



THE MEMPHIS DEPOT TENNESSEE

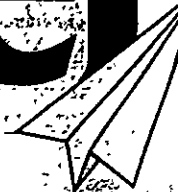
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DEFENSE DEPOT

Army Wants To Monitor TCE

THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IS currently negotiating with developer Jack Belz to see if it can place environmental monitoring wells on his property. The U.S. Army wants to see whether or not the toxic solvent tetrachloroethylene (TCE) is seeping into the city's drinking-water supply.

The solvent is coming from the northwest corner of the former Defense Depot, which is still owned by the U.S. Defense Department. Environmental experts have concluded that if the ground beneath the surface is missing a critical layer of hard clay, it's possible that TCE is migrating both downward and westward into Memphis' drinking-water supply. Not enough information is yet available to say for sure, but consultants want to test the ground under an adjacent parcel of land to see what the actual threat is.

The key place underground that needs to be studied lies below property owned by Belz.

"We are currently in negotiation with Mr. Belz's attorneys," says Shawn Phillips, remedial project manager for the Depot. "We're the bad guys here. We believe this is our contamination; we just hope [Belz] lets us onto his property to check out our problem." There is no word on when the developer and the government will reach an access agreement.

The actual health threat to Memphians is unclear. Officials from Memphis Light, Gas and Water believe that they will be able to filter out the TCE before it reaches private faucets and public drinking fountains.

■ — PHIL CAMPBELL

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