

Plum Brook test results delayed

■ **Extent of contamination won't be known until June**

By MICHAEL TURNBELL
Staff Writer

PERKINS TWP. — Results from tests to determine the extent of contamination from the former Plum Brook Ordnance Works won't be available as soon as hoped, a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers official said Tuesday.

Initially, the corps hoped the results would be ready in March or April. But Rick Meadows, project manager at the corps' Huntington, W.Va. district office, said a harsh winter and funding problems have pushed the release of the results back to June.

Meadows said the corps hired a Knoxville, Tenn. company last fall to conduct tests on 100 acres that Erie County Commissioners and Juvenile Court Judge Donald Ramsey once eyed as the home for a new county detention home and regional juvenile rehabilitation center.

Meadows said the site was chosen ahead of several others because of the county's interest in it. The site, located off a long-closed section of Campbell Street and part of a 600-acre tract declared as surplus property by

NASA, is no longer being considered for either juvenile facility because of concerns over the cost of extending water and sewers.

Meadows said the corps believes explosives and other materials were burned near the site when the Army decommissioned and decontaminated Plum Brook Ordnance Works after World War II, but won't be sure until the tests are completed.

"It's not something you can see on the ground walking around," Meadows said.

The corps is in the process of awarding other contracts to conduct soil and groundwater tests in two other sites on the Plum Brook grounds.

The corps has not indicated how long the tests or cleanup could take or how much it will cost. Meadows said it all depends on what the corps finds.

The General Services Administration may screen proposals from federal, state, county and local governments, in that order, to reuse the 600 acres of surplus property once it is declared no threat to health or human safety.

The release of the surplus property won't affect NASA, which acquired most of the original Plum Brook property in the early 1960s and today operates Plum Brook Research Station, a satellite facility of Lewis Research Center in Cleveland.

Corps wants input on Plum Brook cleanup

■ **Public invited to Feb. 21 meeting at Perkins Township Hall**

By MICHAEL TURNBELL
Staff Writer

PERKINS TWP. — Representatives of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will visit the area in two weeks on a fact-finding mission to hear concerns and answer questions about the cleanup of the former Plum Brook Ordnance Works.

Diane Folk, technical manager at the corps' Huntington, W.Va. district office, said the corps tentatively will meet with residents and officials from 2 to 5 and 8:30 to 8:30 p.m. Feb. 21 at Perkins Township Hall, 5420 Milan Road.

Folk said the visit is part of the corps' Community Relations Plan.

"We want to hear their concerns, whether they be groundwater or surface or ordnance or that type of thing," she said. "The whole point is to give people a say

or a voice in what we're doing."

Folk is working on obtaining mailing labels from the Erie County Board of Elections to notify households in Perkins, Oxford, Milan and Huron townships about the meeting.

Folk said corps officials will spend the rest of the week meeting one-on-one with people and establishing a location to store public records about the cleanup and background about the former explosives plant.

A year ago, the corps placed a legal notice in the Register looking for employees who worked at Plum Brook or residents who either lost land to the government or lived near the plant to provide background.

Rick Meadows, project manager at the corps' Huntington, W.Va. district office, said the notice drew little response. But one employee who worked at Plum Brook and for NASA did confirm much of what the corps already had heard, Meadows added.

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FAX TRANSMITTAL

of pages 1

To: *Diane Folk*
Department: *CEDEH-ED-DC*
Fax: *304-529-5591*

From: *Ann Bauer*
Phone: *419-621-3233*
Fax: *419-621-3236*

5099-101
NSN 7540-01-317-7968
GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION