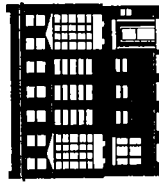


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Lawn excavations to begin in coming weeks EPA plans to start with 28 lawns in Templeton

By SEAN DUBOIS
NEWS STAFF WRITER

TEMPLETON — U.S. Environmental Protection Agency officials and members of the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection spoke to a crowd of about 25 townspeople Tuesday night

explaining the process of removing contaminated soil from residential properties centered around the former Temple-Stuart factory.

During the meeting, which took place at the American Legion Building on Central Street, EPA Project Coordinator Michael

Barry told residents that his team will begin excavating 28 lawns beginning in about a week in a project to rid home owners' soil of polychlorinated biphenyls. PCBs are manmade chemicals that may cause certain types of cancer.

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EPA plans to finish this year

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Barry said his team will excavate the first foot of surface soil from the top of the 28 yards and retest for PCBs at the new depth, to make sure that no additional dirt needs to be removed, he said. In 2003, 35 residential properties were tested for PCB contamination and the EPA plans to test at least another 24 properties in the area beginning in September.

The EPA's plan is to excavate two lawns at a time and backfill and restore the properties before moving on to the next set until the 28 properties are complete. Barry said that a team of 40 people are working on the excavation project, but residents should expect to see no more than 14 people in the area at a single time.

The EPA completed its two-year cleanup project of removing asbestos and PCBs from the Temple-Stuart factory facility, located on a

23-acre parcel at 4 Holman St., in June and now the main focus is the residential properties, according to Barry. He said he hopes the PCB removal from the 28 residential properties will be completed by December.

"Hopefully, the weather will hold out enough for us to get our work done quickly," said Barry. "This is a big project for us."

When the 28-lawn excavation project is complete, more than 6,200 cubic yards of contaminated soil will be shipped out of the area in 300 to 400 truckloads, according to Barry. The cost of the total PCB removal project is expected to reach about \$4 million of federal funds when the Temple-Stuart area cleanup is completed.

Greg Voisine has lived on Harris Street for the past eight years. His home is among the first to be excavated by the EPA team.

"Nobody wants to have their lawn dug up, but it's worth it when you look at the long-term effects that this project will have on our health," Voisine said. "So far, the EPA officials I've been dealing with have been extremely willing to work with me during the inconvenience."

The PCBs found in residential properties may have come from the period when the Temple-Stuart facility burned oils containing the contaminants, said Barry.

The factory was owned and operated from 1910 to 1993 by the Temple-Stuart Corp., which specialized in furniture construction. In 1993, the American Tissue Mills of Massachusetts bought the property, but today no longer operates at the site after declaring bankruptcy.

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