



November 2, 2017

Open Letter to Steve Verburg, Wisconsin State Journal, et al

Your provocative headline - Hazardous Plume Advances, (front page news on 10/28/17), seems incongruent with the facts. The report referenced states the earliest the PCE could reach the City Well is 5-6 years or it could be several decades, or as the author goes on to say, it may in fact, not be moving at all and would never impact Well 8 (as our regular testing data supports). Seems odd that you would conclude that it is advancing. Do you have any additional information not published, to reach this conclusion?

I have only lived in Madison for six years now, and even though it's clear by reading the record that the WSJ has never been a supporter of Madison-Kipp, I find that your articles are increasingly biased against the company and in addition to being repetitive and redundant, they often lack solid reporting.

Your recent article on soil vapor, as an example, was substantially based on an 'expert' report written by a gentleman brought to Madison for a day from California who based his report on previous opinions expressed by the local 'activist/bloggers' who invited him here. That article just seemed like an orchestrated way to give amplification to the bloggers opinions.

Another of your recent (front page) articles, continued to regurgitate the well known fact that there remains residual amounts of PCB in the stormwater drainage ditch near Kipp. This did not seem to justify front page news as we continue to work with the WDNR and the city to fully understand the source of these residual amounts so that we can completely remediate. The City/County Health Department has confirmed there is no health risk to the public and we have isolated the area while we finish our work (which may continue into the spring).

Why is there a seemingly renewed effort by you and the paper to cast Madison-Kipp as a public enemy (or at least a 'bad actor') never to be trusted again?

As I read Saturday's fear inspiring front page headline I wonder - 'where's the rest of the story'?

City Well 8 has never had a PCE detection. The Water Department confirms that Madison Kipp is not a contributor to any of the other contaminants found in Well 8. And yet you continue to paint a picture in the minds of your readers that Kipp is somehow single-handedly responsible for all the PCE under our fine city.

I know that you are aware that six other city wells have already tested positive for PCE. Where's the headline on that? In these locations it's not a case of the PCE potentially getting there in 5 years or decades or never, but rather it's already in our drinking water. The Well Protection Plans for each of these wells identifies literally hundreds of potential contributors to the contamination. Has there ever been another company identified as a source? Has anyone ever tried to find the source? **Why is it that unless it can be attributed to Madison-Kipp it's not news?**

PCE's as you know, are now regrettably prevalent in our environment all over the world. They were used by thousands of companies who dealt with metal cleaning and more impactfully, they were used by nearly all dry cleaning locations since the 1930's. Published data by the Dry Cleaners Association indicates the following:

- PCE was introduced as a drycleaning solvent in 1934.
- By 1962, 90% of all PCE consumption was as dry cleaning solvent.
- The average dry cleaner used around 100 gallons of PCE each month and disposed of it 'locally'.

- Not until the 1980's did it become required for dry cleaners to 'properly' dispose of their PCE waste.
- A survey of dry cleaners in 1988 indicated that 70% still discharged their separator water (containing PCE) either to sanitary sewer or septic systems.

Has there ever been one dry cleaner (past or current) in Madison that has been held accountable for their contribution to the prevalent PCE problem? What ever happened to the 2012 city project intended to understand the true extent of dry cleaners waste handling on our water system in Madison?

How about the **hundreds** of manufacturers, auto dealers, repair shops and other businesses (many of whom are now gone) that all would have used PCE's during the last century and handled them the same as Kipp did which was the 'legal standard of the time'. This includes the recent discovery of PCE on the Kessenich site on Fair Oaks, where the Madison Plow Company operated for decades.

Perhaps the headline should someday read - **East side employer of thousands over 120 years accepts responsibility and diligently works to rectify the unintended consequences of prior generations**

We've not dodged our responsibility, we've not spared expense in ensuring the health and well-being of our neighbors, we've not asked for a dime from the city or state to remediate our contribution to the contamination caused (unlike the millions of dollars given to developers to clean up what many others walked away from), and finally - **we are not done** with our work here. It took decades to create this situation, it will take time to fix it.

We still have to finish our work with the stormwater system (rain garden). As I said that workplan will likely extend into the spring to ensure complete remediation. We are still operating our Soil Vapor Extraction SVE system. We are still operating our Groundwater Extraction and Treatment System GETS. We are still testing our network of wells on a regular basis to confirm our conclusions about the stability of the plume are correct. As we continue this work, we are also working with the DOJ/WDNR toward the closure of the complaint filed against us in 2012 that pertains to these matters.

Importantly, in addition to the environmental work we are doing, we also happen to be recognized as one of the top die casters in the country. **We operate a world class manufacturing company** that is run responsibly, legally and well within the limits of all of our environmental permits. We have recently been recertified by accredited auditors for both our quality system (ISO16949) as well as our environmental system (ISO14001). We provide job opportunities to over 500 people providing good wages, benefits and career advancement, and we support with both our dollars and time dozens of Madison schools, businesses and charitable organizations.

Despite the regular negative press we receive, we are proud to be part of the fabric of this town as we have been for 120 years. We are proud to be a significant job provider and a 'maker of things' here in Wisconsin.

I'm not asking that the WSJ stops reporting the information you think is important. I am simply asking for a more balanced account of the complexities of a multi-year cleanup, some occasional context so that it does not appear as if Madison-Kipp was the only manufacturer or user of PCE and PCB on the Isthmus and perhaps an occasional 'benefit of the doubt' that we are genuinely trying to do the right thing.

I invite you to continue to contact me for your stories as you have, but know that I will be increasingly reluctant to answer your last minute deadline requests if I'm just contributing to a 'scary headline' that is not supported by the facts.

Sincerely,



Tony Koblinski
President/CEO
Madison-Kipp Corporation
tkoblinski@madison-kipp.com