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U.S. to help on Truax landfill

By Thomas M. Waller
City news reporter

The city of Madison and Dane County, which have been arguing for three years over who should pay pollution cleanup costs at the old Truax Field landfill, are getting some unexpected help.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has agreed to spend about \$100,000 to study groundwater contamination at the former landfill, and there is a possibility the Defense Department will pay for a similar parallel study.

The landfill was operated by the city until 1973, when it was turned over to the county.

David Benschawski, of the city engineering office, said Truax Field was once used by the U.S. Air Force and Wisconsin Air National Guard for disposal of ordnance and fuel.

The Madison Fire Department also used ordnance and fuel at Truax Field, he said, when practicing putting out fires.

Benschawski said both activities have created problems because the groundwater table is only eight to 13 feet below the surface.

Groundwater monitoring equipment installed by the city in the late 1980s has detected heavy metals and volatile organic compounds at levels exceeding allowable limits.

Five wells owned by Oscar Mayer

Food Co. can no longer be used for drinking water because of the contamination, but the nearest city well, on Sherman Avenue, is not polluted.

The corps of engineers' comment is significant in that it appears to be an acknowledgment that several parties bear responsibility for cleaning up contamination that are reaching groundwater.

Environmental Engineers will take soil samples and drill three monitoring wells near the landfill and the former

Dane sewage treatment plant, which is near the landfill.

The wells will be installed in July and a report on the findings will be available in September. The corps will then rank the site for federal cleanup actions, and money may be available as early as next April for remedial action or the hiring of a consultant for further study.

Benschawski said the report is supposed to determine ownership and management of the former landfill

and former sewage treatment plant.

He said the Department of Environmental Protection is studying groundwater contamination of active national guard

landfill and a study of the Truax Field site could lead to funding of remedial monitoring wells or removal of contamination.

Monitoring wells will have to be installed at 30 sites around the landfill and sewage plant, at a cost of \$300,000 or more.

2 hospitalized in Ladish Malting fire

JEFFERSON — Two men were hospitalized Thursday night as a result of a fire at Ladish Malting Co. near Jefferson that some 20 firefighters fought for about six hours.

A Lake Mills firefighter was in satisfactory condition at St. Luke's Hospital in Milwaukee, where he was taken from First Alderson Memorial Hospital by Med Flight helicopter. He was being treated in a hyperbaric chamber for smoke inhalation.

A Ladish employee was in fair condition, suffering from smoke inhalation and heat exhaustion, when he was taken by ambulance to Univer-

sity Hospital. Two other firefighters were treated and released in Port Alton.

Firefighters from Jefferson, Lake Mills, Port Alton, Johnson Creek, Janesville and Watertown were called to the fire, which started about 6:45 p.m., said Jefferson Fire Chief Don Wagner.

Wagner said the fire started in a drying kiln of the barley malting processing plant, which is in Jefferson Junction, about three miles north of Jefferson on Highway 28.

Wagner said he had an idea what caused the fire, but would not release the information early this morning. He said he had no damage estimate.

Ladish, which is one of the world's largest malt producers, with most of all of the major breweries. The company's executive offices are in Milwaukee.

John Ladish, president of the company, refused to comment on the fire when contacted Thursday night at his home in Brookfield.

Engeliter plans 'listening tour'

State Journal staff

State Sen. Minority Leader Susan Engeliter said Wednesday she plans to spend most of May on a "listening tour" of Wisconsin as part of her campaign for the U.S. Senate.

"This tour marks the point at which I will begin meeting with voters at her alma mater, Brookfield Central High School."

She is scheduled to address classes at the Prairie High School on Wednesday morning and will make various stops in Madison after that. Those stops are Elva's Deli, 282 East Washington Ave. 12 p.m.; the state

employee child care center, 48 East Walnut St. 1:30 p.m.; Delta Gamma security, 180 Langdon St. 4 p.m.; and a Delta County GOP reception, 1000 Main St. 6 p.m.

Other stops are planned for Green Bay, Wisconsin, East Claire, Horicon, La Crosse, Superior, Janesville, Beloit, Stevens Point, Wisconsin Rapids, Appleton, Verona and Menasha.

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Low challenges fitness centers

People who join fitness centers no longer need fear they will lose the most weight from their waist, Attorney General Don Hanaway said Thursday.

A state law that takes effect Tuesday requires fitness centers to establish proof of financial responsibility before they require a customer to pay more than 8% in advance on a membership contract.

"We have received an incredibly large number of complaints from people who lost money because fitness centers went out of business," Hanaway said. "This new law goes a long way toward solving that problem."

He said his consumer protection office received more than 100 complaints about fitness centers last year, most of them involving the lack of refunds when the centers closed.

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