

Environmental Project - Lockport Township Fact Sheet #1 August 2011

Commonwealth Edison and Nicor Gas (the Utilities) will conduct an environmental project at the northwest portion of Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) Parcel 14.03 located in an unincorporated area of Lockport Township, Illinois (Figure 1).

The purpose of the project is to remove residues related to the operation of a former manufactured gas plant (MGP) from MWRD's property. The work will be conducted under the oversight of the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (Illinois EPA) as part of the Site Remediation Program.

Manufactured Gas Plant Background

Prior to the advent of natural gas service, manufactured gas or "Town Gas" was produced locally to provide fuel for lighting, cooking, and heating. Gas was produced using a variety of processes that typically involved the use of coal, oil, or both. At one time, up to 3,000 plants operated in the United States. Byproducts of the manufactured gas process included coal tar and materials used to purify gas. Beginning in the 1930s, a system of pipelines was established in the Midwest to bring natural gas from the Southwest, thus rendering this form of gas manufacturing obsolete.

The Site Background

The site of the environmental project is on vacant property owned by MWRD, located east of Illinois Route 53, north of Caton Farm Road, and west of the Des Plaines River. The MWRD property is located immediately north of the Toyal America, Inc. (Toyal) industrial plant. An MGP had been located on the Toyal property in the early part of the 1900s. The MGP on Toyal's property was remediated under the Illinois EPA Site Remediation Program.

Based on a review of historical documents, visual observations, and site investigation activities, potential MGP residuals in the form of semi-solid tarry material and wood chips used to purify manufactured gas were discovered at separate surface locations in the northwest portion of MWRD Parcel 14.03. As a result, the Utilities have developed a plan to safely remove the residual materials.



Figure 1. Site Location.

The Removal Project

Beginning in the fall of 2011, an environmental consulting firm under contract with the Utilities will begin the project to remove the residual materials. Access to the site will be through the Toyal property. The project will involve site preparation, clearing of brush and trees, construction of temporary and permanent facilities, excavation of soil and residuals, and restoration of the disturbed areas. The project is expected to take approximately eight months. Construction equipment will excavate materials in selected areas. The excavated materials will be transported in covered trucks to a state-approved disposal facility. The excavated areas will be backfilled where necessary, using clean materials brought to the site. The final step in the cleanup will be the restoration of the site with topsoil and seeding. Care will be taken throughout the project to protect endangered or threatened species.

This project has been planned with cooperation and approval from MWRD, Toyal, Will County, Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, Illinois EPA, US Army Corps of Engineers, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

What to Expect

Beginning in mid-September, truck traffic in the area will increase as the site preparation, clearing of brush and trees, and facility construction work begins. People in the immediate area may notice odors similar to those from roofing or road tar during the project. These odors are a normal occurrence in this type of cleanup activity, and workers will conduct operations in a manner that minimizes the odors as much as possible.

An air-monitoring program will be implemented during the project. The air-monitoring program is designed to monitor for the presence or absence of airborne MGP constituents and identify any need to implement on-site abatement actions. Both hand-held detectors and stationary monitors installed at the perimeter of the site will be used by site personnel during the cleanup activities.

All site activities such as tree clearing, excavation and paving will take place during regular business hours in order to minimize any potential inconvenience to those in the area.

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An **Information Repository**, consisting of work plans, reports, and fact sheets issued by ComEd related to this environmental project, is being maintained at the Crest Hill Library Branch, 1298 Theodore St., Crest Hill, Illinois.