

DEP to give 2nd order to clean up water contamination at gas stations

By Robert J. Cyr
Journal Inquirer

HEBRON — The state Department of Environmental Protection is on the verge of issuing a second order to a local company to clean up contamination at two gas stations that has made groundwater in some surrounding areas undrinkable for more than eight years.

Drake Petroleum is busy having

testing done on water passing under the Route 66 Citgo Station at 70 Main St. and the Main Street Mobil station to determine the extent of contamination first found there in 2000, Town Manager Jared Clark said.

Drake, which says it is one of New England's largest independent petroleum distributors, owns both the Citgo and the Mobil stations.

The company appealed an order from the DEP last year, DEP

spokesman Patrick Bowe said today. DEP policy is to issue a second order rather than amending the first one, he said.

"We don't usually deny appeals," Bowe said. "We just issue another order."

"DEP is empowered to create an order of conditions," Clark said. "And I understand they're very close to doing that."

Neighboring residences and busi-

nesses that have well water have been using bottled water since, including a highly contaminated fire station, Clark said.

Although some locations, including Town Hall, have "safe levels" of contaminants, most prefer the option of bottled water, he said.

"Everyone just feels a lot more comfortable drinking water if it comes from a relatively pure source," he said. "The town of

Hebron has no jurisdiction in this matter; we're not privileged to the full body of scientific data surrounding it."

A 2001 gas leak at the Citgo station was at first assumed to be the contamination source for those other locations, where the fuel additive MTBE was found. The additive contains benzene, a recognized carcinogen.

The use of MTBE, a fuel additive once used to reduce carbon monoxide and ozone omissions, was banned in Connecticut as of Jan. 1, 2004, because of its ability to move quickly and relatively undetected through an aquifer. The state now uses gasoline that contains ethanol, which is partially made from corn.

In early 2004, Lenard Engineering of Mansfield sent letters to residents and business owners alerting them to groundwater pollution that was discovered in the vicinity of the Hebron Xtra Mart Mobil station at 37 Main St. The company did consulting work for Kenyon Oil Co., the previous owners of the stations.

The letter encouraged recipients within a 500-foot radius of the station to have their drinking water sampled, but did not require them to do so.

After the initial leak was found, the Hebron Commons condominium complex at 30 Main St. and the Patti Dunne School of Gymnastics at 38 Pendleton Road both tested positive for varying levels of MTBE, though none were above the drinking water action level.

The worst contamination so far, however, is found at the Fire Department's Company No. 1's former tank grave at 44 Main St., where testing has revealed levels of MTBE and benzene well above acceptable levels, according to the Chatham Health District, which monitors water quality in town.

Past and present gas station owners have reimbursed the town for its bottled water. Since the initial leaks were found, tanks at both gas stations have been replaced, Clark said.



Irena Pastorello / Journal Inquirer

MARC tournament moment

Bruce Lostocco of Carter Chevrolet, right, is congratulated by co-workers, from left, Don Neilson, Brian Enrique, and Jeff Simmons after hitting a good shot while playing in the 9th annual MARC Inc. Golf Tournament on Thursday at Manchester Country Club. More than \$60,000 was raised at the tournament. Proceeds go to the construction of a new MARC Inc. building to serve people with disabilities.

2 East Hartford disputes lead to arrests of 4 people

By Jenna N. Carlesso
Journal Inquirer

EAST HARTFORD — Four people have been arrested this week on charges stemming from domestic assaults and threatening.

On Wednesday, police were summoned to a Tolland Street home on reports of a dispute involving a knife and bricks.

Roberto Rodriguez, 30, of 822 Tolland St. was arrested on charges of third-degree assault, second-degree attempted assault, and second-degree breach of peace. He was arraigned Thursday in Manchester Superior Court and held in lieu of \$100,000 bond.

His next court date is scheduled for Sept. 19.

Officers said they arrived at Rodriguez's home after an argument between Rodriguez and his father-in-law, Heriberto Vega Sr. The two were bickering over money and employment when, police say, Heriberto Vega Jr. stepped between them to diffuse the argument and was punched by Rodriguez.

The father and son then picked up bricks to defend themselves, according to a police report, while Rodriguez brandished an 18-inch machete.

He began to advance on them, but retreated into the woods when he learned police were on the way, the report states. Officers arrested Rodriguez a short time later after finding him on the railroad tracks.

Vega Jr. sustained a bloody nose. Vega Sr., 54, of 421 Tolland St.

was arrested and charged with second-degree breach of peace. He was released on a promise to appear in court. Vega Jr., 37, was charged with second-degree breach of peace and reckless endangerment, and also released on a promise to appear. Both are slated to be arraigned on Sept. 21.

On Monday, police were dispatched to Main Street on reports of a stabbing.

Janice E. Harvey, 56, of 101 Connecticut Blvd., was arrested on charges of second-degree assault, first-degree reckless endangerment, and second-degree breach of peace. She was arraigned in Manchester court and held in lieu of \$20,000 bond.

Police said a witness told them

Harvey and a man had been arguing when she grabbed a steak knife from atop the refrigerator and stabbed the man at least twice. She then fled the area, the witness told police.

The man was taken by ambulance to St. Francis Hospital and Medical Center. He had two cuts on the left side of his torso and a cut on his right ring finger, officers said.

Police said they found Harvey later that night near her apartment. Upon her arrest, Harvey told police she had been strangled and was acting in self-defense, but later changed her story to say she was being held tightly in a bear hug and couldn't breathe, according to police reports.

She will return to court on Sept. 18.

DUI checkpoint to be set up Sat. in Andover

ANDOVER — State police will conduct a sobriety checkpoint in Andover on Saturday, Aug. 23.

Police from the Troop K barracks in Colchester said by detecting, arresting, and deterring those who would otherwise drive under the influence of intoxicating substances, the roadways can be safer for everyone.

The checkpoint is an effort to prevent DUI related accidents, injuries, and deaths.

For more information, contact Troop K commanding officer Lt. Regina Rush-Kittle, 860-537-7500, or Sgt. James O'Rourke, driving under the influence coordinator for Troop K.