



Region 7

Iowa
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Fact Sheet

December 2003

Time-Critical Removal Action To Begin Iowa City Former Manufactured Gas Plant Site, Iowa City, Iowa

INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) continues to oversee field activities at the Iowa City Former Manufactured Gas Plant (FMGP) site, 505 Burlington Street, Iowa City, Iowa. In October 2003, MidAmerican Energy conducted sampling on the northern edge of the site between the Iowa-Illinois Manor apartment building and Burlington Street, to identify the source of light non-aqueous phase liquid (LNAPL) contamination found in two monitoring wells. During the investigations it was also determined that an underground tank is located in the northeast corner of the site. The contents of this tank, if any, are not known.

The city of Iowa City plans to replace the Burlington Street bridge which crosses Ralston Creek adjacent to the Site beginning in Spring 2004. During this project, the city will require access to buried utilities along Burlington Street in the northwest area of the site.

NEXT STEPS

The EPA determined that a time-critical removal action was necessary to remove contamination on the northern portion of the site associated with the FMGP, to reduce risks to city and utility workers in the area during the bridge project. In December 2003, MidAmerican Energy Company and the Iowa-Illinois Manor Partnership entered into an agreement with EPA, called an Administrative Order on Consent, to perform this removal

action. The work at the site is planned to begin in early January 2004.

Soil will be excavated to expose the top of the underground tank. Any contents will be removed, sampled, analyzed, and properly disposed. The empty tank will then be filled with an inert material and covered with top soil.

Water and heavily contaminated material called light non-aqueous phase liquid (LNAPL) will be pumped from two wells with a vacuum truck. The material removed from the wells will be sampled, analyzed, and properly disposed. After approximately two weeks, if more LNAPL is found to be in the wells, the wells will be pumped again.

Any area that is excavated will be backfilled with clean fill and graded to restore the areas to pre-excavation condition and provide for proper drainage. Any features such as sidewalks, curbs, or grass that have to be removed will be replaced, consistent with the wishes of the property owner.

In addition to the removal action that will be taking place on the northern edge of the site, additional site characterization activities will be occurring. These activities will include drilling two bedrock monitoring wells in the parking lot of the Iowa-Illinois Manor. These wells will be located very close to one another, but will be drilled to different depths in an attempt to better understand the movement of contamination in ground water at the site.

Ten soil borings will be placed along the banks of Ralston Creek. They will extend to below the depth of the bed of the creek in an effort to better understand the movement of contamination in the subsurface and its impact on Ralston Creek.

The additional site characterization work is scheduled to begin in late December 2003, and continue into January 2004.

An air monitoring program will be used during Site activities. The intent of the air monitoring is for the protection of the workers at the site, and anyone else who may be in the area.

SITE BACKGROUND

From 1857 to 1937, gas was manufactured at a plant located on the southeast corner of Burlington and Van Buren Streets. Tri-City Railway and Light Company operated the plant. In the 1940's, Tri-City Railway and Light Company became the Iowa-Illinois Gas and Electric Company (now known as MidAmerican Energy Company), which maintained service facilities on the property until about 1971. In 1983, the Iowa-Illinois Manor apartment complex was built on the site.

When the gas was produced, by-products such as coal tar were also produced. Coal tar contaminants, such as polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs); volatile organic compounds (VOCs), including benzene and toluene; metals, including lead, cyanide and arsenic; have been identified in samples taken by EPA, both on and off site. Some compounds found in coal tar are hazardous substances that can cause health and environmental problems if handled improperly.

In March 1999, the EPA, MidAmerican Energy Company, and the Iowa-Illinois Manor Partnership, the owner of the apartment building at the site, reached an

agreement, known as an Administrative Order on Consent or AOC. The AOC required MidAmerican Energy to determine the nature and extent of coal tar contamination at the site, and assess the threat to human health and the environment.

From 1999 through the present, MidAmerican Energy has conducted investigations to determine the nature and extent of coal tar contamination at the site. The soil, ground water, air at the site, and surface water and sediment in Ralston Creek, were sampled. These investigations have been summarized in the Site Characterization Report. This report also included a baseline risk assessment. The baseline risk assessment evaluated the potential human health and ecological risks associated with the contaminants in soil, ground water, air sediment, and surface water if no action were taken at the site.

The Site Characterization Report is included in the Information Repository at the Iowa City Public Library, 123 S. Linn Street, Iowa City, Iowa.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

If you have questions about this fact sheet or need additional information on the site, please contact:

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