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Toxic site being cleaned

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SAUGET — Barrels containing toxic waste are in worse condition than anticipated at a cleanup site on the property of Monsanto's W.G. Krummerich Plant in Sauget.

400 barrels containing toxic waste have thusfar been removed from the dump site, which was discovered by Monsanto early last year and announced to the public last November.

The barrels are part of an estimated 5,000 barrels that were dumped by Monsanto during the early 1940's.

Monsanto's plant manager Jack Molloy, said in a press conference last November that the drums were probably in good condition.

But first indications are that many of the drums, which contain several toxic chemicals, have cracks and fall apart when unearthed.

But Monsanto does not think the condition of the barrels is any cause for alarm.

"They (Monsanto officials) had made the assumption that some of the barrels would not be intact," when plans were being made to clean up the site, said Monsanto spokeswoman, Donna Vandiver.

Workers from Rollins Environmental Services of St. Louis, who were hired to clean up the waste site, wear airtight protective clothing and the site is restricted to all except those involved in the cleanup.

Preliminary tests indicate the drums contain traces of the chemical paranitrobiphenyl — a highly toxic substance used in the manufacture of pesticides. It is listed as a carcinogen by the EPA. Further testing is being conducted, Vandiver said.

Monsanto listed the chemical as probably being contained in the barrels before the cleanup began.

So far, there are "no surprises" in what has been found at the site, said Vandiver.

The waste is removed from the old barrels and sealed in Department of Transportation-approved containers then shipped by truck in groups of about 400 to Deer Park, Texas, for incineration, said Vandiver.

Monsanto now incinerates all toxic wastes produced at the plant.

Though Monsanto estimated the dump trench to be about 250 feet wide and 25 feet deep, the company will not know the exact size of the dump site until more excavation is completed, said Vandiver,

The cleanup is expected to be completed by this spring.

The site is in a field owned by Monsanto across from its Krummrich Plant on Illinois 3.

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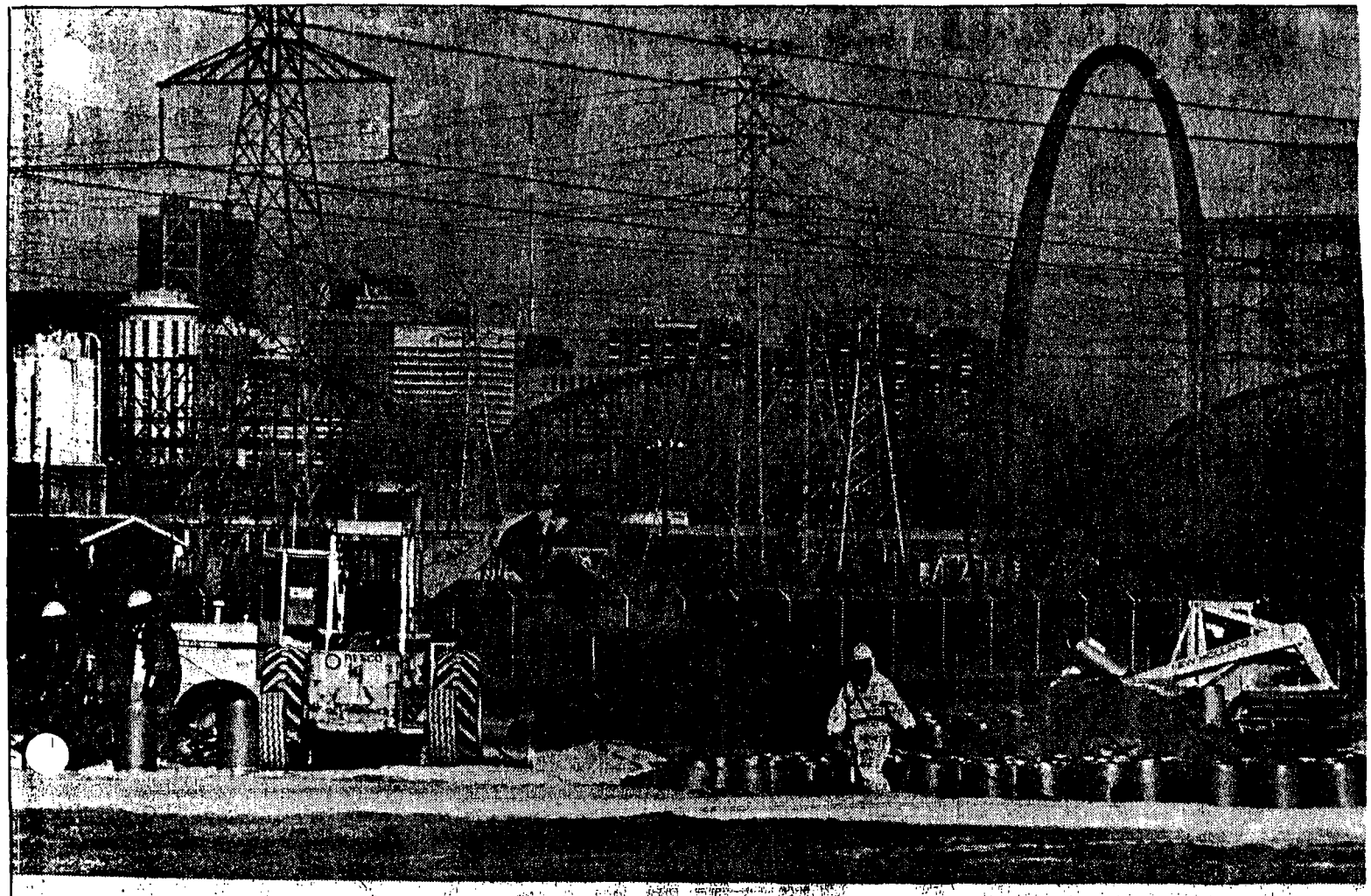

CLEANUP — Workers wearing protective clothing across from Monsanto's Krummrich Plant in Sauget clean up toxic waste left by Monsanto 40 years ago.

(Kevin Miller photo)

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