PCB Dumping Ground Cleaned In Frontenac

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The Frontenac lot cited by a national television program as one of the nation's most dangerous hazardous materials dumping sites has been cleared.

The Russell Bliss Drain Oil Service, owners of a 34,000-gallon capacity storage tank, its contents and the property, moved the now-empty container from the west county location on Friday.

Efforts to move the material were initiated long before the ABC public affairs program, The Killing Ground, two weeks ago listed Frontenac on its "most hazardous" list. The city has since complained to the local ABC affiliate, KTVI (TV), about the program and also made their grievance known to Missouri's two senators. They consider the citation deceptive.

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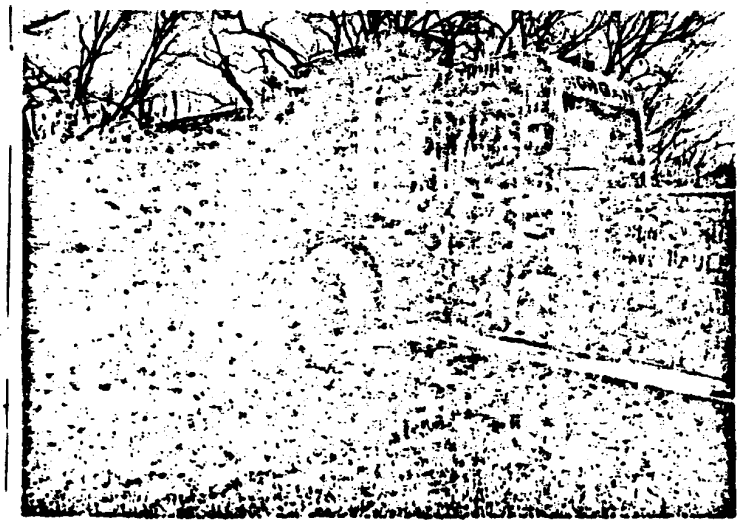

TANK REMOVAL: Workmen from the Morgan company remove the last oil storage tank from Russell Bliss property in Frontenac. (Staff photo)

PCB

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Russell Bliss, owner of the material, said of the program, "The only thing I can figure is that they (the EPA) put that out to put pressure on me to move (the tank)." ABC said its list had been provided by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). During interviews conducted by the Citizen, the Missouri Dept. of Natural Resources which controlled the cleanup of the site was often referred to as the 'state EPA.'

Bliss said that any such pressuring was "not necessary." He said that six tanks had formerly been stored at the location and "five were moved a year ago."

All six had been tested by Frontenac, which had successfully sought a court order to have the material removed. Five were found to contain waste petroleum materials. The other had been used to store some waste oil and polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB), that is "considered to be a carcinogen," according to Bob Zeman of the natural resources dept.

"It's a synthetic oil, basically," he said. "It has many of the characteristics of oil – but it doesn't burn very readily." A state spokesman said that there was no evidence of leakage from the Bliss tank.

"We are very concerned with the material (PCB)," said Zeman. "It's bio-cumulative – it accumulates in the higher life forms and tends to remain in fatty parts of the body and the liver."

PCB's, which are no longer manufactured, were formerly in wide use in electrical transformers, some fluorescent lights, and 'carbon-less' carbon paper, according to Zeman. Paper recycling has caused PCB's to remain, he said, something of a problem to that industry.

Zeman said that the material still in use, such as that in transformers, pose little real threat until they're taken out of service. Even then, he said, there should be no problem "as long as it's disposed of properly."

The Frontenac tank liquid was drained off 11 days ago and incinerated at a plant in Baton Rouge, La., Bliss said. The residue was treated, placed in barrels and the tank cleaned under the watchful eye of the natural resources people last week. The small containers, Zeman said, were sent to a site near Wright City in Warren County and the large tank was en route to an Illinois location owned by Bliss.

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