

Corps community members end RAB; partnership continues



In August 2003, the River Valley Local School District opened its new school campus. Congress voted to allow the Louisville District to pay \$15 million toward the relocation of the high and middle schools during the environmental investigation at MED and SOP.

By Jenn Domashevich, public affairs

Over the past 10 years, community members have assembled at Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) meetings to provide meaningful input and receive updates on the clean-ups at the former Marion Engineer Depot (MED) and Scioto Ordnance Plant (SOP) in Marion, Ohio. What was once the setting of intense public interest has now become the setting of waning public concern as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) completes the remaining remedial actions at these sites.

As clean-up projects at MED and SOP draw to a close, so has the RAB that had once assembled in the Tri-Rivers Career Center.

The RAB was formed and co-chaired by USACE in 1998 and consisted of volunteer community members and local, state and federal agency representatives. A RAB can be dissolved when no longer needed or when community interest in the RAB declines sufficiently.

The four community members in attendance at the Nov. 19, 2009, RAB meeting voted to dissolve the RAB. Communications will continue through other means such as a quarterly newsletter, follow-up e-mails, periodic news releases and updates to the Corps' Web pages (http://bit.ly/Marion_OH and http://bit.ly/Scioto_OH).

A public comment period was extended for community members to comment on this proposal, and as the comment period drew to a close Feb. 8, no comments were received to dispute this course of action. USACE is currently moving ahead with

the necessary steps to dissolve the RAB.

"Thank you, guys," said Ted Graham, community RAB member. "You built a new school because of the stigma that was attached to the location. Not only that, but you came in and solved even more problems."

Prior to Graham's proposal to dissolve the RAB, status updates were presented on the remaining projects at MED and SOP.

Project Manager Cynthia Ries from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Louisville District said that all remedial actions will be complete within the next three years for both properties.

"The extra money we received this year helped us get additional contracts and the physical work complete," Ries said.

USACE received \$3 million in plus-up funding in 2009 that allowed two remedial action contracts to be awarded. Currently, areas known to require remedial actions are under contract.

To date, major milestones have been accomplished during the environmental investigation of MED and SOP. These milestones mark the significant steps achieved during the ongoing 12-year investigation that follows the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA).

These milestones were accomplished through the partnership of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Ohio EPA, Ohio and Marion County departments of health, Army Reserve 88th Regional Readiness Command, Army Environmen-

tal Command, River Valley Local School District, contractors, Restoration Advisory Board members and other concerned and involved citizens.

During the course of the investigation, 23 groundwater monitoring wells were installed and more than 1,100 samples were taken from MED. More than 90 reports have been completed since the start of the investigation and are available for public viewing at the Marion County Library.

There were approximately 28 areas of concern identified at SOP, which resulted in the clean-up of residual contamination from tank removals in three areas of concern. Over the years, 26 groundwater monitoring wells were installed in various areas of concern on the property and 40 reports were generated on the SOP investigation.

Although USACE is nearing completion of the investigation and clean-up of the properties formerly used by the military, there are still several areas of concern to be addressed. The Corps expects to complete the investigation of all of the areas of concern at the former MED and SOP by June 2013.

"Thanks everybody for coming here for the past 12 years," Ries said as the final RAB meeting was adjourned, marking yet another milestone in the progress of MED and SOP and the progress made through continued partnership and coordination.