

The SHORE LINE

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Prior to the regularly scheduled Board of Commissioners' August meeting, Mayor Hanan called on representatives of Henry Von Oesen and Associates to present their report on the gasoline tank contamination project.

N. C. State and Federal EPA requirements recommend that when underground gas tanks are removed they be replaced with an above ground system. During the removal of the old tank it was discovered that gasoline has leaked out and was potentially contaminating the adjacent area.

When contamination of the ground is determined, the State must be notified and an assessment of the contamination as it might affect the ground level water must be made. In order to confirm the level, if any, of ground water contamination shallow wells must be dug adjacent to the old tank location. Soil test samples then must be taken to determine the effect on the soil.

Benzene, toluene, xylene, ethyl benzene and tetraethyl lead are all contained in gasoline and all considered hazardous chemicals by the EPA of N. C. State and the Federal EPA. Benzene and ethyl dibromide are considered to be cancer causing agents. These chemicals will not biodegrade and could contaminate ground water and aquifer sources for many years. These chemicals can cause fires or explosions, permeate through PVC pipes and poison ponds and streams. Non-compliance with the State's recommendations can lead to penalties of from \$2500 to \$25,000 a day.

Von Oesen and Associates recommended the drilling of five shallow wells in a semi-circle adjacent to the leakage area. Then monitor the wells to determine the extent of the leaks. If contamination is present, the process of feeding the contaminated water from the wells into an oil-water separator then into an air stripper and carbon absorption unit would be necessary to discharge water that meets EPA standards of one part per billion of contamination. Their recommendation was to start the process by contracting with Wilmot Well Drilling Co. to dig the required wells.