

# Local

Wednesday, May 4, 2022

EagleHerald

www.ehextra.com

## FROM A1

### WAUPACA:

the same general family. They've been detected in water, food, products and packaging, the EPA said.

Now the question is how much PFAS might be in the Menominee River, which opens into the Bay of Green Bay right where Waupaca Foundry is located. "That's a super good question," Esch said. "That's the purpose of having a site investigation. You can have all these theories—here's where it's coming from and here's the appropriate actions to take to resolve it. That's what we've been working on with the Department of Natural Resources."

When Waupaca Foundry opened its Marinette facility in 1974, PFAS wasn't known to be a problem and it wasn't tested for. Today, testing is routine in the Marinette area in part because of news about PFAS from Johnson Controls and Tyco.

"We're aware PFAS has been a big topic in the Marinette-Peshigo area. We assumed it had nothing to do with us," Esch said. The results of the soil sampling were a surprise to Waupaca and to the Department of Natural Resources.

In July 2019, American Transmission Co. notified Waupaca it found PFAS when it tested the soil and groundwater at a transformer substation on the island. In the groundwater results, PFOS was detected at 200 parts per trillion and PFOA at 110 parts per trillion. The concentrations exceeded proposed enforcement standards.

While the Wisconsin legislature hasn't passed limits for PFAS yet, the Department of Natural Resources is using recommendations from the Department of Health Services.

"As you probably know, there are regional impacts from Johnson Controls. We suspected it was from there. But as we got the data back, it was clear there was a contamination on the site," said David Neste, hydrogeologist at the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

In October 2019, the Department sent Waupaca a "responsible party" letter.

Now Waupaca is working with AECOM and other companies to monitor and address the issue. In September 2019, AECOM installed a groundwater monitoring well and collected soil and groundwater samples. The level of PFAS in the soil was below the recommended limit, while the groundwater sample showed 72 parts per trillion of PFOA, above the recommended limit.

When groundwater naturally collected at the Changeyard Returns Pit on Sept. 18, 2019, Waupaca took a sample and sent it to Eurofins in Sacramento, California, for analysis using Michigan's PFAS-24 list because Wisconsin hadn't yet formalized its list of 36 PFAS chemicals. These results indicated PFOA at 490 parts per trillion and PFOS at 2.9 parts per trillion, which exceeded the recommended limits.

PFAS are known to travel in water, so the results raise new questions about where else the chemicals might be found in the Menominee River and Bay of Green Bay.

"What we will be doing is monitoring for a while to determine the extent and make sure it's not impacting drinking water," Neste said.

So far, the results aren't alarming, Neste said. "This one's not a huge concern," he said. On a scale of 10, he'd put it at a 1 or 2.

Unlike the PFAS contamination found in groundwater requiring alternate water options for residents in some areas of the Town of Peshtigo, Neste said, "This isn't residential. It's municipal. Marinette monitors municipal water."

Neste said he suspects the end result will be monitoring for at least five years "to make sure it's not traveling beyond the boundaries of the site." If it is, the Department of Natural Resources will notify affected property owners.

Given the location of the facility at the mouth of the Menominee River where it opens into the Bay of Green Bay, he said the Department of Natural Resources will look east of Ogden Street as well as at Waupaca's facility west of the Ogden Street bridge to determine the extent of the problem.

"The next step is to monitor the well to the east of Ogden Street to see if the contamination is migrating over to that section," he said.

The elevated PFAS levels haven't been found in the immediate area used for drinking water, he said. "There's not a lot of receptors in the area. No one is drinking the water."

The foundry is within yards of boundary with the city of Menominee and not far from Menominee's wastewater treatment plant. While the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources has worked with Michigan on the Johnson Controls PFAS investigation, this investigation doesn't involve Michigan at this point, Neste said.

"With this site, I haven't really had any communication with the State of

Michigan about it. If we do find contamination from the site on the other side of the river, we definitely would be in contact with Michigan."

The EagleHerald has contacted local Menominee authorities and the State of Michigan about PFAS levels but hasn't had its questions addressed. Foam on the Menominee side of the Bay of Green Bay hasn't been fully explained. Some have suggested it's from natural causes.

Exactly what the PFAS detected on Waupaca's property stems from is difficult to say, Neste said. "PFAS has been present in products since the late '40s and early '50s," he said.

"It looks like it's coming from prior use of the site. There's nothing the Waupaca Foundry is doing to release those compounds," Neste said.

But according to Wisconsin statute, Waupaca is the responsible party. "Waupaca has to foot the bill," Neste said. "They're the possessor. We don't know who the causer is. The possessor is the responsible party."

Waupaca employs about 700 people at the Marinette site, where it makes automotive parts. "Obviously, we're a metal caster. We take scrap metal, and it's all metal that otherwise would be disposed of. At Marinette, we're using an electric furnace. We melt it and pour it into a sand mold. We let it cool, and then you have your new part," Esch said.

"We've done a pretty intensive search with the Department of Natural Resources in our entire use," Esch said. PFAS isn't used in the metal casting process, he said. "We're very confident we're not the source."

While some PFAS might be contained in old, coated or painted products, Esch said the company is choosy about the metal it melts. "I'm not aware of any study that shows PFAS is demonstrated in scrap metal," he said. "The scrap is very clean, so there's not much opportunity for PFAS or plastic material to get into the stream."

An AECOM reports said the first commercial use of the site was for a lumber mill 100 years ago. Then it became a dump for municipal waste from Marinette. "A good portion of that island was built with solid waste fill," Neste said.

"There was a time when cities just dumped whatever on it and then filled it," Neste said. "If you look at the way the areas of fill line up with the hot spots of contamination, it does look like the source of the PFAS might be those fills."



Associated Press

**Demonstrators protest outside of the U.S. Supreme Court Tuesday in Washington. A draft opinion suggests the U.S. Supreme Court could be poised to overturn the landmark 1973 Roe v. Wade case that legalized abortion nationwide, according to a Politico report released Monday. Whatever the outcome, the Politico report represents an extremely rare breach of the court's secretive deliberation process, and on a case of surpassing importance.**

## Wisconsin Dems urge action ahead of abortion ruling

By SCOTT BAUER  
Associated Press

MADISON, Wis. (AP)—Abortion catapulted to the front of Wisconsin's midterm races for governor and U.S. Senate on Tuesday in the wake of news that the U.S. Supreme Court could be poised to overturn the landmark 1973 Roe v. Wade decision, which would make nearly all abortions illegal in Wisconsin.

Democrats looked to capitalize on anger over the possibility. Republicans were joyful at the prospect that the nearly 50-year-old ruling could be overturned, while also expressing caution given that the court emphasized that no final decision had been made.

"It's about time!" Republican

gubernatorial candidate Lt. Gov. Rebecca Kleefisch tweeted on Monday.

Abortion rights were already expected to be a major dividing line issue in races for governor and U.S. Senate in Wisconsin. But if the justices follow through, it could serve to energize Democrats hoping to defeat Republican Sen. Ron Johnson and reelect Democratic Gov. Tony Evers.

"Democrats need to act today," Lt. Gov. Mandela Barnes, a Senate candidate, tweeted. Barnes renewed his call on the Senate to abolish the filibuster to make it possible to pass laws protecting abortion rights. The other top candidates—Milwaukee Bucks executive Alex Lasry, Outagamie County Executive Tom Nelson and state Treasurer Sarah Godlewski—made the same pleas.

## Dane County sues foam makers over PFAS pollution

MADISON, Wis. (AP)—Dane County officials are suing dozens of firefighting foam manufacturers alleging their products contaminated the area around the county's airport.

The Wisconsin State Journal reported Tuesday that the county is seeking unspecified damages from dozens of companies, including DuPont, 3M and Johnson Controls. The county alleges the manufacturers sold foam for decades despite knowing it contained PFAS and failed to warn

consumers and the public of the chemicals' dangers. Court records indicate the county filed the lawsuit on April 26.

The city of La Crosse filed a similar lawsuit last year. The state Department of Justice sued Johnson Controls in March over PFAS contamination near Marinette.

A Waukesha County judge last month, however, ruled that the state Department of Natural Resources lacks authority to regulate PFAS because the state hasn't set any limits on the chemicals.


It's unclear what effect that ruling could have on the other lawsuits.

PFAS is an acronym for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, man-made chemicals used in non-stick cookware and firefighting foam. Research suggests they can cause health problems in humans, including decreased fertility, developmental delays in children, increased risk of some cancers and a weakened immune system, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

## PETS OF THE WEEK

**ALL ANIMALS ARE MICRO-CHIPPED**


Remember, there is no fee to drop off or surrender animals, but donations are welcome!



**Medusa** here! I'm an adorable gal of 3 years. I'm a sweet girl who enjoys attention, though I can be a bit standoffish. I'm a playful girl but I also make plenty of time for couch potatoing. I can get a bit anxious when left alone too long, a family who is home more often may be ideal for me. I am housetrained but occasionally had an accident during the night, I would do best in a family without young children.



**Sky** here! I'm a majestic brindle Pitsky of 1 year. I love tug of war, balls, and any type of toy I can chew on! I can get a bit rough when I'm in play mode and tend to get a bit moody and I still need work on redirecting that mouthiness to something like a toy. I do already know a number of commands but repetition is key! I would do best in a family without young children or felines. I am house trained, but I do have some separation anxiety.



**Black Phillip** here! I also go by Phillip or Phil! I'm a handsome young man of 1 year and I'm searching for a forever family! I did join the shelter as a stray so my past is a mystery but I can tell you I'm very friendly and I seem like a social guy.

**WE'RE OPEN!**

The Shelter is resuming our regular hours  
**Tuesday - Friday**  
**12 pm - 6 pm**  
**Saturday**  
**12 pm - 5 pm**  
 Visit [mshelter.org](http://mshelter.org)

**HAVELKA CONSTRUCTION**

These Pets of the Week are sponsored by: If you would like to adopt ANY OF THESE ANIMALS or any other animal, stop by or call the Menominee Animal Shelter, Inc. at N184 Haggerson Court, Menominee, WI (906) 864-PAWS (7297). Or visit us on the Web: [mshelter.org](http://mshelter.org) or [www.petango.com](http://www.petango.com) for a complete listing with photos. E-mail: [animals@mshelter.com](mailto:animals@mshelter.com). Hours: Tuesday-Friday--Noon-6pm, Saturday--Noon-5pm

## CELEBRATE CINCO DE MAYO WITH US!



**SANGRIA**



**LA CABANA BEER BUCKET**



**La CABANA Mexican Cuisine**



**MARGARITAS**



**MICHELADAS**

ASK ABOUT OUR DEALS TO GET A FREE T-SHIRT

1553 MARINETTE AVE., MARINETTE, WI  
715-330-5903

2812 10TH ST., MENOMINEE, WI  
906-863-4699

f [lacabanamexicancuisine.com](http://lacabanamexicancuisine.com)