

# Water Table Limits Could Push Local Site Off Hazardous Waste Treatment Plant List

BY SUSAN USHER

Proposed water table restrictions could eliminate coastal counties like Brunswick from consideration as the site of a proposed state-run hazardous waste treatment facility, according to one industrial development official.

Leland Industrial Park, a 2,200-acre tract fronting U.S. 74-76 about eight miles west of Wilmington, is the only site in Brunswick County now under consideration for the facility. It is one of 139 potential sites in 41 counties identified as such recently by the state's Hazardous Waste Management Commission in a preliminary report prepared by PEI Associates Inc. of Durham, consultants hired to do the study.

No site is listed in New Hanover County, but individual sites in Pender, Bladen and Sampson counties also remain under consideration.

Brunswick County officials haven't taken a stance in support or opposition of the plant locating at Leland, said Michael deSherbinin, executive director of the Resources Development Commission, which recruits industry to the state.

"It hasn't been narrowed down enough to do that," he elaborated. "It may not become an issue for comment."

"The site does have some of the elements the commission is looking for," said deSherbinin, "but I think in the final analysis it won't qualify."

The culling process begins this month. At its Feb. 12 meeting, the Hazardous Waste Management Commission is to consider a second round of criteria, more specific than the

first. These include a proposal from engineer Henry von Oesen of Wilmington, a commission member, to exclude all sites with less than 10 feet vertical clearance above the uppermost aquifer in use or that can be used as a drinking water supply.

Adoption of the proposed water table restrictions would eliminate coastal sites, including the Leland Industrial Park, said deSherbinin.

"There is not a place in the park that has a groundwater level greater than 10 feet," he explained, citing soil studies and geotechnical work done for various projects. "They all fall within 10 feet and zero."

According to Alecia Ferdo, project manager, PEI Associates Inc. first developed a list of 519 sites, including state-owned property and tracts offered for commercial/industrial development.

Commercial properties were to be located within 25 feet of interstate highway, offer 50 or more acres for industrial expansion and have natural gas available.

Ferdo, an environmental scientist and hazardous waste specialist, said the firm reviewed the sites for compliance with applicable state and federal regulations. For instance, the facility cannot be located within a quarter-mile of facilities such as daycare or school facilities, hospitals or jails, or in wetlands or the flood plain.

Next week the commission will consider land use, air pollution, wastewater discharge and local emergency response capabilities as well as proximity to ground and surface water sources and exactly what structures will constitute a

"facility."

Proximity to other facilities, anticipates Kathy Neal, public information officer for the commission, will be a primary concern. While regulations require a distance of one-quarter mile, the commission will consider extending the limit to one-half mile.

Once more specific criteria are adopted the list will be narrowed to 15 to 25 possible sites, said Ferbo. Then the Commission will visit each site and talk with residents of the community.

According to deSherbinin, finalists are expected to be announced in April.

But before a final choice is made, public hearings will be held locally, said Neal.

### Proposed Facility

The waste treatment plant would not include a landfill, but would consist of a rotary kiln incinerator, a distillation unit and several chemical batch treatment tanks, indicated Kathy Neal.

Added Ferdo, "It will be a very clean facility. There will be no billowing smoke." Wastewater discharge would be from a cooling process and would not affect water quality.

The only cause for concern regarding groundwater, she added, is in the case of a spill—which she said is more likely to occur during long-distance hauling of the waste elsewhere.

No permanent storage for hazardous waste would be provided on-site, with a maximum stay of 90 days. Treated waste would be disposed of off-site, she added, most likely shipped to a licensed disposal site in South Carolina.

Leland Industrial Park is within 150 to 175 miles of where a majority of the waste would be shipped, based on a weighted calculation involving the 20 counties that produce the most hazardous waste.

In 1985 alone, said Ferdo, North Carolina industries generated 2.57 billion pounds of hazardous waste, much of it waste from furniture industries in the western part of the state. Mecklenburg County is the single largest producer. While some



LELAND INDUSTRIAL PARK, on the U.S. 74-76 bypass eight miles west of Wilmington, is one of 139 potential sites in 41 counties under consideration for a state-run hazardous waste treatment facility. It would

include an incinerator, distillation unit and chemical batch treatment tanks, but no landfill or permanent storage facilities.

industries treat their waste on site, most of the waste—and most of the byproducts of any on-site treatment—are hauled to South Carolina for disposal, with the rest going to sites in Florida, New Jersey and Alabama.

Waste handled by the proposed incinerator would be heated at 2,200 degrees Fahrenheit for two seconds, with the volume reduced by 97 percent. The byproduct would be a fly ash, either listed (toxic) or delisted. However, the volume of toxic waste that would have to be transported outside the state for disposal would be drastically reduced, she said, which means the risks associated with transport would also be reduced.

Delisted waste could be disposed off in a regular landfill.

Sludge, or residue from the chemical treatment tanks where other wastes are neutralized, would most likely have to also be hauled

away for disposal.

The plant will also produce steam, which can be sold, and by-products for recycling, such as a chlorine solvent.

The plant will not handle radioactive wastes or PCBs. It will handle these four kinds of waste:

•Corrosive: examples include alkaline cleaners and acids used in etching; capable of eating away materials and human tissue.

•Ignitable: gasoline, industrial alcohols and acetone; capable of burning or causing a fire.

•Reactive: obsolete munitions, cyanide and chlorine, capable of in-

teracting with air or water, causing an explosion and release of poisonous fumes.

•Toxic: arsenic, pesticide wastes; capable of poisoning humans.

If a suitable private company cannot provide the facility, the commission has been directed by the General Assembly to select a site that the state would then operate, condemning the property if it cannot be obtained otherwise.

Said Ferdo, "I'm a mother of two and I wouldn't mind having it in my back yard. I'd rather see hazardous waste properly treated and disposed of than spilled somewhere."

## Samples From Funeral Home Fire Contained Kerosene

BY ETTA SMITH

A chemical analyst testifying in U.S. District Court in Wilmington this week said kerosene was detected in two samples taken from the scene of the Gilbert Funeral Home in Southport after it burned on Aug. 11, 1984.

Analyst Jimmy C. Pau is one of several witnesses, including firefighters, who are testifying in the fraud and arson trial of Thomas E. Gilbert III and Thomas E. Gilbert IV this week, according to U.S. Attorney Kieran Shanahan, who is prosecuting the case.

The Gilberts are charged with 21 counts of fraud in connection with the operation of their funeral home and cemetery. They are also charged with arson for allegedly burning the funeral home to collect insurance.

Shanahan said Pau testified that kerosene was detected in two of four samples taken from the scene of the fire.

Bill Beeker, a state Bureau of Tobacco, Alcohol and Firearms auditor had testified last week that the Gilberts were more than \$500,000 in debt at the time the funeral home burned, said Shanahan.

This is the third week of the trial, which is expected to end sometime next week after the defendants' case is presented, said Shanahan.

Last week, he said, the six-man, six-woman jury heard testimony from about 20 of the Gilberts' creditors.

### Supply VFD To Meet Friday

The Supply Volunteer Fire Department will hold its annual meeting at the fire station on Friday, Feb. 13, at 7:30 p.m.

The station is located on N.C. 211 in Supply. The public is invited, indicated a news release.

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