

Patrick Ryan
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June 5, 2003

Radioactive Waste in North County

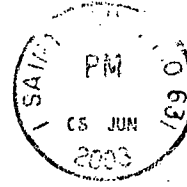
One of the things that struck me while visiting the Latty Ave, and St Louis Airport sites was that it didn't feel like I was actually surrounded by radio-active waste. There were no three headed mutant animals running around, the site wasn't glowing green, and there were no military personnel securing the area. It was just a regular plot of land, without any conspicuous indication of the radio-active waste that resides there. The reality of course is that both sites are extremely hazardous containing waste that dates back to the initial fission experiment performed by Enrico Fermi. I believe, however, that the hazards go beyond the radiation that is emitted by the area. There is also the danger that exists due to the inconspicuous nature under which the site exists. Because the radioactivity is not perceptible to anyone without a Geiger counter, North County continues its routine without a second thought towards the Latty Ave and St Louis Airport sites. Many people in the area don't even know that the sites exist, or that the St Louis Airport site is on a floodplain that washes radioactivity into the same Coldwater creek that runs through their neighborhood. Houses, Businesses and Factories exist in the area without a second thought towards the nuclear waste. For instance the Supervalu Perishable Food warehouse is only a block or two away from the Latty Ave waste site; and children routinely play in Coldwater creek which is undoubtedly very contaminated from the St Louis Airport site.

The careless nature in which these sites were chosen and the carelessness with which these hazardous materials were shipped has had a huge impact on the citizens of our city. People are

paying the price for this radioactive waste that does not belong to them. Incidents of Leukemia in the areas exposed to this waste are high, and there has been little attempt to minimize the exposure that people have to these deadly materials. Our inability to perceive the immediate effect that these sites have on our community does not lessen the price we pay for living next to this radioactive material. The damage that these sites have had is immeasurable. North County can no longer pay the price for the negligence that allowed these sites to occur. I hope that the Corps of Engineers will take it upon themselves to do what should have been done long ago, and remove all radioactive material from these sites and from North County.

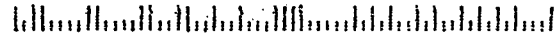
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