

DELLUTION - CARGILL 1981

Odor complaints just sniffed at

By Lori Wallner
Herald staff writer

Without doubt, there's an unpleasant odor from a Carpentersville chemical complex, but the problem is two-fold: which plant has the smell, and who's job is it to put a stop to it?

Several Carpentersville village officials said they have received residents' complaints about objectionable odors emanating from the Cargill plant area, but were unsure if the fumes were coming from Cargill or the neighboring plant McWhorter Inc.

Although he said it was hard to gauge exactly how many residents have complained about fumes from the Cargill/McWhorter area, Village Manager Richard Escalante said there were at least four complaints that he knew.

"We've gotten complaints... it is just a matter of identifying the source (of the odor)," Escalante said.

And, identifying the source of the fumes is up to the

Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, he added.

"It is a very technical problem...an individual alone cannot deal with it. The EPA is the first agency which should be involved," Escalante said.

Deciding which plant is responsible for the odor and getting that company to comply with environmental standards is the responsibility of the EPA, he added.

"If the goal is to stop the emissions, then the EPA is the agency directly responsible," he said.

Village engineer Steven Starek said the village keeps a record of all the complaints filed, and Escalante said those complaints have been forwarded to the EPA.

In addition, Escalante said he spoke to the EPA and to the management of Cargill and McWhorter about stifling the smell.

Village President Herb Radtke said he has not smelled the odor recently, but

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during last summer, the fumes were evident and he received as well as issued many complaints.

"My wife, herself, has been calling the EPA, and she writes down on the calendar every time she smells it," Radtke said.

Carpentersville Fire Chief Richard Paul said he has heard residents complain about the smell for 20 years, and that forwarding complaints to the EPA is not effective.

"Forwarding complaints to the EPA is ridiculous, by the time the complaints are processed and the EPA calls the plant to tell them they are going out to investigate, the smell is temporarily taken care of," Paul said.

Paul added, the very nature of a chemical plant so close to a residential area is dangerous.

"By their very nature, chemical plants are dangerous...the clock is ticking," he said.

1-13-86

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