

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
POLLUTION/SITUATION REPORT  
Old Saratoga Hospital (RV2) - Polrep/Sitrep



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
Region II

**Subject:** SITREP #21  
**SPECIAL #5: Asbestos Remediation Activities Resume in Main Building  
Old Saratoga Hospital (RV2)  
A-25L  
Providence Township, NY  
Latitude: 43.1096093 Longitude: -74.0195896**

**To:**  
**Thru:**  
**From:** Paul L. Kahn, OSC  
**Date:** 5/23/2016  
**Reporting Period:**

**Executive Summary**

The Site is the former Saratoga County Homestead Hospital that opened in 1913 as a tuberculosis sanitarium. It is located on approximately 25 acres about 10 miles west of Saratoga Springs, NY. When a medical cure for TB was discovered the need for sanitariums was eliminated and the hospital eventually closed in 1960. It reopened a few years later as a County senior center but closed in 1979. The property was sold in the 1980s to a developer, but plans fell through and the building was abandoned and fell into total disrepair. Over the intervening years it was a magnet for the occult and thrill seekers who considered the building haunted. Amateur horror movies and You Tube videos were made inside the building. The ground floor windows and doorways were open and the remaining interior walls are covered with graffiti. Inside are rooms with stained mattresses, food containers, beer bottles etc. In 2014 a fire occurred and the structure was partially damaged. Fire department officials toured the building after the fire and discovered friable asbestos pipe and duct insulation, drums and smaller containers of paint and chemicals. To the rear of the main building is a mechanical graveyard with old boilers and pipes with friable asbestos insulation hanging off. The site is located in a State-designated wetlands and is near a creek within the Great Sacandaga Lake Watershed. On May 20, 2015 the site was referred to EPA from the NYSDEC for an assessment and possible Superfund removal action.

In August 2015 an emergency removal action was initiated (RV1) for abandoned chemical containers found in a waste water treatment plant on the Site and also inside the main hospital building. The Site was authorized on 12/31/15 for a CERCLA time-critical asbestos removal action RV2. Removal activities commenced on 1/26/2016.

**1. Introduction**

**1.1 Background**

<b>Site Number:</b>	A25L	<b>Contract Number:</b>	EP15-S2-02
<b>D.O. Number:</b>	027	<b>Action Memo Date:</b>	12/31/2015
<b>Response Authority:</b>	CERCLA	<b>Response Type:</b>	Time-Critical
<b>Response Lead:</b>	EPA	<b>Incident Category:</b>	Removal Action
<b>NPL Status:</b>	Non NPL	<b>Operable Unit:</b>	
<b>Mobilization Date:</b>	1/25/2016	<b>Start Date:</b>	1/25/2016
<b>Demob Date:</b>		<b>Completion Date:</b>	
<b>CERCLIS ID:</b>	NYN000201779	<b>RCRIS ID:</b>	
<b>ERNS No.:</b>		<b>State Notification:</b>	

**1.2 Incident Objectives**

Safely remove all Asbestos Containing Material (ACM) from pipes and flat surfaces from the main building and from the former steam plant on the Site.

**1.3 Critical Resource Needs**

No information available at this time.

**1.4 Strategic Considerations**

No information available at this time.

**2. Current Activities**

## 2.1 Operations Section

### 2.1.1 Narrative

### 2.1.2 Response Actions to Date

#### **Current information is in bold font.**

On August 3 - 5 2015 EPA and it's technical contractor, Weston Solutions, acquired 23 samples of suspected ACM from various locations inside the main building and from 2 locations outside the main building. The samples were send to a laboratory for analysis. In addition to the sampling the contractor measured the length and diameter of insulated pipes in the basement and first floor in the main building.

On 9/16 EPA and tacom with the EPA removal support contractor, Weston Solutions, flew a drone over the main building at the Site and recorded the physical condition of the roof. The overflight lasted for lasted for about 10 minutes and the drone recorded about 3 minutes of footage of the roof. The overflight confirmed that the roof has collapsed in three places and there are at least a dozen smaller holes in the roof. One section, approximately 10 feet X 20 feet is shown in a dotted outline in what appears to be the beginning of an imminent collapse. RST will overlay the location of the holes and collapsed areas on a scale drawing of the building so that the rooms underneath can be blocked off for H & S concerns.

On 9/17 the OSC met with attorneys for Saratoga County and the Providence Town Supervisor at the Site. The current situation with the site was discussed and the guests were given a brief demonstration of drone ops.

On 9/17 Weston Solutions techs acquired 10 additional samples of suspected ACM. Samples were processed and will be transported to the lab on 9/18 for analysis.

Results of the second 'round of ACM sampling that occurred on 9/16/2015 have been received. This 'round of sampling was done solely on the first floor of the main building. Sample results indicated the presence of Chrysotile asbestos in concentrations ranging from 5.4% to 66.8%.

On 10/6/2015 counsel for Saratoga County informed the OSC that youths were accessing the contaminated main building in increasing numbers. In response to this information the OSC activated the ERRS contractor to initiate site security as follows: subcontract for repairs and upgrade to existing damages perimeter fencing, install plywood panels over doorways and basement windows, and post asbestos warning signs on fence and main building. ERRS contractor expected to be on Site by 10/13/2015.

ERRS contractor mobilized to the Site on 10/13/15 and purchased supplies needed to board up doors and ground floor windows. Work commenced on 10/14/2015 and continued until 10/21/2015. ERRS secured all openings to the main building, boarded up the abandoned caretakers house which had been vandalized, and also secured the WWTP which had previously contained 31 drums of hazardous substances. The WWTP contains 4 open top, water-filled process tanks which pose a drowning hazard to the public who may access this building. ERRS also cleared underbrush and small trees from around the main building, creating a swath of open space which will make trespassers more visible if they attempt to enter the building. ERRS posted asbestos warning signs at all entrances to the main building and on the perimeter fence.

ERRS is keeping one Tech at the site during daylight hours for security purposes from 10/23 to 10/26, and from 10/30 to 11/2, Halloween weekend. Tech was directed to call 911 if anyone attempts to force entry into the main building.

A trash roll-off will be ordered for the week of 10/26 and debris around the site and caretakers house will be collected for disposal.

Two full 150 pound LPG gas cylinders that were discovered in the weeds two weeks ago were picked up by a local gas supplier at no cost to the Government.

One fence contractor submitted a bid for \$32,000 for fence repairs and upgrades. Bid response being reviewed by OSC. As a possible alternative to the fence contractor, ERRS is providing the OSC with a cost-estimate for in-house fence repairs and upgrades. If this is a more cost-effective way to address the needed fence repairs the ERRS contractor will proceed with its own resources to make the necessary repairs.

Site was secured and demobed at 1100 hours on 10/21/2015.

Action Memo was signed on 12/31/2015. Paperwork associated with putting funding into site account has been processed. Contractor will mobilize crew and equipment to the site on 1/25/2016.

On 1/26/2016 ERRS contractor personnel arrived on the Site. The Town of Providence and Saratoga County assisted site mobilization by supplying sand and rock salt to clear the command post staging area. A skid steer was delivered and used to clear ice and roadway along the rear of the main building. ERRS picked up supplies to complete repairs to perimeter fence. Additional fence supplies will be delivered on 1/27. Arrangements underway to have office and crew trailers to the site by 1/29, porta johns, and temporary generator. Bids for electrician to install temporary pole and meter box issued. Site set up activities will continue through 2/5 when comms are expected to be operational.

ERRS has begun to transfer existing bags of ACM from the basement, through a decon area, into lined roll-offs where they will be staged for off site disposal. The bags are frozen in ice in the basement and are currently difficult to remove without damaging the already fragile bags. ERRS is, in the meantime, beginning to remove ACM pipe insulation until the bags are more easily handled without breaking.

On 3/17/2016 the first two roll-offs containing bagged ACM waste were shipped off the Site. This amounted

to almost 50 cubic yards of ACM waste. The waste was transported to an approved asbestos landfill in Seneca County, NY for permanent disposal. In attendance to mark the occasion was a reporter with the *Daily Gazette* who interviewed the OSC and took photographs for the newspaper. Public officials from Providence Township were also present to view the first shipment of asbestos waste.

A chronic problem that we are experiencing at the Site is trespassers and kids trying to break into the main building. Since EPA mobilized to the Site in December the incidents have diminished, mostly to our presence there, but also because we repaired/replaced the fence, cut back underbrush that afforded cover, posted warning signs and sealed ground floor doors and windows, and posted observers at the site at random times on weekends. Similar preventive measures were also implemented at the vacant care-takers house on the site which had been severely vandalized. ERRS will be installing video cameras and hi-intensity lights on the main building, and the County Sheriff's Dept. has been alerted to the situation. The OSC advised the Sheriff that he would sign a trespassing complaint against anyone apprehended on the property. This is the only way to ensure that the public does not access the building and become exposed to asbestos contamination.

ERRS progress to date has resulted in approximately 90% of the ACM being removed from the basement of the main building and staged in double-lined bags in a lined and covered roll-off. The second shipment of 25 cu. yds. of bagged ACM will leave the Site during the week of March 28th for disposal in the Ontario County Land Fill.

The OSC dropped off 100 two-color information flyers at the Galway Jr./Sr. High School and requested that they be distributed to home room teachers and read to the students. The flyer was developed jointly by Region 2 PAD and the OSC. The flyers provide a history of the Site, explain EPA's clean-up goals, and provide basic health information relating to the dangers of exposure to asbestos. The intent was to inform and hopefully help deter youths from trespassing in the building.

A reporter and photographer from the *Daily Gazette*, a newspaper of general circulation in Schenectady NY, visited the site on the occasion of the transporting of the first load of ACM off Site for disposal. Attending the event were two elected officials from Providence Township and OSC Carl Pellegrino. The paper published a news article about the Site and EPA's remediation efforts. A copy of the article can be found in the Documents Section.

ERRS continues to remove ACM from the basement of the main building. The sole area in the basement that has to be addressed is the far East end in what is the newer side of the building. This area is not on the building plans and some of the areas where there is ACM is difficult to access due to partially collapsed walls and a labyrinth of small and odd shaped rooms in that area. ERRS will enter the building from the exterior doors on the east end and will do confined space entries to access ACM in those difficult areas. The basement area is about 95% remediated.

At the direction of the OSC, ERRS established a fenced-off personnel Exclusion Area around the perimeter of the building where the façade is loose and bricks and other debris are falling.

The OSC brought 100 copies of an informational flyer to the Galway Library, the repository for the Admin Record for this removal action. The flyer was developed jointly with the OSC and staff of the EPA Region II Public Affairs Division. It provides information on the history of the Site, the nature of the EPA removal action, health related information pertaining to asbestos exposure, and contact information for the Site/OSC. Copies of this flyer were also distributed at Town Hall and are available at the Command Post.

The second shipment of ACM left the Site on 4/7/2016, consisting of 30 cu. yds. of asbestos waste. ERRS continues to remove ACM from the basement in the main building. The basement is about 98% finished and ERRS is focusing on removing the remaining ACM from difficult to access basement areas on the north side of the building. This will require a Confined Space Entry into areas with limited access/egress. ERRS crew is reviewing CSE procedures and a CSE permit will be issued prior to entry into affected work areas. Prior to entry, ERRS will use torpedo heaters to melt the 2 inches of ice on the floor in those areas. Air monitoring for CO and O2 will be performed in any area where heaters were operating; this is in addition to routine air monitoring required by a CSE permit.

On 4/7/2016 a subcontracted structural engineer toured the two upper floors of the main building with ERRS to assess the integrity of those areas. His report will photo-document areas of concern from a safety standpoint and make recommendation as to how to reduce/eliminate any risk associated with compromised floors, walls, ceilings etc. The engineer has already identified 3 rooms on the top floor which are unsafe to enter without first making major repairs. However, these rooms do not have any ACM so they will be partitioned-off to prevent entry. During the engineering inspection living quarters were discovered in an area over the main entrance lobby. It is a full apartment accessible only from the roof, and ACM insulation was observed in this area. This ACM will be remediated when ERRS begins work on the second floor of the main building.

No incidents of trespass or vandalism have occurred, indicating that perhaps the word has gotten out that it is unsafe for curiosity seekers to enter the main building.

Electrician will run a second power line to the Decon trailer at a fraction of the cost of renting a second generator. This will allow ERRS to use the existing generator powering the Decon trailer to power additional heaters and lights in the Hot Zone.

New photos of workers in the Hot Zone have been added to the Images section of this web site

On Saturday 4/9/2016 the RM reported to the OSC that two cars were spotted at the Site by ERRS contractor personnel who were monitoring the Site. The monitors took photos of the license plates, one from NYS and one from CT. The drivers had entered the main building but left when they saw the two ERRS monitors. A report was filed with the Saratoga County Sheriff but the deputy taking the report said that it was unlikely that the individuals would appear for what was a ticket offense only. As follow-up to the incident the OSC contacted the Dean of Students at Skidmore College (Saratoga Springs) and was able to

confirm that the kids who trespassed were in fact students at the college. The OSC met with the Director of Security and learned that there were 7 students involved, all of which, and their parents, had been contacted by the school and advised to bag the clothes they wore inside the building for disposal. The college brought in their asbestos remediation contractor who will vacuum the student's cars and the common areas where the students went after the Saturday incident. The parents were advised that they will be billed for the cost of the remediation contractor. The OSC gave the Director copies of the public information flyer that has been distributed to the schools near the Site. The Director said he would try to disseminate this information to the rest of the student body. In the aftermath of the incident ERRS boarded up a number of windows on the first floor which had been breached by the students.

ERRS continues to remove ACM from the last area in basement on the north end.

The Site will be temporarily demobilized for the week of April 18th. One ERRS Tech will be at the Site for 4 hours each day to monitor for trespassers.

Removal activities resumed on Monday 4/25/2016. Two incidents of trespassing occurred during the demobe, including two youngsters who were observed climbing the perimeter fence on Sunday. The Sheriff's dept was contacted and given license plate information. Sheriff will ID and contact the two families involved and advise them that their children may have contaminated their cars and residences with asbestos.

A forced entry event occurred during the night of 4-25/4-26. Vandals tracked through the basement using glow sticks to mark their trail, located a locked ERRS tool box and stole power tools. As a result, the OSC has decided to initiate off-hours unarmed security guard service for seven days a week. This will add considerable cost to the removal action.

The OSC photo-documented a roof-top apartment discovered by ERRS when the structural engineer did his walk-thru of the main building. There is approximately 100 linear feet of ACM pipe insulation, most of it visible but difficult to access (see photos in Image section.) In addition to access problems, the roof is perforated in a number of places, requiring ERRS to devise a path from the roof access door to the apartment, a distance of approximately 30 feet. ERRS will consider laying plywood over 2 X 8 lumber over the underlying main roof beam, the most solid support underneath the roof. Remediating this area will require about a week of work and the use of a Lull lift for supplies and bagged ACM.

The Confined Space areas in the basement were entered on 5/5. ERRS successfully completed removing all ACM insulation in the basement area. The third shipment of 30 cu. yds. of bagged ACM was shipped for disposal to the Ontario County LF on 5/5. As of this SITREP 85 cu. yds. of ACM have been shipped off Site for disposal.

Based on manufacturer's literature found on the Internet, the two old boilers in the ruins of the former steam plant have been identified as Kewanee Firebox boilers, models #481 and #484, weighing 10,400 lbs. and 15,800 lbs respectively. This information will be used to select the excavator needed to remove the boilers from the rubble so the ACM insulation can be stripped.

As of COB on 5/5 all asbestos insulation in the basement of the main building has been removed. ERRS is in the process of breaking down temporary poly barriers and moving scaffolds, HEPA filters, ladders, negative air fans etc. to the first floor. ERRS has already started prepping the first floor by clearing debris, affixing poly to open windows, and plugging holes in floors. Removal activities on the first floor will begin next week and should take four weeks to complete. Although there is less ACM insulation on the first floor than there was in the basement, it will be difficult to reach. Based on the recent structural engineer's report, much of the ACM insulation is located in rooms with damaged floors and ceilings. In some cases, prior to removing the ACM tons of debris have to be removed to reduce the weight on damaged flooring. Consequently, the remediation of ACM on this floor will take about 4 weeks to complete.

At approximately 1800 hours on 5/13 the brick and concrete parapet along the south end of the building collapsed (see POLREP #18). Bricks and concrete fell across the door leading to the bagged ACM decon station. None of the crew was on the Site at the time, and the security guard notified the ERRS response manager. After conferring with the OSC the response manager decided that a Safety Stand down would be in effect until such time that the overall situation could be evaluated by the OSC and RM and new tactics put in place.

On 5/16 ERRS and the OSC conferred about possible 'fixes' to safeguard personnel entering and leaving the Site through the two ingress/egress doors: the main door through the Decon Trailer and the other door through which deconed bags of ACM are passed to be loaded in the roll-off. The latter door was the one underneath the collapsed parapet. It was agreed at the meeting that no further entry would be made into the main building until the access paths were secured from falling debris. Pending this 'fix' the crew was reassigned to removing ACM from the boilers and duct work in a pit where the former steam plant is located outside and to the rear of the main building. This work commenced on 5/17 with the removal of the smaller of two old boilers. The boiler was raised to the edge of the pit where a small amount of ACM was observed, wetted and removed. The clean boiler was moved and staged on poly sheeting pending disposal as scrap metal. Some partially insulated duct work was similarly handled by ERRS. In the meantime, ERRS is subcontracting for a scaffolding company to erect rental scaffolding over both access/egress doors in accordance with applicable OSHA/NYS/DOL requirements.

On 5/18 ERRS decontaminated additional duct work and the second boiler from the pit and staged it for T & D.

A subcontract has been awarded by ERRS for the construction of overhead protective scaffolding over the two active ingress/egress doorways ERRS is using in the main building.

As of 5/20 all scrap metal has been decontaminated and removed from the pit.

**On 5/20 ERRS pulled down the remaining loose bricks and precast concrete edging from the roof**

on the south end of the main building. On 5/23 a subcontractor erected overhead protective scaffolding over the ACM bag egress door and over the decon trailer/access door on the west side of the main building. A subcontracted structural engineer was on-site to confirm that the scaffolding was adequate overhead protection and had been erected properly. As of 1100 hours today ERRS re-entered the main building and has resumed removing ACM insulation from the pipes on the first floor.

#### 2.1.3 Enforcement Activities, Identity of Potentially Responsible Parties (PRPs)

There are a number of known PRPs, including the current owner and one of the former partners of Conifer Construction. Co. Enforcement staff continue to identify additional PRPs.

#### 2.1.4 Progress Metrics

**\*\* estimated**

<b>Waste Stream</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Quantity</b>	<b>Manifest #</b>	<b>Treatment</b>	<b>Disposal</b>	<b>Date</b>
Chlorine solns.	liquid	15 gals	B of L.	recycled		8/8/15
roofing tar	s/solid	4,000 lbs.	B. of L.	inciner.		9/18/15
WWTP chems.	liquid	41 drums	008864669	various...		9/18/15
amyl formate	liquid	1 drum	008864670	waste wtr.		9/18/15
propane clys	gas	300 lbs.	n/a	recycled		*10/17/15
ACM	solid	25 cu. yds.	n/a	none	landfill	3/17/16
ACM	solid	30 cu. yds.	n/a	none	landfill	4/7/16
ACM	solid	30 cu. yds.	n/a	none	landfill	5/5/16

## 2.2 Planning Section

### 2.2.1 Anticipated Activities

**Effective 5/24 the current OSC will transition off the Site and another OSC will assume responsibility for this removal action.**

#### 2.2.1.1 Planned Response Activities

**The decontaminated metal will be shipped off site for scrap. Net proceeds (if any) from scrapping will be applied in RCMS as a credit to EPA.**

**The ACM and dirt that removed from the pit will be bulked for T & D to an approved asbestos landfill. The pit will be back-filled with clean dirt and contoured to conform to the existing topography. Small trees and/or grass seed will be planted for erosion control.**

#### 2.2.1.2 Next Steps

**Complete all excavation/restoration work at the location of the former steam plant.**

**Knock loose bricks from the edge of the roof along work areas.**

**Complete construction of protective scaffolding over the two ingress/egress doors.**

**Resume ACM removal activities inside the main building.**

#### 2.2.2 Issues

**None.**

## 2.3 Logistics Section

No information available at this time.

## 2.4 Finance Section

No information available at this time.

## 2.5 Other Command Staff

No information available at this time.

## 3. Participating Entities

**3.1 Unified Command**

**3.2 Cooperating Agencies**

Town of Providence

NYSDEC

**4. Personnel On Site**

7 ERRS contractor personnel

1 private security guard (evenings & weekends)

1 EPA OSC

**5. Definition of Terms**

No information available at this time.

**6. Additional sources of information**

No information available at this time.

**7. Situational Reference Materials**

No information available at this time.