

PRESS RELEASE - Nov. 17, 2011

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LOOW RAB.com website announced

RAB Surveys Public on Corps Options to create Radioactive Waste Disposal Facility in Lewiston

The Steering Committee of the Lake Ontario Ordnance Works Restoration Advisory Board, more commonly known as the “LOOW RAB,” announces the re-launch of its website at LOOWRAB.com accompanied by a vital call for public input on whether the Town of Lewiston should become home to a radioactive waste disposal facility.

RAB Chair Bill Choboy said, “We think the public needs to know that the Army Corps of Engineers is considering three options for the long-term management of dangerous radioactive wastes at the Niagara Falls Storage Site, located one mile east of Lewiston-Porter School property. Two of the options being considered contemplate turning the Niagara Falls Storage Site (NFSS) into a permanent radioactive waste disposal facility.” The public can select an option on the LOOWRAB homepage to make their voice heard.

Chemist and Engineer Ann Roberts who leads the RAB’s technical subgroup described the issue further. “The high level of radioactivity in material at the NFSS, left over from development of the atomic bomb in the 1940’s and ‘50’s, requires it be handled remotely, by special equipment. If not removed, the 2,200 Curies of Radium-226 and its decay products along with other radioactive materials at the NFSS would pose a major environmental/health hazard to the Niagara region for thousands of years.”

Former Lewiston Town Councilwoman and Emeritus RAB member, Joan E. Gipp, recalled a similar federal proposition from 30 years ago. “In 1982, the Dept. of Energy proposed turning the Niagara Falls Storage Site into a radioactive waste disposal facility for this part of the U.S. With enormous effort, the Town Board and residents defeated the proposal. At the time [early 1980’s,] radioactive material was transferred into what we were told would be very temporary storage at the NFSS; a WWII-era basement that was repaired and then capped with clay. We were also told it would take up to 10 years to remove these dangerous wastes to safer long-term storage or disposal in a dry climate. But 25 years later, we are still waiting for the federal government to fulfill its promise to this region.”

RAB member Nils Olsen said, “We’ve seen what happens when the government sites disposal facilities, initially to address local wastes. Inevitably they’re expanded to serve larger areas of the country. And in this case, none of the radioactive wastes at the NFSS were even produced here.” RAB members Al Bax of Lewiston and Beverly Van Deusen of Youngstown also encourage public comments. “We hope residents will go to the LOOWRAB.com website and take a moment to share their views.”

Other Announcements:

The RAB encourages the public to attend the [U.S. Army Corps of Engineers](http://www.army.mil) Nov. 30th public workshop regarding its Phase IV investigation for chemicals and explosives on abandoned LOOW wastewater plant property. The meeting starts at 6:00p.m., at the Lewiston Senior Center, 4361 Lower River Rd.

The next meeting of the [LOOW RAB Steering Committee](http://LOOWRAB.com) will be on Tuesday, December 6th, at 6:00P.M. in the Alumni Room at the Community Resource Center, which is located at the northern end of the Lew-Port Central School District campus. Members are encouraged to attend and the public is welcome.

The mission of the Lake Ontario Ordnance Works (LOOW) Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) is to influence the investigation and promote the satisfactory remediation of the entire LOOW site, including all publicly and privately owned parcels. Convened in 1999, the RAB is a forum for the public and all stakeholders for the exchange of information as well as open and independent dialog concerning Army Corps of Engineers environmental investigations and remediation activities at the LOOW site.

The LOOW site consists of approximately 7,500 acres of publicly and privately owned parcels located in the Towns of Lewiston and Porter that were once owned by the federal government and used for military weapons production-related operations started during WWII. It includes the 191-acre Niagara Falls Storage Site, which still houses radioactive waste material from atomic weapons production in the 1940's and 1950's.