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NEWS

Army engineers take on soil cleanup

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The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will assume responsibility for removing radioactive soil from the Coldwater Creek site, but this shouldn't slow the cleanup process.

That was the message from U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) officials at a public forum Wednesday at the St. Louis County Government Center in Clayton. Few residents attended the session.

"We need to fold the corps into the decision-making process," said Steve McCracken, DOE site manager.

The previous week's announcement of congressional budget authority shifting from

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President of ART Inc.

DOE to the Corps of Engineers in the cleanup project confirmed recent rumors of the Corps assuming responsibility for it.

The current phase of the cleanup is the selection of bids for a demonstration of the technology needed to remove the contamination material. Three firms will receive a combined \$5 million.

The purpose of Wednesday's public hearing was to let com-

peting bidders pitch their cleanup methods to the public.

But while nine vendors set up displays previewing the latest in radioactive soil-cleaning technology, few residents attended.

"Probably about four or five true citizens (showed up)," DOE spokeswoman Mary Ann Crate said.

One of them was University City resident Dr. Neville Rapp, a pathology specialist and Sier-

ra Club member.

"I'm optimistic they will investigate the possible technologies and hope they can find a way to get it cleaned up at the lowest cost possible," Rapp said.

One of the vendors at the meeting was Mike Mann, president of ART Inc., a firm that has experience in similar industry cleanups.

"The question is, will the local people accept a solution that places clean soil back on the site? That's the most economical solution," Mann said.

Mann said of resident interest, "If the local people get involved it can be really tremendous. The question is, 'Is the interest there?'"