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Tuesday, March 22, evening paper Des Moines Register
by Amy Craig

Questions For Dealer On PCB Waste

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency officials were to question a Minneapolis waste oil dealer about his suppliers Tuesday after a highly toxic substance found in Iowa was traced to him.

Richard Cable, head of the Minnesota agency's Spill Unit, says Hy Friedman will be queried on the origin of 13,600 gallons of contaminated solvents.

The solvent contained about 60 gallons of polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) which can cause birth defects, illness and death. The solvent which was discovered in Iowa last week before it was to be spread on gravel roads first was mistaken as crank case oil.

In other developments in the case Bud Karachiwala of the Iowa Dept. of Environmental Quality (DEQ) said he received unconfirmed reports that the driver of one of the tanks carrying the solvent had come down with symptoms of chloracne, a condition suffered after handling PCB.

The driver who was questioned Thursday in St. Paul, MN told police he had delivered 4 loads of the solvent to Schmitty's Road Oiling Co. in Cedar Falls.

Minnesota's Kable said Friedman apparently sold the contaminated solvent to A-1 Drain Oil Service in St. Paul and it was then stored in a tank. The solvent disappeared from the St. Paul tank and officials found 4,000 gallons had been shipped to Mankato, MN and the remainder to Iowa.

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Kable said Friedman had operated under about 9 different company names involved in waste solvent processing.

Kim Scherkenbach in charge of the Minnesota Unit's Inforcement and Compliance Division said Friedman collects waste oil from a number of firms and sells it for road or other work.

PCB is manufactured only by Monsanto Industrial Chemicals Co. of St. Louis, MO but it could be generated as a by-product from other firms, Scherkenbach said.

Much of the St. Paul PCB comes from electric transformers. According to Iowa Power and Light Co. officials here, of the estimated 3,000 transformers in Iowa only about 6 have PCB. All of those are in underground vaults and only Iowa Power employees have access to them. The PCB transformers are being replaced as they wear out.

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