Message

From: Fife, Greg [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=1EBD5B1EB9104F3E93818DB928C8A313-FIFE, GREG]
Sent: 7/18/2019 1:45:52 PM
To: Durant, Jennah [Durant.Jennah@epa.gov]
CC: Hubbard, Joseph [Hubbard.Joseph@epa.gov]
Subject: Re: Gert Town

Take a look at these pictures. The orange paint shows the hotspots that the City found. And our subsequent surveys were very close to the same thing. The hotspots are about the size of what the meters read as elevated.

Sent from my iPhone

On Jul 18, 2019, at 7:31 AM, Durant, Jennah <Durant.Jennah@epa.gov> wrote:

More questions. Some of these might be for the city to answer:

Was the 3-inch diameter area below the road surface or at the road surface (i.e., at the asphalt)?

Was the 10,000 microRem/hour reading on contact with the contamination or at 1 foot away?

Was the 10,000 microRem/hour reading primarily gamma radiation?

If below, what was the reading at the surface of the road?

How many feet away from the contamination was considered the perimeter of the road?

If the perimeter of the street measured just above background radiation prior removal, how could the contamination be detected by a flyover that was much further away as compared to the slight increase above background at the perimeter of the street?

What is your best estimate of the total cumulative dose to the potentially highest exposed member of the public?

Why was the contamination not removed when it was detected during the flyover for the Super Bowl?

When was the EPA notified of the contamination?

From: Fife, Greg
Sent: Wednesday, July 17, 2019 5:28 PM
To: Durant, Jennah <Durant.Jennah@epa.gov>
Subject: Re: Gert Town

The one thing is that there were several of the hotspots on that block of Lowerline. The hottest was 10,000 and others were close to that. Just don't want to give the impression that it was just one spot

Sent from my iPhone

On Jul 17, 2019, at 2:50 PM, Durant, Jennah <Durant.Jennah@epa.gov> wrote:

> Erin in the RA's office made some edits to the responses for this inquiry. She wanted me to run them by you. Let me know if these are OK.
>
> **Q:** Can you let me know what the levels of radiation were before the remediation?
> **A:** The highest levels were recorded at the removal site in about a 3-inch diameter area, and measured around 10,000 microRem/hour. That area is now measuring at less than 8 microRem/hour. The perimeter of the street measured just above the background before the removal, and now measures at background.
>
> **Q:** Was this considered a reopening of a superfund site? If so, how was the community informed of the plan of action?

A: No, this removal action conducted by the Superfund program is separate and unrelated to any existing Superfund remedial site. EPA and the City of New Orleans kept the community informed by speaking with residents directly, going door-to-door, speaking to community members before/after church services, and having community relations coordinators on site.

Q: There were 6 total containers, right? How large were they?
A: Six containers were brought to the site, and five were used to complete the removal. Each container has about 20 cubic yards of space.

Q: Where is Waste Control Specialists located?
A: The facility is in Andrews County outside of Andrews, Texas.

Q: Can I see the plan of remediation and the removal action memo?
A: These documents are publicly available at the public repository for the site, housed at Xavier University.

From: Fife, Greg
Sent: Wednesday, July 17, 2019 1:10 PM
To: Durant, Jennah <Durant.Jennah@epa.gov>
Subject: Re: Gert Town

Right in the middle of the road.

Sent from my iPhone

On Jul 17, 2019, at 12:25 PM, Durant, Jennah <Durant.Jennah@epa.gov> wrote:

> Where were the hottest spots? Where the stuff was removed, I assume?
>
> ---
>
> **From:** Fife, Greg
> **Sent:** Tuesday, July 16, 2019 3:06 PM
> **To:** Durant, Jennah <Durant.Jennah@epa.gov>
> **Subject:** Re: Gert Town
>
> I hate to just give that without making sure they understand.
>
> One area to compare is the perimeter of the street. The pre-action level was just above background. Now, it's background.
>
> The hottest spots, about the size of a soft drink cover, 3 inch diameter, were greater than 10,000 microRem/hour. Now it's less than 8 microRem/hour.
>
> Sent from my iPhone
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> On Jul 16, 2019, at 2:55 PM, Durant, Jennah <Durant.Jennah@epa.gov> wrote:
>
>> Hi Greg, this reporter asked about the before and after radiation levels again. Is there a way to explain this?

Are you able to share the gamma ray and radium levels before and after remediation? What was the highest level of gamma rays and the closest residence with people living inside?

From: Fife, Greg
Sent: Wednesday, July 10, 2019 11:29 AM
To: Durant, Jennah <Durant.Jennah@epa.gov>
Cc: Hubbard, Joseph <Hubbard.Joseph@epa.gov>; Coats, Janetta <coats.janetta@epa.gov>
Subject: Re: Gert Town

Sent from my iPhone

On Jul 10, 2019, at 11:44 AM, Durant, Jennah <Durant.Jennah@epa.gov> wrote:

> The reporter had some follow-up questions:
>
> Can you let me know what the levels of radiation were before the remediation?

This is a little more complicated than what was the level. Since Radiation exposure is a function of time, distance and shielding. It takes more parameters to answer that.

Let me come back to that.

> Was this considered a reopening of a superfund site?

In no way was this a reopening. Somehow, there is an effort in the media to relate this to Thompson-Hayward. The only thing is that it's nearby.

If so, how was the community informed of the plan of action?

Janetta can better fill in this information but EPA, LDEQ, and the City of New Orleans went door to door, went to and talked to the church adjacent, flyers were sent to residents. New Orleans sent news releases/desk statements to media outlets prior to the action and during the action. And a repository was established at the Xavier library that has the Action Memo and and other documents that support the decision to take action. Jo Horner can fill in details of where it is.

There were 6 total containers, right? How large were they?

Six containers were brought to the site. One was never loaded. I don't have the specs with me but they are approximately 20 cubic yards. The boxes are large so that they can hold other materials that are not as heavy. Weight limits for highways limits the loading to about 10 cubic yards.

See separate email for a picture, etc.

Where is Waste Control Specialists located?

WCS is located in Andrews , Texas

Can I see the plan of remediation and the removal action memo?

The action memo is a public document. And like I said, it is available at the repository. Or there are ways to transmit it.

From: Fife, Greg
Sent: Tuesday, July 09, 2019 3:36 PM
To: Durant, Jennah <Durant.Jennah@epa.gov>
Subject: Fwd: Gert Town

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

> **From:** "Fife, Greg" <fife.greg@epa.gov>
> **Date:** July 9, 2019 at 4:34:50 PM EDT
> **To:** "Bokun, Lisa" <Bokun.Lisa@epa.gov>
> **Cc:** "Coats, Janetta" <coats.janetta@epa.gov>
> **Subject: Fwd: Gert Town**
>
> This is why I would say:
>
> Sent from my iPhone
>
> Begin forwarded message:
>
> > **From:** "Woodruff, Emily" <ewoodruff@theadvocate.com>
> > **Date:** July 9, 2019 at 2:55:20 PM EDT

To: "fife.greg@epa.gov" <fife.greg@epa.gov>
Cc: "coats.janetta@epa.gov" <coats.janetta@epa.gov>
Subject: Gert Town

Hi Greg,

I'm a reporter for The Times Picayune | New Orleans Advocate. I am writing a story on Gert Town and the recent removal of radioactive materials in the neighborhood. Are you able to answer the following?

1. Where were the containers moved?

The material was disposed of at a proper facility, Waste Control Specialist. They are licensed to accept and dispose of the low level radioactive waste.

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Each of the five containers had between 9 and 11 cubic yards of road base, pavement, and the contaminated soil layer. One container was never used.

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The original area was believed to be limited to be a 3 feet by 3 feet area. The City tried to address that but the follow up investigation found additional contamination. All limited to about the middle third of the 3400 block of Lowerline. There were a few discreet areas excavated, approximately 5'x5', 10'x20', and 20'x40' with some modifications during excavation.

It is not correct that the contamination went beyond that block of Lowerline.

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The cleanup is believed to be complete. EPA will return to conduct a scan on Lowerline to verify the cleanup is effective.

The readings showed that the contamination was removed. Since the boxes were removed, it allows the meters to read down to background.

8.
9. What are the radon levels now?

I'm assuming that this means Radium, not Radon. The Radiation has been reduced to near background levels.

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11. What did the test

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The results showed radium and associated decay products such as lead and bismuth. The amount of the total radioactive material is not inconsistent with several possible tools or mechanisms used in the past.

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It is all theory and speculation. It appears that the contamination dates to the late 1940s or early 1950s.

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Thanks so much,

Emily Woodruff

Health Reporter
ewoodruff@theadvocate.com
504-233-8154 cell
@emily_woodruff_