

# Community News



PORT HOPE AREA  
INITIATIVE

Fall 2001 Vol. 1, No. 1

## The clean-up initiative begins ...

On June 19, 2001, Paul Macklin, MP Northumberland, and Alex Shepherd, MP Durham, announced the commitment of the Government of Canada to invest \$260 million over the next 10 years in the Port Hope/Clarington area to complete the clean-up of affected sites and construct three long-term management facilities for low-level radioactive waste.

The commitment by the federal government responds to the community-recommended solution to this longstanding environmental problem. A legal agreement between the Government of Canada and the municipalities sets out responsibilities throughout the process.

The Low-Level Radioactive Waste Management Office (LLRWMO) has been designated by the Government of Canada to act as “proponent” for this initiative. This means that the Office will act on behalf of the Government and will begin to conduct the necessary studies and the public consultation program associated with the environmental assessment phase of the initiative and licensing of the facilities.

Now, planning, engineering, environmental studies and public input will better define the three concepts for low-level radioactive waste management proposed by the communities. This process should take approximately 5 years.

Another 5 to 7 years will be required to construct the facilities, consolidate the wastes, clean up and restore waste locations and close the facilities.

### In This Issue

- Helicopters and vans survey the area
- Background to low-level radioactive waste in the Port Hope Area
- Managing waste safely for generations
- Answers to your questions
- Exchanging project information



## Airborne and roadway surveys begin the studies

In conjunction with the environmental assessment of the Port Hope and Port Granby projects under the Port Hope Area Initiative, a number of technical studies will get underway this fall and winter.

Residents in the area south of County Road #2 in the Municipalities of Port Hope and Clarington, east of Newtonville Road, can expect to see low flying airplanes or helicopters collecting information needed to prepare detailed mapping of the project areas and comprehensive gamma radiation survey data. A roadway survey using truck-mounted radiation detectors is also planned.

These surveys will assist in planning the low-level radioactive waste clean-up by documenting environmental conditions in the study area. For further information on these activities visit the Project Information Exchange at 110 Walton Street in Port Hope.



## Interim Waste Management in Port Hope continues

The LLRWMO has been conducting an Interim Waste Management program in Port Hope since 1988. To meet the ongoing needs of this program, the

Temporary Storage Site (TSS) for Low-Level Radioactive Waste (LLRW), located in Ward One of Port Hope, north of Highland Drive, is being expanded by constructing a second asphalt pad. The asphalt pad constructed in 1988 is close to

its design capacity and a second pad is needed to accommodate the interim storage of contaminated soil collected as part of the Construction Monitoring Program in Port Hope.

The Municipality of Port Hope, through its Policy Review Committee, participates in the interim management of LLRW in the municipality, and expansion of this temporary storage facility will facilitate the normal pace of construction and development in the community. Materials placed in the TSS would eventually be incorporated into the proposed long-term waste management facility.

## Property Value Protection Program now available

As part of the Port Hope Area Initiative, a Property Value Protection (PVP) Program, is available to owners of property located within the former Town of Port Hope and designated areas of Clarington and the former Township of Hope. The PVP Program is designed to assist property owners who have realized certain types of financial losses related to real estate matters as a result of the Port Hope Area Initiative.

People interested in finding out more about the PVP Program or picking up a claim application form may phone 905-885-2866 for an appointment or drop in to the PVP office, 38 Walton Street, Suite 3 (second floor), Monday through Friday.

# YEARS AGO, A PROBLEM WAS CREATED.

*Today we are Seizing the Opportunity to Restore the Environment for Future Generations.*

Port Hope Harbour 1930s

## Low-Level Radioactive Waste in the Area of Port Hope

**R**oughly one million cubic metres of low-level radioactive waste and contaminated soil are presently located at various sites in Clarington, Hope Township\*, and the Town of Port Hope\*.

These low-level radioactive waste materials are a consequence of past practices involving the refining of radium and uranium by a federal Crown corporation, Eldorado Nuclear Limited, and its private sector predecessors. The waste materials contain radium-226, uranium and arsenic in various proportions.

The majority of the waste is located at Port Granby Waste Management Facility in Clarington and the Welcome Waste Management Facility in Hope Township. These facilities are owned by Cameco Corporation and are licensed by the

Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC). The remaining material is located in the Town of Port Hope. Some of it is in licensed interim storage facilities, while some is located at unlicensed locations.

Efforts have been ongoing over the last 20 years to find an appropriate approach for the long-term management of this waste. In 1997, a proposal came forward from Hope Township for the Government of Canada to begin discussion on a local solution to the long-term management of the waste. The proposal was accepted and over a two-year period, each of the three municipalities developed their own conceptual approaches to manage the waste.

The municipalities' conceptual approaches to the management of the local wastes are the foundation of a legal agreement signed between the Government of Canada and the municipalities earlier this year. The agreement defines the terms under which the initiative will be carried out.

\* The municipalities of the Town of Port Hope and the Township of Hope were amalgamated into the Town of Port Hope and Hope on January 1, 2001. References in this newsletter to Port Hope and Hope Township prior to that date are to the former municipalities.

# A Chronology of Low-Level Radioactive Waste in the Port Hope Area

**1932** Eldorado Gold Mines Ltd. opens radium refining facilities in Port Hope.

**1933-1939** Processing residues retained on the plant site.

**1939-1944** Processing residues stored 300-400 metres west of plant site (Lakeshore Disposal Area).

**1930s-1970s** Properties and sites in the Town of Port Hope become contaminated in a variety of ways, including spillage during transportation, unrecorded, unmonitored or unauthorized diversion of contaminated fill and materials, wind and water erosion, and contamination spread from residue storage areas.

**1942-1954** Production emphasis shifts from radium to uranium refining.

**1944** Government of Canada takes over Eldorado Gold Mines Ltd. and the company is renamed Eldorado Mining and Refining Ltd.

**1945-1948** Processing residues stored at Monkey Mountain Residue Area (beside Highland Drive, formerly Pidgeon Hill) in Port Hope.

**1948-1974** Pidgeon Hill storage compound used for storage of used equipment, incineration, etc. (not residue storage).

**1948-1954** Residues stored at Welcome Disposal Area in Hope Township, about 3 km northwest of the plant site.

**1953-1954** Radium refining stops. Facilities dismantled and removed from plant site.

**1955-1988** Waste management operations moved approx. 13 kilometres west to Port Granby Residue Area in Clarke Township, now Clarington.

**1962** Company becomes Eldorado Nuclear Ltd. and in 1982, Eldorado Resources Ltd.

**1976-1981** Atomic Energy Control Board directs a large-scale radiation reduction program in the Town of Port Hope. Over 100,000 tonnes of contaminated soil is transferred to a site at Chalk River Laboratories.

**1982** Low-Level Radioactive Waste Management Office (LLRWMO) is established to manage historic waste in the Town of Port Hope and across Canada.

**1982-Present** LLRWMO investigates, characterizes and consolidates certain waste within the Town of Port Hope. Construction Monitoring Program in place to minimize spread of contamination.

**1988** Cameco purchases Eldorado's assets from the federal government. Cameco assumes responsibility for management of waste at Welcome and Port Granby facilities.

**1988-Present** Cameco's programs for waste reduction, recycling and recovery minimize waste generation. Small volumes of waste produced are now stored on site.

**1988** The federal government establishes a Siting Task Force on Low-Level Radioactive Waste Management to site a permanent management facility for Port Hope area wastes.

**1988-1996** Through a cooperative process, Siting Task Force invites all Ontario municipalities to consider hosting a long-term management facility for low-level radioactive waste, but no agreement is reached.

**1997** Hope Township initiates a community proposal to construct a long-term waste management facility for wastes at the Welcome Waste Management Facility.

**1998** Port Hope and Clarington also develop proposals to establish long-term management facilities for low-level radioactive wastes within their communities.

**2000** The Government of Canada and Hope Township, Port Hope and Clarington initial *Principles of Understanding*, outlining terms for a project to clean up low-level radioactive waste in the three communities.

**2001** A legal agreement is signed which commits the federal government and the municipalities to clean up and isolate low-level radioactive waste in aboveground mound facilities designed to last for at least 500 years.

### The project begins.



# Answers to Your Questions...

*... on the clean-up and safe long-term management of low-level radioactive wastes in the Port Hope and Hope / Clarington area*

**Isn't the waste currently being stored safely? If it is, why spend taxpayers' money to build these three long-term waste management facilities?**

The current situation, while not presenting an urgent risk, is inappropriate for the long-term and must be addressed through clean-up and safe long-term management. This initiative will clean up and isolate low-level radioactive waste and contaminated soil presently located in the communities.

The agreement between the municipalities and the Government of Canada enables the development of solutions for historic low-level radioactive waste problems that have troubled the Port Hope area communities for years. The proposed clean-up includes sediments in the Port Hope harbour, other industrial non-radioactive wastes at specified sites and Eldorado Nuclear Ltd. wastes generated before 1988, now stored by Cameco Corporation.

In Port Hope, the contaminated material and waste will be collected and managed in a mound where it can be easily monitored. Waste currently stored at the licenced Port Granby and Welcome Waste Management Facilities (WMF) will be isolated from the environment in similar mounds.

**What is the legal agreement?**

The legal agreement was signed by the Municipality of Clarington, the Township of Hope, the Town of Port Hope, (in December 2000) and the

Government of Canada (in March 2001).

This document defines the terms agreed to by the parties for the clean-up and long-term management of historic waste in the three communities.

It sets out the Government of Canada's commitment to implement community defined approaches to the clean-up and management of these local waste.

## Managing Low-Level

The community recommended design option for isolating low-level radioactive waste (LLRW) in the Port Hope area is the impermeable aboveground mound concept. This design has been effectively implemented at a number of LLRW facilities around the world.

Concepts for aboveground long-term management facilities were developed by local community committees and adopted by the municipalities of Hope Township, Port Hope and Clarington. Three facilities are proposed – in Clarington at the Port Granby Waste Management Facility, and in Port Hope and Hope near Highland Drive, and at the Welcome Waste Management Facility.

Conceptual designs for the Port Hope, Hope Township and Clarington facilities vary according to the community input received, site conditions, and the character and volume of the waste to be contained. Each design would be engineered to remain safe for over 500 years. Maintenance, monitoring and institutional control would ensure continuing performance.

Before any facility is built for the long-term management of low-level radioactive wastes, the project must meet applicable regulatory,

### What benefits will the municipality receive from accepting a federal government low-level radioactive waste storage facility?

Properties in the communities will be cleaned-up and the use of previously unavailable sites will be recovered for the public.

The municipalities of Clarington, Port Hope and Hope Township have each received a \$10-million (\$30 million in total) host community grant to address, as they see fit, impacts that may be associated with the establishment of long-term radioactive waste management facilities within the community.

In addition, facility development and clean-up costs estimated at \$230 million (over 10 years) will be a major economic stimulus. Benefits will include local employment in environmental, engineering and construction fields, local supply contracts, spin-off jobs and important infrastructure improvements in the communities.

Do you have a question about the Port Hope Area Initiative? We're here to answer them. Send your questions to: LLRWMO, P.O. Box 118, Port Hope ON L1A 3V9.

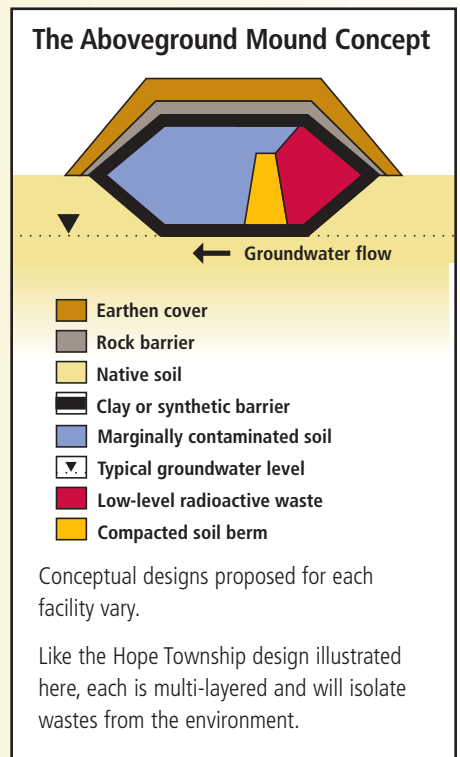
## Radioactive Waste Safely for Generations

environmental and local standards. Over the next few years, the three community proposals will be reviewed under the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* (CEAA) and the *Nuclear Safety and Control Act* (NSCA).

Environmental assessment of the project under the CEAA will involve technical and scientific studies, review and comment by community residents and officials, provincial and federal agencies, and other interested parties.

In addition, each facility will undergo a multi-step licensing process conducted by the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC). Public and environmental safety will be examined by the CNSC during the planning, construction and long-term monitoring of the LLRW management facilities.

These concepts will be refined based on community and technical input during the environmental assessment and licensing process. After the facilities are constructed, monitoring will continue. Results will be reported to the community, as well as to government agencies. The community will decide on post-construction landscaping and recreational uses for each site.



## What you can count on from us

Communicating with local residents is important to the success of the Port Hope Area Initiative. In this regular newsletter the Low-Level Radioactive Waste Management Office intends to provide project information to the public during all phases of the Initiative.

To respond to your questions and concerns, we're also opening a storefront at 110 Walton Street, in Port Hope, called the Project Information Exchange. Initially, we'll be open on a part-time basis.

## What we need from you

We need your ideas, your information, your concerns — *your input*. Public consultation is an important part of the environmental assessment and licensing processes and we want to start this dialogue now.

Come down to the Project Information Exchange and talk to us. Or call, fax or join our mailing list. We need you to make this Initiative succeed.



Visit [www.llrwmoo.org](http://www.llrwmoo.org)

### To join our mailing list,

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

(Home)

(Work)

Send to:

Low-Level Radioactive Waste Management Office

P.O. Box 118, Port Hope, ON L1A 3V9

Call: (905) 885-0291 or toll-free: 1-866-255-2755 Fax: (905) 885-0273

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