



# THE MEMPHIS DEPOT TENNESSEE

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## ADMINISTRATIVE RECORD COVER SHEET

AR File Number 300

# Central City Neighbors

THE COMMERCIAL APPEAL

MEMPHIS, THURSDAY, MARCH 19, 1998

## Survey targets concerns of depot neighbors

By Tom Charlier  
The Commercial Appeal

When Georgia Oliver sees neighbors stricken with cancer, she can't help but wonder about "those chemicals that are buried over there."

Like some other residents living near the old Defense Distribution Depot Memphis, Oliver has concerns about long-ago waste disposal practices at the 642-acre complex that's only a block south of her home on Lapaloma Street.

As plans proceed toward a cleanup at the depot, Health Department officials are conducting a survey of area residents to gauge their level of knowledge and concern about environmental issues surrounding the

### SOUTH MEMPHIS

base.

The survey is funded with a \$3,000 grant from the National Association of City and County Health Officials. It will ask depot neighbors what they know and what they want to know, said Carter Gray, pollution control manager with the Health Department.

The residents' answers will help the department and other agencies educate the community on environmental health issues and on the cleanup, Gray said.

"Recognizing that there is a good deal of controversy surrounding the depot, the department saw this as an opportunity to get an idea of what the

community needs to participate in the process more effectively," he said.

To find out some of the concerns, department officials attended meetings of neighborhood associations and incorporated those findings into the survey. Once the confidential survey results are compiled, environmental health education opportunities can be created to deal with the issues of greatest interest to residents.

The depot, which opened in 1942 and closed last year, is the focus of a long-term cleanup program. Much of the effort will be directed at Dunn Field on the north side the complex, where a variety of wastes were buried between 1954 and 1970, according to records.

Tests have shown soil and

groundwater beneath the depot to be tainted with chemicals that include polychlorinated biphenyls, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, trichloroethylene and carbon tetrachloride and toxic metals.

State officials, however, do not believe there is any current significant health risk associated with the depot, said Jordan English, Memphis field office manager for the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation's division of superfund.

Officials are concerned that the contamination, believed to be restricted to a shallow aquifer, could move into the deeper Memphis Sand aquifer that supplies the city's water.

Under the plan to deal with the contamination, wells will be installed to intercept the tainted water.

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