

Town residents, others, react to PFAS study

Town receives \$1.6 million in funding for new water line

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EagleHerald Staff Writer

TOWN OF PESHTIGO — Imagine a drop of yellow food dye falling into a cup of water with blue food coloring. If the water turns green, it doesn't mean the source isn't still yellow.

That's the analogy that Cindy Boyle, chair of the Town of Peshtigo Board of Supervisors and town resident, used to explain the significance of a new study linking PFAS from Johnson Controls Inc. (JCI)/Tyco to a large plume of PFAS in the bay of Green Bay, through the movement of groundwater.

On the back of the study's release, Boyle said she had just received word that U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin (D-Wis.) secured \$1.667 million in earmarked funding from Wisconsin's 2023 budget to support the installation of a new water line for the Town of Peshtigo.

They don't have all the details of the funding yet, but the money will go toward a pre-development effort to start the modeling studies, engineering and grants needed to develop a permanent water utility, which will come "at the expense of the responsible party" who polluted the water they can no longer trust as safe, Boyle said.

Boyle openly disclosed that she has a personal lawsuit against JCI, represented by Saltz, Mongeluzzi and Bendesky. She said that anyone that

has remaining damages might consider doing the same.

"JCI has repeatedly been trying to sell the narrative that they're only responsible for contamination within a small area," Boyle said.

Researchers used a PFAS fingerprinting technique to make the connection. The fingerprinting method relinks a chemical back to its original source, even after it's been changed, in this case, by groundwater transport, surface water flow and land application of contaminated biosolids.

Doug Oitzinger, a Marinette alderman and member of Save Our Water SOH2O, an activist group, said the study's detailed methodology is significant.

"This is the first really focused, independent university study of the situation," Oitzinger said. "Here you have a study that isn't being done by the regulatory body."

Previously, most testing was done by JCI/Tyco and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR). JCI/Tyco has designated an area as the Potable Well Sampling Area (PWSA), where it has provided bottled water and are now offering the option of a private well, all free

of charge. Residents along the bay are also petitioning for annexation. If passed, that section would become a part of the city of Marinette and receive city water, which JCI/Tyco would also provide for free. The DNR has tested outside of the PWSA to determine the scope of PFAS contamination — this area is called the Expanded Site Investigation Area (ESIA).

"Here in Marinette County, Tyco has adamantly asserted that some contaminated groundwater in the Town of Peshtigo is not theirs," Oitzinger said. "The study says, 'Yes, it is.'"

In September, JCI unveiled its \$25 million Groundwater Extraction & Treatment System (GETS) to treat the groundwater in Ditch B and the surrounding area around the facility, which is the most contaminated.

"It will not treat a single drop of groundwater in the Town of Peshtigo, under my house, on Daggett Street... all which have contaminated groundwater," said Oitzinger, who does not live in the PWSA, but lives in Marinette near the bay.

More PFAS | A13

POWER OUTAGE



EAGLEHERALD/MATT LEHMANN
A Wisconsin Public Service crew member works to remove a utility pole that was knocked down in a one-car accident Tuesday in Marinette.



EAGLEHERALD/MATT LEHMANN

A car struck a utility pole at about 9:45 a.m. Tuesday on Hattie Street near Riverside Avenue in Marinette causing a power outage to about 1,800 customers, according to Wisconsin Public Service media relations specialist Matt Cullen. The outage affected customers in both Marinette and Menominee and knocked out power to some traffic signals. All but 68 customers had their power restored as of early Tuesday afternoon with the remaining expected to have power back in the early evening, according to Cullen. He said crews re-routed power around the damaged pole and a new pole was to be installed Tuesday. Marinette Fire Chief Jay Heckel is in the center of the photo with firefighters to the right. The Marinette Police Department did not have further information on the incident as of press time.

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OBITUARIES

RICHARD SCHULTZ

Richard Schultz, 77, passed away January 6, 2023 at The Bay in Oconto. He was born March 25, 1945 in Chicago, Ill. to Casimer and Lottie Ann Schultz, Sr. He resided in Marinette for many years before moving to Peshtigo and most recently Oconto. He loved Elvis Presley songs and was known for singing in local supper clubs.

He is survived by two sons: John Schultz of Chicago and Casey Martinez of California; brothers: Joseph Casimer Schultz, Jr., Edward Schultz and Gerald "Jerry" Schultz of Marinette and John Schultz of Florida; sisters, Helen Schultz, Arlene (Schultz) Wolf of Marinette, Lucille (Schultz) McCoy of Oak Lawn, Ill. and Diana (Schultz) Hoppe of Marinette; grandchildren; and many nieces and nephews.

In addition to his parents, Richard was preceded in death by sisters: Mary Ann (Schultz) Sinks, Rose (Schultz) Weissgerber and an infant sister, Margaret.

Friends may call at **HANSEN-ONION-MARTELL FUNERAL HOME** on Friday, January 13 after 1:00 p.m. A funeral service will be held at 2:00 p.m. on Friday with Fr. Celestine Byekwaso officiating. Burial will be in Glenwood Memorial Gardens.



PFAS/from A2

Andrea Maxwell, a Town of Peshtigo resident with a deep well installed by JCI/Tyco, said she figured the PFAS would reach the bay. (It is the EagleHerald's responsibility to disclose that Maxwell's husband is a retired JCI/Tyco employee.)

"We're not surprised," Maxwell said. "It makes sense that it will follow the flow of water, like creeks do, to the bay. I hope that the filtration system they put in is cur-tailing what is going into the bay."

Cindy Verschay, retired educator and formerly a Town of Peshtigo

resident, said she lived in a house for 34 years in the contamination of the original plume.

"There was always foam in our bay and foam in our creek," Verschay said. "We've had some family illnesses associated with it." Two months after her daughter moved in and they moved out, the PFAS information was released.

"We never would have sold it to her; not in a million years."

Boyle said she hopes that the public believes this independent scientific study. Oitzinger said, after studying the issue for five years, that each new layer revealed "like peeling an onion" has only deepened the

complexity of the problems and has made the situation sad — "it's depressing," he said.

Boyle said she doesn't believe that a majority of residents want annexation. Verschay said that as a parent, knowing her family is in the contaminated area is a "huge

heartache" for her, but she can't decide on a solution.

"I have concerns about the deep well," she said. "I can't tell you what I would prefer."

Erin Noha can be reached by email at enoha@eagleherald.com

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