

News Release
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Village of DePue, Illinois
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Illinois EPA challenged by Village of DePue

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency is being called to task by the Village of DePue for failure to enforce a federal Superfund-related Interim Consent Order issued in 1995. Attorney General Lisa Madigan has been asked to look into the state project manager's conduct, and investigate compliance enforcement and reasons for lack of progress in consent order completion.

First term village mayor Eric Bryant says, "The agency has dragged-out order implementation for 15 years with only minimal remedial action being completed. We have not even been able to get copy of the original Work Plan that ExxonMobil, HH Liquidating Corp. and CBS Operations, Inc. were required to submit to the IEPA in 1995-96 stating how the pollution would be identified and removed, and a timeframe for those activities."

The consent order is related to former operations of the current owners and mandates them to clean up toxic wastes that have engulfed the village and contaminated Lake DePue and surrounding area.

Bryant recently submitted a letter to IEPA director Douglas P. Scott stating concerns which include lake restoration and status of a 750,000-ton pile of slag left on the operation's site.

The mayor says Lake DePue was one of the state's most popular natural resources connected to the Illinois River, which offered excellent fishing, recreation, water fowl hunting and boating venues. It has been the site for district and national championship boat races for several decades. Contamination and silt in the lake have already negatively impacted fishing and boating and threatens future racing events. The lake continues to fill-in and is about half of its original size of 1200 acres. The area is the 14th worst toxic site on the U.S. Superfund's National Priority List.

"DePue will celebrate its 150th year as a village in 2011. It will be a sad situation unless our national, state and local elected officials step forward and spearhead restoration of the lake," Bryant says. "We will be asking other municipalities in Bureau County and throughout Illinois to pass resolutions of support to restore the lake, and the community will be forming a citizen action team to aggressively pursue this effort."

"In addition, we will be asking Illinois residents – adults, teens and school children - and organization's representatives to sign a petition, available at www.villageofdepue.com, to demonstrate support for initiating immediate clean-up of Lake DePue, the village, and surrounding area. Our campaign is called We the People of Illinois. Our battle-cry is Restore the Lake Before It's Too Late."