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MAQUOKETA

# SENTINEL-PRESS

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■ Helen Dotterweich probate



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MSP photos by Kelly Gerlach

The long-awaited clean-up of Maquoketa's January 2008 fire site progressed this week as nearly five dozen truckloads of material were hauled from the South Main Street site to the designated landfill near Milan, Ill. The giant excavator loading the material had reached

the basements of the four buildings involved. Clean-up rules require that the material being loaded be drenched with a steady flow of water to prevent any asbestos particles from becoming airborne.

## Progress made on Main St. clean-up

By DOUGLAS MELVOLD

Maquoketa's downtown fire clean-up project continued full speed ahead this week as the remaining walls came tumbling down, excavators filled one large refuse bin after another and a dozen or more trucks hauled debris to the Quad Cities area landfill in shuttle fashion.

"We're making good progress," Brandon Neilson, the on-site engineer for Howard R. Green Co. of Cedar Rapids, observed Thursday night, April 29.

The Green engineering company is overseeing the cleanup of the debris from the South Main Street fire that destroyed four downtown buildings and damaged two others in January of 2008, 39 months ago.

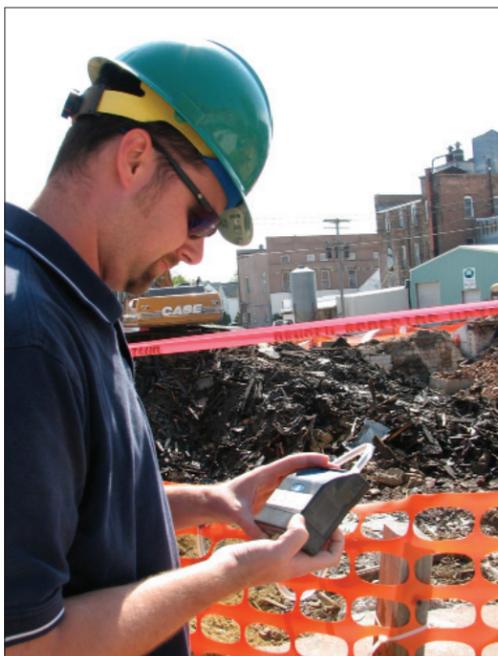
G&B Construction of Burlington is handling the cleanup of the asbestos-contaminated debris under a \$268,550 contract with the city.

The project was progressing on schedule as of Thursday, Neilson said. With possible thunderstorms or rain creeping into the Friday forecast, operations may be slowed, he said.

He said 25 truckloads of debris were sent to the landfill on Wednesday, April 28, and some 32 loads were hauled on Thursday.

"Being able to get 30-plus loads out in a day is pretty good progress, as good as can be expected," particularly considering that the Milan, Ill., landfill where the material is being taken closes at 3 p.m. each day.

Because it takes a truck about an hour to reach the landfill once it leaves Maquoketa, the hauling for the day essentially stops at about 2 p.m., Neilson noted.



Brandon Neilson, an engineer with Howard R. Green Co. of Cedar Rapids, the engineering firm overseeing the downtown clean-up project, checks one of several air monitoring devices that are mounted around the perimeter of the project. The firm is taking air samples continually during the project to determine the level of asbestos in the air during the clean-up operations. Initial results received late this week showed only insignificant amounts.

Approximately 12 to 15 trucks are transporting material in the morning; the number of trucks on the road tapers off as the closing time draws near.

Neilson said it would be convenient if the landfill were open later hours, but he said the landfill operators are offering a favorable tipping price "so we really can't complain."

The latter part of the afternoon is spent getting the material prepared and getting an early start at 6 a.m. the next day.

Neilson said the biggest surprise to the job so far has been the amount of carpet, vinyl and other floor covering materials that has been found mostly intact in the former Breitbach Floor Covering building.

"We've pulled out quite a few rolls of carpet and flooring material," the engineer said. "I don't think they were expecting that much. They're all pretty much intact, other than water damage and damage from the debris. They're still all rolled up."

Another unexpected find on Tuesday was a water line in the basement of either the Sue's Hallmark or Breitbach building. Water was flowing from the pipe, creating standing water in the basement floor. G&B crews crimped the line to stop the flow.

Asked how long the water may have been running, Neilson said there is no way to tell for certain. He said it's possible the water may have been running constantly since the Jan. 19, 2008 fire, or it may have started running at any point since then, perhaps triggered by a shift or settling of the debris pile that hit the pipe, opening it up.

"I don't know the exact gallons per minute it was running, but it was a decent amount," Neilson said. "There was standing water in the basement. But it's shut off now."

Results of the first batch of air monitoring samples taken earlier this week were received from the laboratory, he said. As expected, they showed no significant amounts of asbestos, well within the acceptable range, he said.

The engineering firm has located air monitoring devices at several locations around the perimeter of the site. The devices collect particles in the air, which are sent to a laboratory for analysis for the presence of asbestos.

Engineers said earlier that tests showed that the buildings, as they originally stood, had only small amounts of asbestos. But the Iowa Department of Natural Resources requires special handling of the material if any of the cancer-causing

■ CLEAN-UP,  
Please turn to page 3

## Learn how to help the Red Cross respond to emergency situations

A Disaster Action Team meeting will be held in Maquoketa Monday, May 3, at 6 p.m.

The meeting is open to Disaster Action Team members and trainees, including brand-new trainees – basically anyone interested in becoming a member, according to Red Cross organizers.

The meeting is geared toward people interested in learning more about how to help the American Red Cross respond to local and national disasters. New members will gain direct information about how Red Cross operates and what its policies are. They will also get to meet and socialize with other members.

Those interested in attending the meeting are

asked to contact the Gateway Area Chapter of the American Red Cross at (563) 242-5223. Callers will be told where the meeting will be held. They will also be given basic information about Red Cross leadership, how the Disaster Action Team is structured, what training is required and how to maintain active status.

Before adding volunteers to the response list, Red Cross requires volunteers to pass an interview and background check. Trainees must also complete an orientation and an online introduction to disaster services. The introduction is open to the public and can be seen at [www.redcross.org/flash/course01\\_v01](http://www.redcross.org/flash/course01_v01).