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April 26, 2011

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Citizens asked to express opinions about use of Piketon Atomic Plant site

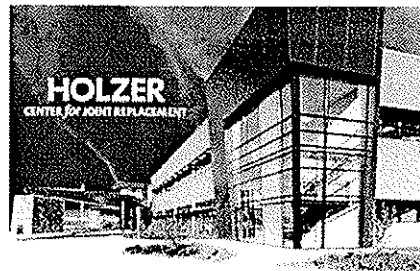
Since the early 50's, the nearly 4,000 acres of land south of Route 32 and east of Route 23 has been known by a variety of names. The site was originally developed for uranium enrichment for nuclear defense. In 1964, the "A Plant" came under the control of the Department of Energy (DOE) and the uranium enriched there was used in energy production.



Jackson Mayor Randy Heath is keenly interested in the future of the "A Plant" site in Piketon. He is part of the Visioning Team that is discussing what kinds of business and industry may occupy that site once the decommissioning and decontamination are complete.

In 1992, DOE leased it to United States Enrichment Corporation (USEC). Demand for nuclear power began to wane and less of the site's product was needed. USEC's focus shifted to the proposed American Centrifuge Project and a cold shut down began for much of the site. DOE contracted with Fluor-B&W to decommission and decontaminate most of the land.

Now DOE is considering how the reclaimed lands can be repositioned to benefit southern Ohio with a special focus on Jackson, Pike, Ross, and Scioto Counties.



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welcomed.

Introductory meetings were held in Chillicothe and Portsmouth earlier this year. The first of two scheduled meetings in Jackson took place April 19 at South District Extension Office. A second will be held Tuesday, May 3 at the Extension Office from 5:30 to 8 p.m. Don't worry about missing dinner, pizza and cold drinks will be served. Come as you are, but come and express your views.

At the first meeting, Voinovich Center personnel Robin Stewart and Robert Gordon

To that end, DOE's office of Environmental Management brought the Voinovich Center of Leadership and Public Affairs at Ohio University into the picture to assist in gathering public opinion about what folks would like to see happen on this land.

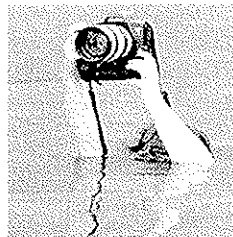
At the end of this process, a comprehensive summary of dominant opinion will be presented to DOE. There is no guarantee any of these ideas will come to pass, but if you are interested in having a voice in future development, the time to speak is now. All opinions are

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provided extensive packets of background information not only about the site but about the process of assessing the public's vision for the future.

Of particular interest was a report based on thinking expressed at a meeting in March. Most people agree they want good, high paying jobs in whatever comes onto the land. That will boost the economic growth of the region. Folks also insist the jobs must be safe. Respondents hope that whatever is sited will provide jobs that keep young people gainfully employed here instead of having to leave the area to find work.

Among specific industries people would like to see, there was great interest in building on the infrastructure already in place and keeping the focus on energy production, but with an emphasis on the newly developing "green" technology. Others saw this land as a great place to develop new manufacturing plants to supply the needs of businesses already in operation in the region.

Before breaking into small discussion groups, Stewart asked participants to concentrate on ideas that are "feasible, realistic, actionable, and likely to be supported by the public."

If you would like more information before you dive into this venture or can't make the next meeting but still want to participate, go to the website at www.portsfuture.com. You can also reach the Voinovich Center at 740-593-2222.

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