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Local News - Wednesday, March 2, 2005

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Public meeting called to hear Emerson results

JENNIE DALEY
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ITHACA -- The public will have two opportunities to learn more about testing and investigations concerning environmental pollutants from the Emerson Power Transmission site on Thursday.

With an availability session from 4-6 p.m. followed by a public meeting scheduled from 7-9 p.m., officials will be on hand to answer questions and present findings. Both events will take place at the Tompkins County Human Services Building at 320 W. State St.

The New York State Departments of Environmental Conservation and Health are organizing the talks to present their analysis of the first round of test data taken from homes on South Hill below the plant.

Testing was initiated last year when trichlorethylene, or TCE, was suspected of having drifted from a leaking firewater reservoir on the Emerson site to homes downhill from the factory. Since then, the air in 49 homes has been tested for toxic soil vapors and more than one home has had a vapor mitigation system installed.

TCE is a concern because it can impact the central nervous system if inhaled in large quantities. The solvent was used by the Morse Chain Company, which used to occupy the Emerson site, to degrease chain made at the plant.

An announcement of the meeting said that the air testing program and next steps in the environmental investigation will be on the agenda. During the availability session officials will answer individuals' questions. A formal presentation will take place at 7 p.m. A question and answer session will follow the presentation.

Contact: jdaley@ithaca.gannett.com

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