

GLEN COVE

Gas plant cleanup set

- Workers will scoop out tar-soaked soil on 2 acres
- Old plant latest contaminated LI site being tackled

BY JENNIFER SMITH

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Cleanup at a former manufactured gas plant in Glen Cove is set to begin this month as workers prepare to scoop out tar-soaked soil that dates back to the early 20th century.

It's one of 25 sites on Long Island where steps are being taken to address pollution left decades earlier by the production and storage of pressurized gas — fuel often made from coal used for cooking, lighting and heating before natural gas was widely available.

State officials say pollution at the 2-acre Glen Cove site east of Route 107 is relatively minor compared with sprawling contamination from much larger plants in Bay Shore and Hempstead that operated for decades. At those sites, coal tar has fouled hundreds of thousands of cubic yards of soil and leached into groundwater, creating multiple toxic plumes.

The smaller Glen Cove plant operated for only 19 years. Most of the pollution remains buried on site, said Scott Deyette of the state Department of Environmental Conservation.

A Long Island Power Authority substation occupies the eastern part of the site. State offi-

cialists say the coal tar poses no immediate threat to residents, wildlife or drinking water.

"It's in a very remote area," said Deyette, of the DEC's environmental remediation division. "It's all contained right there."

The pollution is mostly coal tar — a dense, oily liquid created when coal and petroleum were superheated to make gas.

In Glen Cove, workers will dig out contaminated soil about 15 feet deep in the accessible part of the property. An oxygen injection system will treat fouled groundwater, and tar-recovery wells will be sunk to recover any remaining tar.

Coal tar contaminants include benzene, a known human carcinogen, and PAHs, potentially dangerous chemicals formed by the incomplete burning of coal and petroleum.

An agreement with the DEC authorizes National Grid to investigate and, if needed, clean up 13 manufactured gas production sites on Long Island, and another 12 less-polluted properties where various types of gas were produced or stored. The DEC oversees the process and signs off before cleanups are declared complete. National Grid inherited the sites when it bought KeySpan in 2007.

The Glen Cove plant was de-



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molished in 1929, but investigations only begin in the late 1990s.

Some of the cleanup delay stems from the relatively minor contamination there. State officials prioritized work on Bay Shore and other large sites, where pollution was more widespread or posed a higher exposure risk to people living and working nearby.

Still, most manufactured gas plants remained essentially unexamined until the 1980s, when federal laws were passed governing disposal and cleanup of hazardous substances. It wasn't

until the 1990s that New York officials understood how many of these sites existed — about 300 statewide — and the degree of pollution involved.

Critics such as Adrienne Esposito of Citizens Campaign for the Environment said voluntary cleanups like those the DEC negotiated with National Grid can result in more delays.

National Grid spokeswoman Wendy Ladd said investigations had been completed at most of the 25 local sites. Nine have been cleaned up or declared by the DEC as needing

no further action. "We are invested in this and dedicated, and we're going to follow the process through," Ladd said.

Major investigations at the Bay Shore site began in 1999 and continued through 2003, utility officials said. The cleanup began in 2007 and the major construction phase should be completed by mid-2012, utility officials said.

In Hempstead, the cleanup from the 7.5-acre former plant was put out for bid last year and National Grid expects to start construction in early summer.

SOUTHAMPTON

Sordi resigns as town attorney amid criticism

BY MITCHELL FREEDMAN

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Southampton Town Attorney Michael C. Sordi has resigned just days after members of the town board publicly said he was negligent for filing a late response to a lawsuit against the town.

The delayed response has left

the town facing a potential multi-million dollar court judgment.

The Town Board voted Friday, 3-0, to accept the resignation effective immediately; board members Christopher Nuzzi and James Malone abstained. The board also approved a settlement with Sordi, the terms of which were not available. The town attorney

position pays \$115,000 a year.

Sordi was hired on April 13, 2010, for a term to end Dec. 31.

He came under fire last Tuesday when, at a Town Board meeting, the three GOP members said he was negligent for failing to respond to the suit in a timely manner, leaving the town facing a potential default judgment of \$70 million. The town's response

was due Oct. 30. The town got a two-week extension but didn't file a response until Jan. 21.

The lawsuit was filed in 2009 by Nancy Genovese, of East Quogue, who was stopped outside the Air National Guard Base in Westhampton because she had taken pictures of a helicopter. When police found weapons and ammunition in her car, she

said she was returning from a shooting range. She was released without charges and later filed the \$70 million lawsuit.

At the meeting, Supervisor Anna Throne-Holst said Sordi had been distracted because of the death of his mother. Deputy Town Attorney Kathleen Murray will fill the post while the town searches for a replacement.