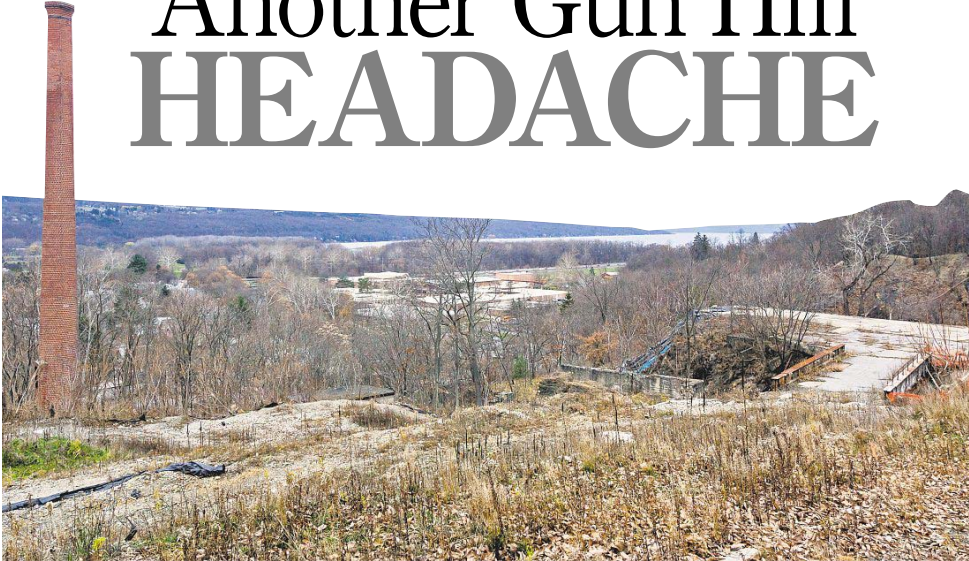


TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 2012

Another Gun Hill HEADACHE



The northern half of the polluted former Ithaca Gun factory site overlooks Ithaca High School, center, and Cayuga Lake in the distance. SIMON WHEELER / STAFF PHOTO

EPA: Three sites recontaminated with lead after cleanups

By Andrew Casler
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ITHACA — New test results show that lead has contaminated parts of the Ithaca Falls Overlook site on Lake Street that were previously considered free of the toxic metal, according to the city.

Officials from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency said three 25-foot-wide sections of lead-contaminated soil were originally cleaned up in 2002. However, the lead migrated from uncleaned uphill sections adjacent to the former Ithaca Gun factory site, again contaminating the parcels, according a preliminary report on environmental contamination at the site.

"From what we understand, the lead has not migrated off site or down into the gorge area or places where the public has access, but we have initial evidence that there has been recontamination of areas that were cleaned and vacuumed by the EPA," said Nels Bohn, the director of community development for the Ithaca Urban Renewal Agency.

The lead is between the now-demolished Ithaca Gun Factory and the parking lot for Gun Hill Residences. Lead concentrations were found at 10,000 parts per million in recent soil tests, according to Bohn, though some soils hold lower levels.

Bohn said the lead contamination extends several feet underground in some areas. Lead-contaminated soil was expected, Bohn said, but the area of contaminated ground was expected to be smaller.

The soil testing comes with a complete



Lead pellets sit in a depression just below the site of the former Ithaca Gun factory. It was found in 2006 when *The Ithaca Journal* and **Walter Hang, of Toxics Targeting**, tested soil samples. FILE PHOTO

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NELS BOHN

Director of community development for the Ithaca Urban Renewal Agency

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2 Senate races still not decided

Control of N.Y.
chamber at stake

By Jon Campbell
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ALBANY — Control of the state Senate could come down to a few thousand paper ballots in Ulster County, as counting in tightly contested Senate districts entered the final stretch Monday.

Ulster was the last of five counties to begin tallying absentee and affidavit ballots in the sprawling 46th district, where Republican Assemblyman George Amedore's lead over Democrat Cecilia Tkaczyk was down to 745 votes as of Monday evening.

Elections officials began counting the 4,300 remaining ballots Monday morning. By the evening, about 3,000 were left. Amedore opened the day ahead by 920 votes.

The winner will represent the far-reaching district, which stretches west to Montgomery County and east to Ulster. The outcome, however, will resonate statewide, potentially deciding which party controls the state Legislature's upper chamber — along with all of the perks and legislative benefits that come with it.

"We're very confident that Amedore is going to win, and we think that when we get done, we'll have a real good indication that George Amedore is going to be elected the next senator," Sen. Thomas Libous, R-Binghamton, said on WGDJ-AM. Libous heads his conference's election efforts.

A win by Amedore would give Republicans the 32 votes necessary for a majority in the 63-seat Senate, buoyed by support from Senator-elect Simcha Felder, a Brooklyn Democrat, who said he will vote with Republicans. If Tkaczyk comes out on top, Democrats would have to reconvene with the four-member Independent Democratic Conference — a caucus of Democrats who broke from their main party conference last year — to take control.

The GOP currently has a 32-29 edge in the Senate, with an additional seat added to the chamber next year. A conference must have a majority of votes to install a leader for the chamber, who

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Gun Hill

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investigation on environmental contamination at the site, with water-monitoring wells, wildlife and soil vapor also getting tested.

A history of contamination

The contamination remains after more than a decade spent attempting to remediate a century's worth of industrial pollution left by the now-demolished factory. The study site was owned by the now-closed Ithaca Gun Company from 1885 to 1986.

The latest discovery is at least the second in the last six years that provoked pledges by public officials that the site will be cleaned up.

After a lead cleanup was completed in 2004, The Ithaca Journal and Toxics Targeting, of Ithaca, obtained soil samples at the site in 2006. Tests showed levels of lead con-

tamination as high as 184,000 parts per million. Arsenic was found in concentrations of 2,210 parts per million.

Both concentrations were well above federal and state guidelines. The lead in concentrations was 460 times higher than the 2004 cleanup goal set by the EPA. Arsenic levels were almost 300 times higher than state soil clean-up objectives. Levels of cadmium and chromium also exceeded the standard.

Following that 2006 report, city, county and state officials pledged to clean up the contamination to prevent it from spreading elsewhere on the site.

The one-acre overlook site was purchased by the City of Ithaca in March 2000, when on-site pollution was thought to be less extensive.

Significant aid

Industrial pollution from the gun factory has drawn mountains of cash in grants.

After \$4.8 million was spent toward cleaning the

site in 2004, New York state in 2008 awarded a \$2.3 million grant to aid in the demolition and redevelopment of the old factory site.

Also in 2008, the state awarded the City of Ithaca \$702,000 toward further cleaning.

Now, the city is looking to obtain an EPA Brownfield Cleanup Grant for remediation. The grant application deadline is Monday.

Though barium, asbestos and PCB have been discovered at the site, lead, in the form of dust and pellets, is the pollutant of greatest concern, according to Bohn.

"We think by spring, we're going to have very full information about the investigation," Bohn said. "We'll be able to develop an alternative and look at a comprehensive remediation strategy."

During a November Common Council meeting, City of Ithaca Alderperson Cynthia Brock said costs to fully remediate the site could range from \$1 million to \$5 million.

It's easy to give yourself or someone else, the gift of ultimate

comfort this season

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