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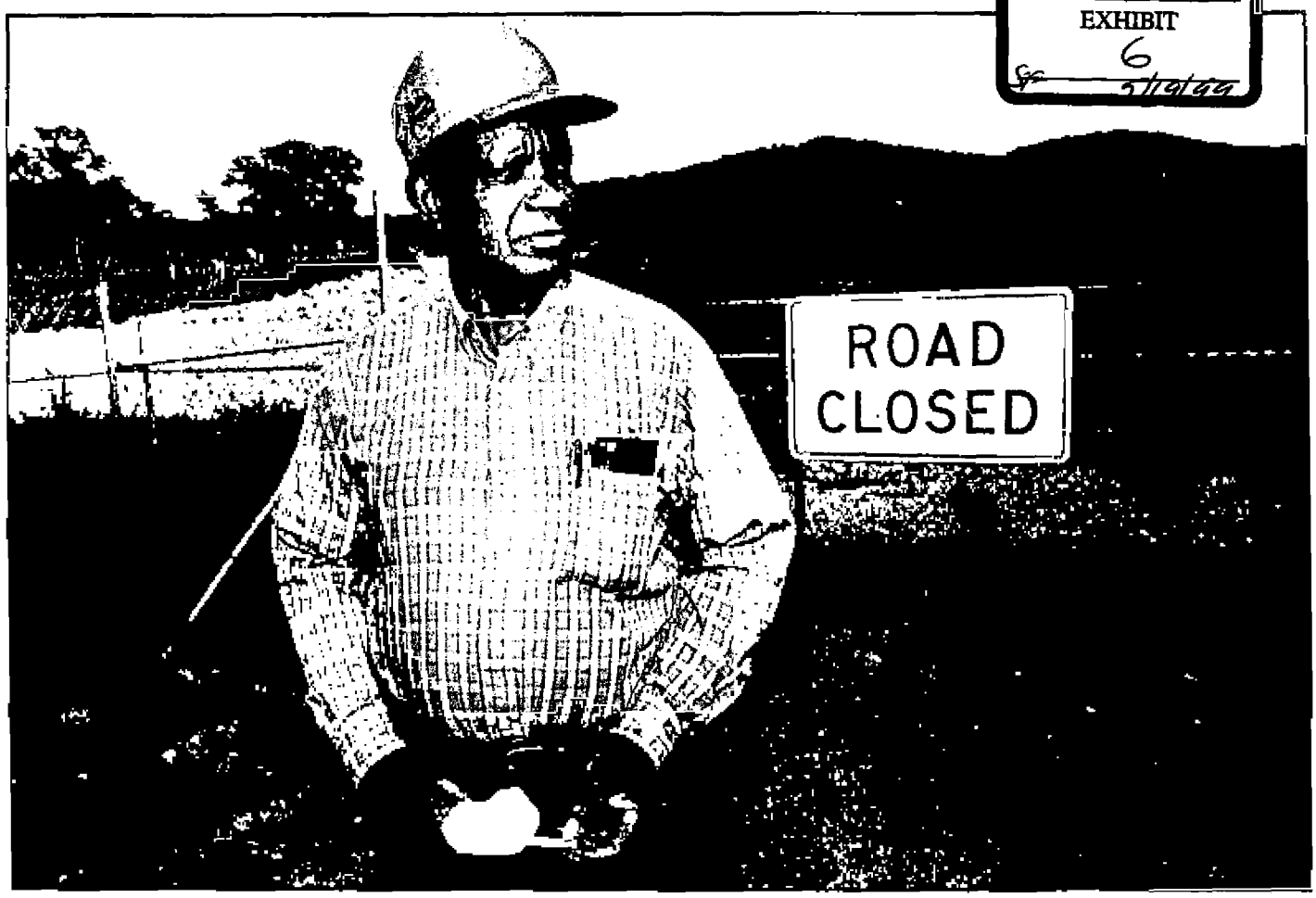
EXHIBIT 6



Eddie Moles/The Anniston Star

Sylvester Harris, manager of Model City Mortuary, remembers when people ate fish caught in Choccolocco Creek. Today, the fish cannot be eaten because they are contaminated with polychlorinated biphenyls.

Hidden in the soil

Residents seek answers for PCB contamination

By Jonathan Lifland
Star Staff Writer

Sylvester Harris just wants to have a normal, healthy garden instead of warnings.

The graying Sweet Valley businessman remembers vine-ripe tomatoes, a neighborhood of kids playing in the water and eating fish caught in Choccolocco Creek.

Fish caught from the creek now carry a "do not consume" advisory from the state health department because of excess levels of an odorless, tasteless chemical that waits in the ground — a hidden, manmade menace.

That chemical, a mixture of 209 individual components — known as polychlorinated biphenyls, or PCBs — is on the Environmental Protection Agency's probable carcinogen list. And it was produced by the ton from 1929 to 1971 at the west Anniston plant now known as Solutia.

The Monsanto Co., which became Solutia in 1997, ceased production locally before much was known about the oily substance. Only later was it found that high doses of the chemical caused cancer in laboratory animals. A total of 1.5 billion pounds of it was produced nationwide at places like the Monsanto plant.

Lawsuits have been launched alleging adverse effects to health and property from PCB contamination. In one case, property owners on Logan Martin Lake have claimed damages for depreciation. In another case, which originated in the Calhoun County Circuit Court, the Alabama Supreme Court has issued an indefinite stay, a result of scores of legal maneuverings by attorneys for and against Solutia.

Even Judge Joel Laird, who is set to preside over the local trial, does not know when, or if, the case will begin in Anniston. He does know that this will likely be the most time-consuming, complicated trial he's ever had, he said.

Human studies to look at the permanent health effects from exposure to PCBs have remained inconclusive, despite mountains of scientific evidence both

Please see Soil
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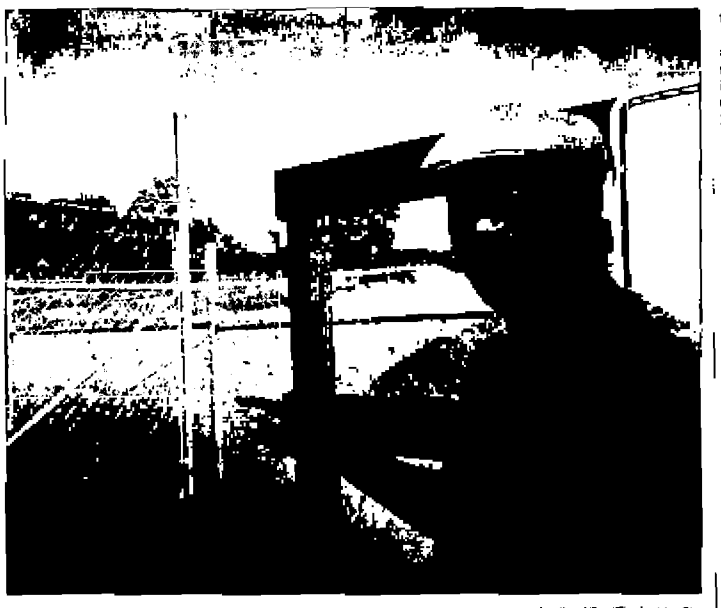
Soil: *Solutia responsible for planning, implementing and funding repairs to soil*



Jonathan Lilland/The Anniston Star

David Baker, president of Community Against Pollution, says if a person lives in West Anniston long enough. The PCBs will affect him or her.

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supporting and doubting the results from folks exposed to high levels of PCBs. Skin, liver, nose and lung problems have been documented from exposure, while developmental and neurological problems are currently under study.

Science, however, has failed to sway the mind of Harris, 61, director of the Model City Mortuary. He was tested recently for PCB content and was found to have more than 35 parts per million of it in his blood. The allowable standard set by the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration is 20 parts per million.

Harris says he doesn't have any health problems, but, like his friends and former neighbors, he worries if any of his customers were brought in before their time because of exposure to air-, water- or soil-borne PCB particles.

If you ask him to tell you what happened to the communities of Cobbtown, Montrose and Sweetwater, he'll just say that they're gone, marked now by shiny steel fences, barbed on top, and freshly dug earth that covers a great portion of the area around the plant.

"People, seems like all they can do is mow their lawn and go in their house," Harris said. "We used to drink right out of the spring and play in the ditch. All that's gone."

Solutia acknowledges producing the chemical, a highly effective insulator prized for its heat resistance. The material was used under the trade name Arochlor in electrical items such as appliances, lighting fixtures, transformers and capacitors, as well as other things.

Some PCBs are probably still in use, said Stephen Safe, a PCB expert and professor at Texas A&M University. While relatively safe when used in a closed system such as an electrical unit, PCBs are hard to get out of the environment and can linger for hundreds of years.

"It never seems to go away if you don't burn it," he said. "PCBs don't degrade over time, so they do present a long-term problem. If there's still a chance for exposure, I'd want something done about it."

Eliminating the chemical is a long, expensive process: It requires either that the contaminated soil be collected and shipped to a hazardous waste incinerator site or that the land be capped in sealed landfills, which prevents the chemical from spreading.

The company has spent more than $30 million in efforts to remedy PCB contamination in Anniston by cleaning up problem sites and buying contaminated property, according to Kevin Cahill, a Solutia spokesman. The company paid approximately $1.7 million to relocate the Bethel Missionary Baptist Church, which was near the plant. A $3 million settlement was handed down last year for the Mars Hill Baptist Church, also close by.

Solutia has located storage sites for affected soil on its property, and to stop PCBs from being washed into local waterways, it has blocked several drainage routes and constructed detention ponds to hold runoff water.

While the company is taking corrective measures, however, Solutia scientists maintain that the adverse health effects attributed to PCBs are overstated.

"The weight of the evidence says that PCBs don't cause anything more than skin problems," said Bob Kaley, director of the Environmental Affairs and Environmental Safety and Health departments at Solutia's St. Louis headquarters.

"Our feelings are that there is no strong evidence that PCBs cause cancer," he said. "We don't argue that high doses in animal studies have shown a positive correlation for cancer. Our position is that if you have sufficient studies of human beings who were exposed to PCBs, you can learn more than with animal studies."

Studies, indeed, are mixed when reviewing the health effects from prolonged PCB exposure. Nearly a dozen such analyses have split nearly evenly on finding problems. One constant, however, has been a finding that PCBs accumulate in human fatty tissue and stay around throughout one's life after exposure.

The largest study of PCBs, published in March, examined more than 7,000 workers exposed at a plant in New York. The investigation, sponsored by General Electric — which has litigation and concerns about PCBs similar to Solutia's — found no direct correlation between exposure and cancer.

Several questions, including the length and rate of exposure of the study's subjects, have led to some speculation that the report is far from conclusive. The EPA, for example, has suggested that it will not remove PCBs from its probable carcinogen list because of the new information.

"We feel there are enough limitations in the newest studies that it doesn't change our mind," said Elmer Akin, chief of the Office of Technical Services for the Waste Management Division for the Atlanta EPA offices.

"There are still a great number of reasons why we feel people should be concerned about PCBs," he said. "We're trying to find what level is harmful, and that's a difficult issue to resolve. There is evidence that the blood levels (in Anniston) are higher than background levels; whether those result in disease, that's the $64,000 question."

Different concentrations of chlorine were used for various applications of the chemical, and additional investigation found that the higher chlorine content, the more likely the chemical was to remain in the environment and the more likely it was to expose people who might happen upon a contaminated area.

Most serious exposures to those residents who didn't work at the plant was either from air or water exposure. The chemical bonds with soil and remains in sediment beds in waterways decades after the initial contamination. Locally, the sediment beds under Snow Creek and Choccolocco Creek are contaminated.

And when fish feed from the creek bottom, they can accumulate the chemical, passing it up the food chain including to humans.

For that reason, the Alabama Department of Public Health has issued fish advisories because of PCBs for all species of fish from the Choccolocco Creek and catfish over one pound in the Coosa River from Cherokee County through Calhoun and Talladega counties, into St. Clair, Shelby and Coosa counties downstream.

Efforts to repair the environmental damage have been led by the Alabama Department of Environmental Management, which has worked closely with Solutia to clean up or contain the contamination on the property surrounding the plant.

ADEM's position has been that, "although PCB exposures have occurred, the site does not currently pose an imminent threat to human health and the environment," according to the agency's most recent summary.

Solutia will be responsible for planning, implementing and funding the various steps of repair, which is expected to continue for years, according to the ADEM document. The state group is responsible for overseeing the actions and reviewing the company's plans.

Still some west Anniston residents consider PCBs a modern-day phantom with uncertain effects after a lifetime of exposure.

If anybody was exposed to the chemical, it was Okla Blankenship, she proudly claimed. She owned land and lived downstream from the [illegible] plant for the past quarter-century. She cleared clogs from the drainage creek, a waterway that later turned out to be an escape route for PCBs.

"I'm 65 years old and I've probably dug more dirt than anyone around here," Ms. Blankenship said. "If I've ever had anything from it, it doesn't show. I'm just going to keep doing what I'm doing."

Her blood remains untested for the chemical, but her bank account has been padded with payments she accepted from Solutia for nine of her properties closest to the plant. Instead of moving away, however, she still lives in the neighborhood.

And she's not alone. In fact, some families have moved in since the remediation began.

"It's kind of scary to see those fences — why would they put those up if it was safe," said Nina Ramey, who recently moved to the area from Jacksonville, along with her three young children. "They keep testing the soil and that worries me. But as far as I'm concerned, they said it's already been cleared."

Some residents are infuriated waiting on a solution from the courts, said David Baker, president of the an environmental group forming under the name of Community Against Pollution. Stalling the legal system holds the city hostage while people around him age and get sick, he said.

"If you live here long enough, you're going to be affected by it," Baker said. "This is not a myth; people around here have been exposed. I still don't know if it's safe — we're worried that our children will have these same problems."

Faith allowed residents to know about the problems of their community, and faith will get them through it, said Rev. Thomas Long, pastor at Glen Addie and St. John's United Methodist churches in Anniston. The fish advisory was the first warning area residents had about the danger from the plant, a sign from above to watch out for their health, he mentioned.

"I feel that we, as a community, have been cheated out of our property and our health," he said. "We just want our property cleaned up. The fish told us the story, and Monsanto is not listening."

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