



# The Dallas Post

50¢

SERVING THE COMMUNITIES OF THE DALLAS & LAKE-LEHMAN SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Vol. 105 No. 20

Dallas, Pennsylvania

Wednesday, May 18, 1994

## Gas-tainted soil not serious enough to merit removal

By GRACE R. DOVE  
Post Staff

Contaminant levels in wells near the center of Lehman Township aren't serious enough to require removal of soil, said federal Environmental Protection Agency representative Richard Fetzer at the township supervisors' meeting May 16.

The EPA has sampled 50 wells within a 3/4-mile radius of Lehman Center and is monitoring about 25 for contamination, Fetzer said.

"Our study is 90 percent complete," Fetzer said. "We had to get new samples and redo the March tests, so I don't have complete information to give you tonight. The good news is that we won't go around tearing things up."

Botched tests on some water samples prevented Fetzer from making a com-

plete report.

The levels of MTBE in the soil, a component of unleaded gasoline, would have to be 200 parts per billion or higher for the EPA to begin any large-scale excavation of contaminated dirt. The levels are considerably lower, both in the soil of the affected area and the wells, he said.

The contamination was first discovered in 1991, when a Lehman Corners resident reported that her water smelled like gasoline.

After extensive testing around Lehman Corners, the state Department of Environmental Resources (DER) concluded that two wells had been contaminated with benzene, a volatile gasoline component, and 17 wells had been contaminated with MTBE, an octane boosting unleaded gasoline additive.

At the time it was believed that the Lehman Sunoco gas station was the source of the contamination.

Owner George Maculloch began supplying bottled water and special water filters to the affected residences and the school and had a new well drilled at Bryant's Trailer Park at his own expense.

The EPA has drilled four monitoring wells to keep track of the extent of the gasoline contamination - one at the Lehman Sunoco, one approximately 400 feet east of the gas station on Route 118 opposite the Lehman fire hall, a third diagonally across Outlet Road from the Lake-Lehman Middle Level Building and a fourth on Fire House Road opposite the rear of Bryant's Trailer Park.

EPA personnel have also used mobile equipment to test gasoline con-

tamination in the soil of the area around the Sunoco station, Fetzer said. "We got a few hits, but nothing conclusive," he said.

Fetzer said that the affected area doesn't seem to be growing larger, but the contamination levels fluctuate, depending on the level of the water table.

"MTBE is very soluble in water, which makes it hang around for a long time," he said. "When water seeps through cracks in the underground rock layers, it carries the stuff with it. The area's geology is very complicated, making it difficult to figure out."

Fetzer and the supervisors discussed several possible solutions to the problem: building a small, self-contained water system for the affected residences, building a pipeline to an area reservoir, installing individual water filtration systems in each affected building or drill-

ing deeper wells.

Drilling deeper wells isn't a good idea, because MTBE travels very easily with the ground water as it moves between the underground rock layers, Fetzer said.

The problem with building a self-contained water system is expense.

Fetzer estimates that building one would cost around \$1.5 million, which the government would pay for, but the township would have to maintain and operate it.

The supervisors have said that they can't afford that alternative.

Fetzer said that his office was exploring having a private water company take over the system once it is built, but if that is done, the Internal Revenue Service would want its cut - a

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POST PHOTO/CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK

### Grandma Eckman bakes a cake

Phyllis Eckman of Shavertown rattles the pots and pans with grandchildren Michael, left, Laura and Jocelyn. Mrs. Eckman's recipe for Black Forest Cheesecake will appear in the June issue of Good Housekeeping magazine, in an article titled "America's Regional Cookery." The magazine's food editors selected 31 recipes from hundreds of community cookbooks from around the nation, all published to help a

good cause. Mrs. Eckman says her grandchildren always help to make her special recipes, and of course to eat them. Her cheesecake recipe appears on page 142 of "Chefs and Artists," the cookbook published by the Friends of the Back Mountain Memorial Library. Copies of "Chefs and Artists" are available for \$12.95 at the library and a number of local stores, including Back Mountain Servi-Star and The Barn in Lehman.

## Week for volunteers who serve and save

By GRACE R. DOVE  
Post Staff

Dallas Ambulance Association members kicked off National Emergency Medical Service (EMS) Week May 15 with the presentation of a proclamation by Dallas Borough Mayor Paul LaBar and a presentation by a guest speaker.

National EMS week, May 15-21, calls attention to the services provided by ambulance personnel, paramedics, emergency medical technicians, firefighters and emergency room personnel.

The theme for this year's EMS week is the Star of Life, a universally recognized symbol of emergency medical services displayed on EMS vehicles and the arm patches worn by certified emer-

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POST PHOTO/GRACE R. DOVE

**NATIONAL E.M.S. WEEK KICKOFF** - Members of the Dallas ambulance crew accepting a proclamation for National Emergency Medical Services Week were, front row: assistant chief Jennifer Gay, Mayor Paul LaBar and ambulance chief Barbara Zeglin; back row: Dennis Garvey, Karen Kachurick, Ed Fritzinger, Enola Whitaker, Rich Zeglin, Megan Stair and Amy Goodman.

## Income taxes fall short in Lehman school district

By RONALD A. BARTIZEK  
Post Editor

Lagging earned income tax collections will put greater pressure on property owners in the Lake-Lehman School District next year.

Proceeds from the tax on wages ran 5.9 percent behind projected levels from July, 1993 through April, according to district business manager Ray Bowersox. "That's scary to me," he said. "Collections for May haven't been that great, either."

When the wage tax falls short, the property tax must make up the difference. As a result, a tentative budget that was discussed May 15 projects a 10 percent increase in taxes on the district's

average property. "It's the unfortunate situation you find yourself in," Bowersox said.

Adding to the burden on local taxes, state support is stagnant, and federal contributions are beginning to decline as a result of the 1990 Census. While the Census showed some growth in population, it also counted fewer poor people in the district, and some federal monies are tied to the number of people below the poverty line.

The overall budget figure of \$15.4 million is a 4.5 percent increase over the projected actual expenditures in the current year. It is 3 percent higher than the

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## Voters must okay tax reform, speakers say

By GRACE R. DOVE  
Post Staff

There are more people who believe Elvis is alive than there are who believe that Pennsylvania's property tax system is fair, said keynote speaker David Atkinson at the start of last week's community forum on local tax reform.

While they disagreed on the details, most of those attending the May 11 public forum at the Penn State-Lehman campus agreed that change is long overdue.

Panel members included Jackson Township supervisor and PSEA representative Walter Glo-

*"The truth is, we are now seeing property tax increases of a percentage that no one ever visualized."*

David Atkinson  
Aide to Senate Majority Leader Robert Jubelirer

gowski, Senator Charles Lemmond's aide Lisa Baker, Luzerne County Commissioner Jim Phillips, Representatives George Hasay and Phyllis Mundy,

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### Wetland damage

in Jackson Twp. will be repaired, by agreement between township and DER. Page 3.

### Local teams

winding down stellar seasons in spring sports. Page 9.

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