

N.C. nearing deadline for waste dump plan

By Kelly Ryan
Associate Editor

If North Carolina does not complete studies of two possible radioactive waste dump sites by the end of the year, it could be left on its own to store radioactive waste.

North Carolina must file a site application with the state Division of Radiation Protection by Dec. 31 as part of its membership in the Southeast Compact, an association of eight Southeastern states that jointly dispose of waste on a 20-year rotating cycle.

If the state does not determine a site for a waste dump by then, the Barnwell, S.C., waste facility will close its borders to North Carolina's waste.

Chem-Nuclear, a Raleigh-based company contracted by the state, is studying two possible sites — one in Richmond County and the other in Chatham-Wake counties, just 10 miles southeast of Pittsboro and 25 miles outside the Triangle area.

Chrystal Stowe, the director of public information at the N.C. Low-level Radioactive Waste Authority, said being excluded from the compact would be detrimental for the state.

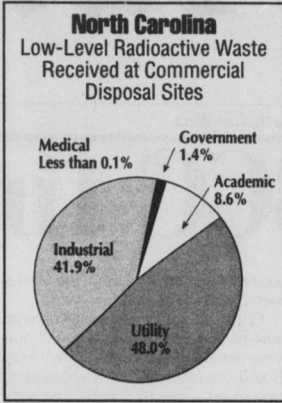
The authority was created in 1987 to build and maintain a dump by order of the Southeast Compact.

"The development costs are being paid by eight states, not North Carolina alone," Stowe said. "The total facility development costs are about \$153 million. The North Carolina General Assembly might find it difficult to come up with that money."

Being a member of the Southeast Compact is beneficial for North Carolina because membership allows states to exclude the waste from non-member states in its dump facilities, Stowe said.

If North Carolina builds a facility by 1994, the S.C. dump will close in 1996. South Carolina currently houses one of two low-level radioactive waste dumps in the United States.

Stowe said there was a strong possibility that Chem-Nuclear would be required to conduct more tests at the Chatham-Wake site.



Source: U.S. Dept. of Energy, 1991

She added that by July or August, the authority would be able to determine whether additional testing was necessary. "We are currently on schedule, but additional testing could put us behind."

Dayne Brown, director of the Division of Radiation Protection, said the division was responsible for approving the plans for testing the site and issuing the permit for the facility to be built.

"With respect to the Chatham-Wake site, we have recently advised Chem-Nuclear that the work done so far was not sufficient," he said.

When Chem-Nuclear applies for a permit to build the dump, they have to show that they have enough information to prove a given site would be safe. "If they reach a decision we don't accept, we would use that same information to bat them down," Brown said.

Chem-Nuclear is responsible for determining that if there were some sort of leakage it would not affect the people living near the site.

Roger Hannah, Chem-Nuclear community relations manager, said there were a number of fractures in the rock at the Chatham-Wake site but added that it was characteristic of the rock in North Carolina. A lot of the fractures have been filled in with material over millions of years, he said.

"We have to prove ultimately that the fractures didn't travel far enough to really have a major influence on the ground water flow," Hannah said.

"We're confident that the site is licensable, as is the Richmond site."

Hannah said the Division of Radiation Protection was recommending that Chem-Nuclear test the site again to be confident in the safety of the site.

Stowe said that if no additional tests were needed, the authority would have a clear indication of the long-term suitability of each site by early October.

The idea of a radioactive waste dump in North Carolina's backyard has prompted environmental protection groups across the state to team up and lobby against it.

The activist groups, such as the Chapel Hill-based Love Your Mother and the Chatham County-based North Carolina Ground Zero, have proposed that waste-producing companies store waste above-ground on their own property like companies in Canada.

Environmentalists charge that this would put responsibility into the hands of the companies that produce waste rather than the tax-paying public.

Figures from a 1991 study by the U.S. Department of Energy indicate that utilities represent 48 percent of the waste sent to commercial storage sites in North Carolina. Almost 42 percent comes from industries, 8.6 percent from academic sources, 1.4 percent from the government and less than 0.1 percent from medical sources.

"What these figures show is that utilities are responsible for the majority of the waste," said Debi Bird, founder of Love Your Mother.

Bird said the environmental and animal protection organization had taken its grassroots movement to the state capital. "We're educating legislators and, on a regular basis, going up to Raleigh and knocking on all 174 doors," she said. "It's going to be the nation's largest dump, and all have leaked."

But Brown said the state would build the dump above-ground, and that it was not feasible to propose that utility companies each operate their own facilities.

"What guarantee do you have that the utility company will have enough money to take care of it forever?"

Brown said that even if the companies that produced the waste stored it themselves, they also would have to go through the lengthy process of determining the site's suitability.

"Those entities that create the waste foot the bill upfront," he said. "I pay my electric bill to (Carolina Power and Light), and I guess as a rate-payer I pay for it. Ultimately, the people pay for everything."

Brown said that if the dump were to leak, the authority would collect enough money from waste-generating companies to deal with unforeseen events.

Hannah said that if there were small waste dumps scattered throughout the state, the chances of leakage would increase because small sites would not have the resources to handle environmental problems.

"From a safety standpoint, it makes sense to have as few sites as possible," he said. "I don't think anyone wants the local hospital to handle a small amount of waste."

Bird said legislators had been very responsive to environmental protests, but that some of the legislators were new and needed to be educated about the issues.

"Why should you and I be responsible for disposing the waste of nuclear companies? They're private industries," she said.

Matt McConnell, chairman of N.C. Ground Zero, which formed in protest of this issue, said states across the United States were members of similar regional compacts. Two other regional compacts have failed to go ahead with selecting new dump sites.

North Carolina then is the only state proceeding with its compact's plan, putting it in danger of becoming a national dumping ground, McConnell said.

"The federal government, if an emergency situation occurs to where they didn't have adequate facilities, they could call a national emergency and federalize the dump," he said. "It's a hypothetical, but with other states bowing out, it could become a reality."

McConnell said each state should be responsible for its own waste.

"What the (waste) generators want is to get this material off their property and get their hands clean of it," he said. "I would be willing to pay whatever it takes on an individual level — a month of electric bills," he said. "It would give me a piece of mind to know it was a smaller dump."

Businesses stay open despite phone outage

By Yi-Hsin Chang
Editor

Although many Chapel Hill merchants lost business during the three-day phone outage last week, most were able to cope with the loss of phone service.

"We chose to stay open because it would've been a big inconvenience for our customers in the mall," said Betty Jones, assistant branch manager of Central Carolina Bank near University Mall. "We managed to do everything manually. The public was very understanding."

About 4,300 Southern Bell customers in the northeast part of town lost phone service June 1 when workers installing a sewer line cut two phone cables and damaged another. Two cables were left intact after the workers realized the cables were phone lines.

By noon Friday, Southern Bell had reconnected the cables, and customers again were able to let their fingers do the walking.

Southern Bell spokesman Mark Collins said some customers complained about the phone outage but were cooperative.

"We've had a lot of customers who've been as upset as we've been since this outage," he said. "In most cases, customers understand the challenges we faced and just didn't want to be charged for not getting the service."

Customers will not have to pay for the time they did not receive phone service, he said. The phone company currently is assessing the damage.

Southern Bell has investigated the phone outage and concluded that Bryant Electrical Co., the company that was installing the sewer line for the Orange Sewer and Water Authority, was responsible for cutting the cables, Collins said. "The service outage was through no fault of our own."

The High Point electrical company will be billed more than \$10,000 in compensation for the damage it caused, he said.

While Southern Bell workers scrambled to return service to customers, local businesses had to cope with

life without phones. Karen Raleigh, First Union city executive for Chapel Hill, said the police had told banks not to open their lobbies because they wouldn't be able to call 911 in case of a robbery.

But the First Union at University Mall was able to function normally thanks to its roof satellite, which was hooked up to the security system and the computers. "We had no phones, but because of First Union's foresight, we were able to operate," Raleigh said.

Rick Overton, manager of Saslow's Jewelers at University Mall, said the store's business didn't suffer during the phone outage.

Saslow's employees weren't able to get credit card approvals, but the store has insurance for cases like this. "The hardest part was knowing we couldn't dial 911, but we had extra security in the mall, so it wasn't a problem," Overton said.

Reggie Perry, a front desk clerk at the Holiday Inn on U.S. 15-501 Bypass, said that although guests were left without phones, they had watched the news and understood the situation. "It wasn't like it was our fault."

While some businesses suffered because of the phone outage, at least one business got a few new customers.

Jeanna DeChiario, a sales representative at Sprint Cellular at Rams Plaza, said the company signed on several new customers who didn't want to deal with land-line phones anymore.

"We had a gentleman come in. We gave him a cellular phone, and he got in touch with the phone company to somehow forward his calls on his business line to the cellular phone."

Fred's Bed at Rams Plaza purchased a cellular phone from Sprint Cellular so customers could continue to call the store. "Yellow Pages is a big part of our ads," said Fred's Bed's employee Anthony Hargrove. "I think Southern Bell did a good job of getting people back on line. It was a real tough situation."

DeChiario said, "You don't know how much you need a phone until you lose it."

AIM HIGH
CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGISTS
PHARMACISTS
PHYSICAL THERAPISTS

Plan a future that soars. Take your science-related degree into the Air Force, and become an officer in the Biomedical Sciences Corps. You'll learn more, you'll grow faster—you'll work with other dedicated professionals in a quality environment where your contributions are needed.

In short, you'll gain more of everything that matters most to you. You and the Air Force. Launch now—call USAF HEALTH PROFESSIONS TOLL FREE 1-800-423-USAF

North Carolina Original Sports Bar

Head Level
(formerly La Terrazza)
CHAPEL HILL'S HOME OF THE BLUES

FRI., JUNE 11
The Voxes
SAT., JUNE 12
Anonymous

504 W. Franklin St. • Inside the N.C. Original Sports Bar • 967-0585

Tickets from page 1

tribution for the home game against Duke conflicted with a Bobby Brown concert at the Smith Center. University Police and CAA members asked students, who had started camping out before the concert ended, to move, but when they did, no one knew where they stood in line.

Crook's Corner
Fine Southern Dining

610 West Franklin Street Chapel Hill, North Carolina
Walk-ins welcome. Reservations accepted. Call 929-7643
Menu changes daily. Patio open, weather permitting.
Bar & Dining Room open every night at 6pm. Sunday brunch 10:30am-2pm.

One FREE Visit
with any tanning package of 5 or more visits

The TANNERY
Open 7 Days a Week
169 E. Franklin Street • Near the Post Office
929-5409

CAROLINA Union SUMMER PROGRAMS

FROM THE DIRECTOR OF "FIELD OF DREAMS"

ROBERT REDFORD
DAN AYKROYD
BEN KINGSLEY
MARY MCDONNELL
RIVER PHOENIX
SIDNEY POITIER
DAVID STRATHAIRN

SNEAKERS
A burglar, a spy, a fugitive, a delinquent, a hacker, and a piano teacher... and these are the good guys.

June 15 • 8:00 PM
Union Auditorium
FREE!

A Player Who's About To Be Played.

EDDIE MURPHY
BOOMERANG

June 18 • 8:00 PM
Union Auditorium
FREE!

Coming June 22...
Beauty and the Beast

*Summer programs are presented by the Carolina Union. Admission to films are by UNC I.D. or Union Privilege Card (one guest per I.D. or Card). No Smoking, food or beverages are allowed in the Union Auditorium. If you are interested in helping out on the summer program board, call Rick at 966-3837.

LAST CALL

25¢ Draft Tonite!
Tuesday \$1.75 house highballs

AIR CONDITIONED!

173½ E. Franklin (above Four Corners) 967-4679

Chapel Hill's Best Tasting Frozen Yogurt.
Pay less per ounce and get more for your money!

the YOGURT pump

942-PUMP 106 W. Franklin St. (next to Pizza Hut) 493-8594 4711 Hope Valley Road (Woodcroft Shopping Ctr.)

DTH **1/2 PRICE YOGURT** DTH
Buy any size of our delicious Yogurt Pump yogurt and get a second yogurt of equal or lesser value at half-price!
not valid with any other offers (excludes shakes & flurries • toppings extra) good thru June 20, 1993