Lease option sparks interest of cement firms

The Associated Press reported Wednesday that a lease option agreement could spark interest among cement firms to purchase land near the proposed XL-5 missile defense site in Utah.

The Associated Press said the lease agreement is expected to be announced soon, and several firms have already expressed interest in the project. The Utah Department of Environmental Quality has approved the lease agreement, which would allow the firms to build a new facility near the proposed site.

The lease agreement is being negotiated between the Utah Department of Environmental Quality and the U.S. Department of Defense. The project is expected to create hundreds of jobs and significantly boost the local economy.

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EPA testing

Valley water

radiation levels

Malcolm Ritter

Staff Writer

Water from two Rapid Valley wells exceeded federal radiation limits this year, but the water system they feed can't be labeled unsafe yet, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

EPA needs another sample of water from Rapid Valley Water Co. before the company's water can be considered in violation of federal regulations.

The company has been using water from the South Fork River, but it has been determined that the water from the Rapid Valley well is the primary source of contamination.

The company has agreed to install additional treatment facilities to ensure that the water is safe for consumption.

Some local residents are concerned about the safety of the water and are calling for more testing to be done.
evenly split in Rapid City as they were 10 months ago, according to the Journal
RapidPoll.

The latest random sampling found 42.5 percent, or 108 people, favor the constitutional amendment while 40.2 percent (102) are opposed. A significant 17.3 percent (44) remained undecided.

\[ \text{RCT 10-31-80} \]

Valley water

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leukemia. But Steichen said the suspect well water hasn’t been available long enough to cause a dangerous buildup.

In addition, the wells only supply part of the company’s water.

The EPA levels exceeded by the wells were set not for short-term hazard, but to protect a consumer who drinks the water over a lifetime, according to Bill Engel of EPA. The agency defines a lifetime as 70 years, which is longer than either of the wells has been operating. One was drilled in 1957 and the other in 1967.

To check on drinking water, EPA required a supplier to submit quarterly samples of water it delivers. If the average of four quarterly readings exceeds a federal limit, EPA can declare a violation and take action. Samples from Rapid Valley cover three quarters so far, and a fourth sample is due in December.

Water sampled at one home on the system in May exceeded federal maximums for both radium content and alpha radiation (a stream of microscopic particles given off by radioactive substances like uranium or radium). Three other samples, taken at other points in the system, have met those standards.

Results of water tests at the wells and the home were brought to light Thursday in a press conference by the Black Hills Alliance. “In view of the increasing water needs of Rapid Valley, a solu-

tion to this problem should be found immediately,” said Lilias Jones of the group.

Possibilities include bottled water, increased use of Rapid Creek’s water and new wells, she said.

“Enforcement and public notification procedures relating to radiation contamination are weak at best, as the radiation in Rapid Valley’s water has been known since March without action being taken,” she said.

High readings in the wells came from samples taken in March. The readings are expressed in terms of picocuries, a measure of radiation.

EPA’s limit for alpha radiation from drinking water is 15 picocuries per liter of water. The well yielded water with 36.8 picocuries (plus or minus 5.4) per liter and 163.9 picocuries (plus or minus 10) per liter.

For alpha radiation from radium, which the federal government limits to 5 picocuries per liter, one well produced nearly 40 picocuries per liter. The other

well’s water had less than one picocurie per liter.

The sample from the home, which is near the well with the higher readings, showed 45 picocuries (plus or minus 5.9) per liter of overall radiation and about 28 picocuries per liter of radiation from radium.

The home belongs to Roy Graff of the water company, who said EPA would close down the wells in a hurry if there were an imminent danger. “There’s nothing to worry about whatsoever,” he said.

Both wells with high readings draw water from the Lakota Sandstone aquifer, an extensive aquifer in the Hills area. Steichen said the well with the higher readings is 1,500 feet deep, and the other 1,800 feet deep.

Steichen said he believed the radiation source to be naturally occurring.

The water company gets water not only from the wells, but also from three other sources: Rapid City, Rapid Creek (through a treatment plant now shut down for repairs) and a sunken box that catches runoff.

Water from these sources, together before it gets to the 1,400 customers, is treated with chemicals to kill germs.

The proportion of water that gets from the wells once it reaches the treatment plant is not known. Engel said he had no idea.

Engel said that when the company doesn’t want to sample, it must sample his samples. Engel said he would be glad to show the high sampling. “If you don’t like it, you can have your samples taken,” he said. Engel said the company could do that if it wanted.

Bob Dugger, water manager, said he planned to monitor places in the system where the water is at the same point in the system. In the vicinity of Graff’s home, he would like to monitor the well.

Dugger said there was no contamination in the water at the two wells and the three other sources, he said.
RapidPoll was conducted Monday and Tuesday.

When the same issue was surveyed in December, 238 households were contacted with the following results: 45.7 percent against, 44.9 percent in favor and 9.2 percent undecided.

By late June, RapidPoll found those favoring the Dakota Proposition had gained a slight edge but there was a higher percentage of undecides: 40.4 percent in favor, 37.6 percent opposed and 22 percent undecided. RapidPoll gathered 218 responses in that survey.

The significance of the latest polling is that there has been extensive media coverage and campaign advertising dealing with Dakota Proposition not present during the first two surveys. In

all three, the same question was asked: "Do you favor Dakota Proposition."

RapidPoll is not a scientific method of determining public opinion. People contacted are selected randomly from the Rapid City telephone directory.

Dakota Proposition, called Constitutional Amendment B on the ballot, would roll back real estate valuations to 1977 "full and true" levels. The maximum taxes would be 1 percent of that assessment and would be limited to 2 percent annual increases.

It includes other provisions. Two-thirds of the state Legislature must approve new state taxes, and two-thirds of a community's "qualified electors" would have to endorse new local taxes.

Opponents say Dakota Proposition will cut taxes to local governments 40 to 60 percent and cause havoc with public schools. Proponents say governments can survive with less tax money. The measure was patterned after Proposition 13 which passed in California two years ago.

RapidPoll made 632 calls in the most recent survey. Of the 391 people who answered their phones, 254 answered the question.

Opinions on the controversial amendment varied. "I'm not interested," said one. Three said they needed "more information before deciding. An opponent said, "Absolutely not." And one who favors the tax change said, "If it will cut taxes, I approve it."

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down for repairs) and a "gallery," a sunken box that collects seepage. Water from these sources is mixed together before it gets to the company's 1,400 customers, so radioactive elements from the well water are diluted.

The proportion of water a customer gets from the wells depends on where he taps into the system.

Engle said that while EPA regulations don't say where a water supplier must sample his system, the final sampling should be done near the home where the high sample was taken. If that reading gives a fourth-quarter average above the federal radiation standards, "we will have to take some sort of action," he said.

Bob Dugger, water company manager, said he plans to sample four places in the system, including the vicinity of Graff's home, and let EPA "go from there." He also will sample the two wells and the three other water sources, he said.