# SOUTH HILL UPDATE
## August 2008

**INTRODUCTION**

This is the second in a series of updates being issued by the NYSDEC in an effort to keep the community informed regarding the status of investigation and remediation activities in the South Hill area of Ithaca, NY. The first update, released in April 2008, is available on the NYSDEC's website at http://www/dec/state.ny.gov/chemical/8669.html.

**EMERSON POWER TRANSMISSION**

In response to the results of ambient air sampling conducted in the South Hill area by Emerson in November 2007, a number of follow-up investigations were completed during the week of July 7 to further evaluate the ambient air quality in the neighborhood to the north-northwest of the plant. These included sampling the exhaust vents on several existing sub-slab depressurization systems, sampling the air inside manholes along the Turner Place and East Spencer Street sewers, and evaluating the potential for air impacts from sources of contamination located outside the neighborhood. The results of these investigations are expected to be available for NYSDEC and NYSDOH review in early September.

On July 14, the NYSDEC and the NYSDOH approved a revised *Supplementary Remedial Program/Alternative Analysis Report*, the purpose of which was for Emerson to develop a comprehensive remedial program for the site, including contaminated groundwater and soil vapor. A number of pre-design investigation activities were identified for completion by Emerson in order for the company to finalize its proposal to the NYSDEC and the NYSDOH.

On July 17, as part of the provisions of the approved *Supplementary Remedial Program/Alternative Analysis Report*, Emerson submitted an *Interim Remedial Measure Design Report* that proposed an enhancement to the existing groundwater extraction system located in the vicinity of the fire water reservoir. The purpose of the system is to intercept and treat contaminated groundwater emanating from the area of the reservoir. The report was approved on August 12, and construction is scheduled to begin by the end of the month.

During the week of July 28, soil vapor sampling was completed north of the plant along sanitary sewer lines servicing the facility, along laterals associated with the sewer lines, and in the vicinity of known bedrock fractures. The results of the sampling will be utilized to evaluate potential remedial alternatives to control the migration of contaminated soil vapor along these preferential pathways.

On July 30, NYSDEC and NYSDOH officials met with Emerson and its consultant to tour the interior of the plant and to discuss Emerson's proposed actions to address the current and potential impacts related to soil vapor intrusion into the facility. Once this issue is resolved, the NYSDEC will begin preparing an amendment to the December 1994 Record of Decision.

In this document, the NYSDEC will identify its preferred final remedy for the entire site. The document will be subject to a public review and comment period, tentatively planned for October. A public meeting to discuss the proposed remedy will also be held at that time.

## FORMER AXIOHM FACILITY

A pilot study was completed by the Brownfield Cleanup Program volunteer in May to evaluate in situ chemical oxidation (ISCO) as the treatment alternative for groundwater contaminated with volatile organic compounds. ISCO is a remediation technology that involves the injection of an oxygen-releasing compound (in this instance, potassium permanganate) into the subsurface to enhance the natural degradation of contaminants in groundwater. The results of the pilot study indicated that this technology would effectively treat the groundwater contamination, but the use of well points to deliver/disperse the chemical would not be effective. Accordingly, a series of trenches excavated into the fractured bedrock was utilized in lieu of the well points for full-scale treatment. Injections began on June 26 and were completed in early August. A groundwater monitoring program is now underway to track the progress of the treatment.

## ADDITIONAL WORK BEING CONDUCTED BY THE NYSDEC

### NCR Sewer

Since April, the NYSDEC has continued its investigation of the former NCR sewer line as a potential migration pathway for soil vapors. The investigation focused on a portion of the line south of Columbia Street and north of Coddington Street. Using a phased approach, soil vapor samples and soil vapor intrusion-related samples were collected from several homes, and from the bedding along two sewer laterals. The structure sampling results indicate that no actions are necessary to address the potential for soil vapor intrusion. The results from soil vapor samples collected along the first of the two laterals indicates that contamination does not exist in this area. The results from the sampling performed along the second lateral are currently being validated. A report discussing all of the sample results should be available by the end of October.

### Phase VI Study Area

The Phase VI Study Area is generally bounded by Turner Place to the west, Aurora Street to the east, and Prospect Street to the north. Since the source of soil vapors migrating along the sewer lines in this area has not been determined, both Emerson and NCR have declined to perform additional sampling. Accordingly, in July, the NYSDEC began evaluating select homes along Columbia Street and South Aurora Street utilizing one of its stand-by contractors. The purpose of the evaluation is to determine if contaminated soil vapors are present at levels that could pose a threat to indoor air quality. Additional homes may be scheduled for testing depending upon access and the results of the initial round of testing. Full-scale soil vapor intrusion testing, if required, would not commence until after the start of the heating season in the fall.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

As the documents cited in this and future updates are finalized, copies will be placed in the Tompkins County Public Library, 101 East Green Street, Ithaca, NY.