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The Paducah Sun

Former plant workers to be exhumed

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finalized in a week or two. He said he is coordinating the work of a local funeral home, cemetery workers, a vault company, a pathologist and the laboratory that will do the testing.

A permit must be obtained from the McCracken County Health Department to exhume the bodies. Amanda Cole, who processes the permits, said an application must be filed by a funeral home that will oversee the exhumations. She said obtaining a permit is a rare but routine procedure. "I've never had one denied," she said.

McMurry said the process involves digging up a grave, removing the sealed vault, opening the vault and then taking the casket to a hospital or funeral home so that a pathologist can take the bone samples that will be sent to a lab. "It takes only about 30 minutes to take the samples," he said.

After the testing is completed, the casket is returned to the cemetery and placed in a new vault.

McMurry did not identify the lab that will do the testing but said it is located outside the United

Paducah ranks 15th in severity of hazard

Associated Press

LOUISVILLE, Ky.

Although the Paducah Gaseous Diffusion Plant site contains more radioactive waste than was once believed, federal officials say this country has other, more serious radioactive-contamination hazards to worry about.

The U.S. Department of Energy plans to spend three-quarters of its environmental-cleanup budget for fiscal 2000 on projects at the 10 worst

nuclear cleanup sites in the nation.

Of the \$5.7 billion that the department will spend on waste detection, cleanup, treatment and disposal, \$4.3 billion will go to those 10 sites. Fifty-five other cleanup projects, including Paducah, must compete for the rest of the money.

The DOE does consider the Paducah site to be a major environmental problem: It is ranked 15th in spending among the agency's top 20 projects.

States. "It is a lab that hasn't done any work for the Department of Energy," which owns the plant that is now leased to the United States Enrichment Corp.

Harding, who was 58 when he

died, worked at the plant from 1952 until 1971. He died March 1, 1980. Early in his career, he worked as a process operator, mixing powdered uranium with fluorine and other chemicals. In a journal that

he kept, Harding said the air inside the building was often heavy with uranium dust that he inhaled.

Harris worked as a machinist at the plant. Other information about his career was not available.

Mathis worked at the plant from 1971 until he died of cancer in July 1998 at the age of 53. At the time of his death, he was the director of training and human resources development. Before that assignment, he worked in numerous jobs around the plant.

The \$10 billion suit was filed in U.S. District Court in Paducah on Sept. 3 against Union Carbide Corp., Martin Marietta, Lockheed Martin and General Electric Co. The first three are former operators of the plant; General Electric shipped spent fuel to Paducah for reprocessing.

Attorneys say that the class-action suit could eventually apply to more than 10,000 current and former plant employees and members of their families.

Besides making claims of illness, the suit alleges that workers were unknowingly exposed to dangerous amounts of radiation and are suffering emotional distress because they fear becoming sick.

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