

Be ready for chemical mishaps, towns told

How prepared is your community to handle a hazardous waste emergency?

The question was the topic of concern at a recent seminar sponsored by the Ann Arbor Hazardous Waste Management Forum.

"The size of communities doesn't matter when talking about the potential for a hazardous waste emergency," said state Rep. Charles Mueller, R-Linden, before the gathering of fire and emergency response officials.

The legislator, a longtime member of the house conservation and environment committee, noted chemical-related accidents can occur in both rural

and urban localities.

In urban areas, garden centers are potential for waste accidents because of the large amounts of chemicals they store in the form of insecticides," Mueller said.

"As a farmer by trade, at this time of the year I probably have 10,000 pounds of fairly toxic chemicals stored in my orchard. It's pretty dangerous stuff. The local fire department knows what they are, where they are, and what to do in case of fire."

HAZARDOUS WASTES are defined as chemical substances which can

harm, contaminate or kill living organisms because they have ignitable, corrosive, reactive or toxic characteristics.

Improperly stored, transported or disposed of hazardous wastes can cause environmental damage or harm public health. The wastes may enter the ecosystem as groundwater and surface water contamination, air pollution, spills, indirectly through poisoning via the food chain, and fire and explosion. The toxic gas leak in Bhopal, India, was an extreme example of a hazardous waste emergency.

Mueller pointed out accidents are

sometimes caused by substances transported through the community rather than by substances stored locally. In such cases, local officials will be the first on the scene. The legislator noted the desperate need for training local personnel to handle the hazardous waste involved.

"I think the state has been lax in helping set up training for local units of government," said Mueller.

THE GENERATORS and transporters of hazardous waste materials must also share the responsibility of public and environmental safety, said speaker James Harless, ERG Inc., Ann Arbor.

Harless said federal law requires all large hazardous waste generators (1000 kilograms per month) to notify local governments about their operation, and to develop emergency response plans with police and fire department personnel.

"A vast majority of generators aren't even aware that they have to have a contingency plan," said Harless. He noted small generators (100 kilograms or more per month) will soon be included under the federal requirement.



our land
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Several program speakers mentioned the issue of liability in reference to hazardous waste accidents.

"Because of no-fault, there are lots of lawsuits," said Frank Kruska, director of criminal justice planning in Jackson. "Governments have money, so they are subject to being sued."

HE EMPHASIZED the importance of providing good training to local response teams to ensure against liability suits.

Gary Backman, program coordinator for the day-long seminar, commented on the timeliness of discussing hazardous waste emergencies.

"As far as I know, this was the first program to address the issue with municipalities across the state," said Backman. "All municipalities need to learn what they should be concerned with in handling hazardous waste emergencies. The number of potential emergency situations will increase."

Ex-judge named to Oakland bench

A former circuit court judge from Petoskey, Martin B. Breighner, has been appointed to fill a vacancy in the Oakland County Circuit Court.

Breighner will serve as a visiting judge, replacing Judge George LaPlata, who recently was appointed to the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan in Detroit, announced Chief Judge Francis X. O'Brien of the circuit court.

Breighner's background includes 10 years of service in Petoskey; where he had been appointed to the 33rd Judicial Circuit Court by then Gov. William Milliken. He held that post until December 1984.

On numerous occasions he has served on the Court of Appeals and Court of Claims as a visiting judge.

Breighner is a 1952 graduate of the

University of Michigan Law School. He was in private practice in Ann Arbor and Petoskey before becoming a circuit judge. During World War II he served in the United States Navy.

He is the author of numerous articles for the Michigan Bar Journal. A resident of Petoskey, he is married with three children and one grandchild.

State slates work on Oakland roads

The Michigan Department of Transportation has awarded several work projects and road improvements for Oakland County roadways. Among them:

• The department awarded a \$1.74 million work project for the reconstruction of a short stretch of 12 Mile Road from Northwestern Highway to Telegraph in Southfield.

The award for the 1.4-mile stretch of road was made to a Wixom firm, the South Hill Construction Co. The project is expected to be completed by June 1986.

• In other action, there's been a delay in a major improvement project slated for the Detroit Zoo in Royal Oak, in connection with the construction of the I-496 extension.

The Michigan Department of Transportation declined to award the work project recently when the lowest bidder came in at 50 percent above the department's pre-bid estimate.

The project includes construction of a parking ramp, administration building, concessionaire building, pedestrian bridge, front entrance, ticket booths, zoo train station and landscaping and a noise wall along 10 Mile Road.

• In Farmington Hills, a \$156,587 bid was awarded to a Livonia firm, Peter A. Basile Sons Inc. for the resurfacing with gravel shoulders of three-tenths of a one-mile stretch of Orchard Lake Road at 11 Mile Road. The project is expected to be completed in September 1985.

• A \$19,879 freeway widening job was awarded to B-L Landscaping Co. of Oak Park for six miles of I-696 Freeway from Lahser Road east to the Grand Trunk Western railroad in Southfield and other communities.

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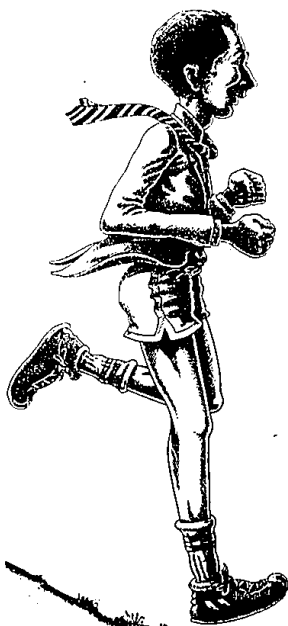
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