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JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI

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Crystal Springs may join suit

■ Toxic chemicals cleanup at Kuhlman Electric at issue

By James V. Walker
Clarion-ledge Staff Writer

CRYSTAL SPRINGS — More than a year after Kuhlman Electric discovered high levels of toxic chemicals during a plant expansion, city officials dissatisfied with cleanup efforts are considering join-

ing a lawsuit against the company. "We have not made any decision," said Mayor Hugh Webb. "For right now, we're trying to make sure the communication lines are open." The city, Kuhlman officials and state and federal regulators have been meeting monthly to discuss cleanup efforts since the company discovered the polychlorinated biphenols, or PCBs, in April 2000.

PCBs were used in the electrical transformers built at Kuhlman's Crystal Springs facility before they were banned in the United States in 1977. Studies have shown the chemicals to cause cancer in lab animals and skin rashes and respiratory problems in humans. Hundreds of people who live adjacent to the plant may have been exposed to PCBs, and the chemical has been detected in the water and fish

of nearby Lake Chatagua, a city park that drew fishermen from across the state before the contamination. "Sometimes when you catch a catfish, you can smell it when you cook them," said David Brewer, the park caretaker who lives by the lake. "A lot of people been coming up sick — cancer. They made us quit fishing out there. It ruined the lake." Webb said he has been frustrated with the slow

pace of the cleanup, and was concerned about residents who made fish from the lake a staple of their diets. But he said that city officials, regulators and company executives have been meeting monthly about the cleanup, and he wanted to continue a cooperative relationship as long as possible. Paul Achesson, vice president of Kuhlman's Crystal Springs facility, said he expected the cleanup to be

"a long process" that could last another year or longer. Contaminated dirt has been removed from around houses to the south and east of the plant, and replaced with clean dirt, Achesson said. Sheets of plastic have been placed over contaminated areas at the plant to keep the chemicals from spreading further, and the company is getting ready to test areas north of the plant. See LAWSUIT, 5B



Dozens find friends, fun at day camp

■ Stewpot offers supervised play, social time

By Lisa Uzelle Gates
Special to The Clarion-Ledger

Like many great ideas, the Stewpot Summer Camp

will serve a total of 200 by the end of the seven-week program. They go on a lot of field trips, have a lot of playtime and avoid television and video games. "It's supervised play and social time," Ott said. "We have a lot of fun. They get a



Brian Albert Broom/The Canton Ledger

High compliance

Madison County Sheriff's Department Captain Joey Ledlow checks licenses, proof of insurance and seat belts at a roadblock on West County Line Road on Saturday afternoon. Ledlow said few arrests were made and almost everyone had proof of insurance.

Lawsuit: Suit claims state environmental agency negligent

From IB
near the lake, to find out how much cleanup will be required there. The cleanup of the plant itself is also in the planning stages.

"We were the ones who discovered the contamination, and as soon as we did, we reported it to the proper authorities," Acheson

said. "This is something we've all inherited, and it's our responsibility to go after cleaning up as quickly as we can."

Jerry Banks, head of the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality's hazardous waste division, said he considered the risk of health problems from the contamination

"minor," and said the problems date from decades ago, before the chemicals were known to be hazardous.

"We don't know that anybody did anything wrong," Banks said.

The two lawsuits filed this month claim that Kuhlman failed to inform residents and employees of the toxic chemicals they were

being exposed to, and allege a connection between the PCBs and a wide range of illnesses, from skin cancer to respiratory problems.

One of the lawsuits names MDEQ as a co-defendant, claiming the agency was negligent in failing to discover the problem and expedite the cleanup.

Reunion: Donations taken to help build local playground

From IB
prominent black businessman in Canton in the 1940s and 1950s.

"I was the first child born here in 1952 in the apartments," Body said. Nearly 50 years later, Body said he's teaching young people how to box "so they have something to do instead of riding the streets."

His prized pupil is his son, Donald Body II, 25, of Canton, who fought last year in Junior Olympics Golden Gloves competition. He was also on hand for Saturday's festivities.

But nobody was fighting at the friendly reunion that brought out local leaders, including Canton

Camp: 5 counselors this year were former participants

From IB
The first reunion had special significance for Sanders, one of its organizers who also stayed busy cooking. She said her family roots at the housing complex date back to its origins. "My great-grandma moved in here in 1952 — she was born a slave," Sanders said.

Reunion-goers snapped up red Prichard Homes T-shirts at \$10 each and spent \$20 on "memory books" that detailed the history of the housing complex and featured photos of former residents from their days at Rogers High in Canton.

Many visitors made it a point to stop by one of the large tents to greet retired Canton teacher Virgie

that they have just enough sponsors to cover the children who show up for camp.

"We are convinced that it is programs like our summer camp that reach children at the time in their lives when they need all the love and support we can give them, that will help alleviate many of the problems that face our community," Ott said in a letter to potential donors.

Sponsors receive a personal letter from the camper they sponsored, telling them about their experiences and thanking them.

To sponsor a camper or make a donation, send money to Stewpot

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