

STATE OF ALASKA

SARAH PALIN, GOVERNOR

DEPT. OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

DIVISION OF SPILL PREVENTION AND RESPONSE CONTAMINATED SITES PROGRAM

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August 18, 2008

To the People of Aniak,

We at the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) would like to keep you informed about the work in Aniak this summer to clean up contamination around the former White Alice Communications building, now the Joe Parent/Votech building. People from the engineering firm of Shannon & Wilson and their sub-contractors began working at the site in mid-May. Their work was scheduled to take place during the summer, while the school is closed.

As mentioned in our letter to the community in May, we were aiming at completing cleanup of the polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) contaminated soil, removing an old septic system that contains contaminants, and studying the extent of low-level trichloroethylene (TCE), which is a solvent, to determine whether any further action is needed to address it. The overall project goals include cleaning up soil outside the building to our strictest levels, which provide for unlimited use of the property after cleanup (for PCB, this goal is 1 milligram per kilogram (mg/kg), or 1 part per million).

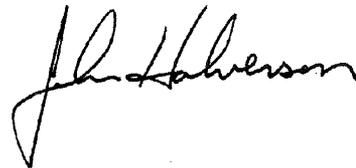
Here is what we have found in the work so far and the changes we must make to our plans:

- **We found a significantly larger amount of soil contaminated with PCBs than expected,** behind the Votech building. The soil is near the old septic system and the concrete truck loading rack for the fuel system installed in 2005. The concrete loading rack had to be removed to safely take out the septic tank and to clean up the PCB contaminated soil. The septic tank contained elevated levels of PCB and TCE.
- **Fieldwork will continue into late August or early September, rather than being completed before school starts.** Access to areas being cleaned up will be restricted – we are asking for community cooperation to continue to stay out of these areas until the fieldwork is done. The school can be safely used while work is going on as long as people stay out of the restricted areas outside the building.
- The cleanup objective for this year has changed. Instead of being able to remove all contaminated soil and replace it with clean soil, **we are now working to complete PCB cleanup on the west side of the building,** near the old septic system and the new fuel system, **and in front of the overhead door into the wood shop,** where the highest levels of PCB have been found.
- **PBC contaminated soil will remain underneath the fabric liner and gravel cover on the east side of the building;** this area will need to be cleaned up under a future contract. This summer's \$3.5 million contract was to address up to 2,000 cubic yards of soil; but based on cleanup and sampling work done this summer, we now estimate that about 3,600 cubic yards exceeded the cleanup level. We increased the contract to \$4.2 million, but still did not have enough funding available to complete the entire cleanup.

- TCE has been found in soil and groundwater between the maintenance shop and the Joe Parent /Votech building; groundwater monitoring wells were installed to define the extent of the affected area; a groundwater sample from a monitoring well placed between the Votech building and the secondary school well did not contain any TCE; further groundwater monitoring will be conducted. The secondary school well has been sampled regularly in recent years (1996, 1999, 2002, 2004, and 2007) for volatile organic compounds including TCE and has not contained TCE or other VOCs; the well water is being sampled again and the results will be shared with the school district as soon as available.
- The concrete pads from the truck loading rack and the wood shop entrance have been broken up and tested to see if they contain PCBs. If so, the concrete will be disposed of with the PCB contaminated soil. Clean concrete and clean soil will be used to backfill the excavations.
- A liner has been placed over low-level PCB contaminated soil in the crawl space beneath the building's computer room. No cleanup was planned for this soil; that area is accessed only occasionally by workers and is considered a low occupancy area. All soil samples from the crawl space have contained less than 10 milligrams per kilogram (mg/kg) of PCB. This makes it lower than the federal cleanup level of 25 mg/kg for PCB in low occupancy areas but above Alaska's soil cleanup level of 1 mg/kg. Alaska law allows soil with PCB between 1 and 10 mg/kg to remain in place if the area is capped and a deed notice is created to document the situation. A sign will be posted in the crawl space to alert workers in the future to not disturb the liner.
- Contractors resampled the woodshop floor inside the Joe Parent/Votech building. No PCBs were found on the floor, except where the sealant/paint had been damaged. The school district plans to clean, reseal and repaint the floor prior to holding woodshop classes. Floor samples are being collected from other areas in the building to see if any PCBs have been tracked inside. Results will be shared with the community.
- Contaminated soil excavated from the site and any other potentially hazardous materials generated during the cleanup are placed into large (5 cubic yard) white bags or drums, temporarily stored on-site and periodically moved to a storage cell at a barge loading area on the Kuskokwim River. The wastes are in water-tight bags or drums and the temporary storage cells are lined and maintained to prevent any pollution at the storage sites. Wastewater (from monitoring wells and from cleaning sampling and other equipment) is being treated and discharged on-site. Non-hazardous materials will be disposed of at the Aniak landfill.

We appreciate your cooperation so far with any disruption you've experienced as the contractors have been working. We now plan to be done working at the school site around the end of August and expect to barge off all the soil and other materials by the middle of September. If you have questions or concerns about the work, please call me at 907-269-7545, or email me at john.halverson@alaska.gov.

Sincerely,



John Halverson
Project Manager