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ADMINISTRATIVE RECORD COVER SHEET

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Corps to treat depot's polluted groundwater

By Tom Charlier
The Commercial Appeal

A federal plan to extract and treat contaminated groundwater at the former Defense Depot Memphis could keep dangerous chemicals from reaching the city's drinking-water source, officials said Thursday.

Toward the end of this year the Corps of Engineers hopes to begin treating contaminated groundwater discovered during recent federal studies at the 642-acre facility in South Memphis, said David Skridulis, a program manager with the corps' Huntsville, Ala., division.

The water-treatment project, which could last several years, will need approval from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. It is part of a \$1.02 million proposal to further monitor and clean up contamination at the depot, which now is officially known as Defense Distribution Region Central.

As The Commercial Appeal reported Sunday, a government contractor found that industrial solvents and toxic metals — apparently from old depot disposal sites — had contaminated a shallow aquifer and spread off base toward wells serving the Mem-

phis Light, Gas & Water Division. No contaminants have been found in LG&W wells, however.

Besides the groundwater pollution, several "hot spots" of tainted soil and low levels of surface-water contamination were documented in the report by Law Environmental Inc. of Kenesaw, Ga.

The environmental problems prompted EPA to propose that the depot be added to its list of high-priority hazardous waste sites.

Speaking at a briefing for the press and local and base officials, Skridulis said the water-treatment project should reduce the contamination threat.

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