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Anatomy of a CLEANUP

Indianapolis firm helps dry cleaner
in Bloomington remove contaminated soil

By Mercedes Rodriquez

Bloomington — About 120 tons of soil were removed from the site of Bloomington Cleaners, a dry cleaning business owned by Steve Arthur, during the week of June 30.

Arthur says though he entered the cleaning business in 1992, his building had housed dry cleaners for more than 35 years. Equipment used in the past was more prone to leaks and spills. It was time to clean up, he said.

The Indianapolis firm EnviroForensics was brought in to do environmental cleanup, to remove soil under the building and under the parking lot. The soil was found to be contaminated with perchloroethylene, a chemical used in the dry cleaning process. EnviroForensics officials estimate that a job the size of Bloomington Cleaners would cost roughly \$500,000.

Cleanup beginnings

Arthur said soil testing was conducted at 317 W. 17th St. in 2006. Holes were drilled in the floor of his shop, and soil samples brought up with an auger.

EnviroForensics found that the parking lot, a large section where former owners kept their old dry cleaning machinery and another area had been contaminated by perchloroethylene, also known as perc. Perc is a derivative of chlorine that can cause problems if it leaks into the ground water. The substance seeped through the concrete floor and into the soil at the Bloomington business. Since dry cleaners must now contain the chemical, a cleanup was planned.

EnviroForensics conducted searches for historical insurance



Enviroforensics worker removes contaminated soil from inside Bloomington Cleaners which was taken to a landfill near Detroit.

(policies taken out by past owners) that may cover costs associated with the cleanup. According to Arthur, insurance paid for the cleanup.

Remediation plan created

Arthur and EnviroForensics worked with the Indiana Department of Environmental Management to make a remediation plan for cleaning the site.

"Basically, we feel we're cleaning what happened in the 20 years before our ownership," Arthur said.

Last week, a 15-foot wide and 40-foot long chunk of concrete was cut out of the shop's floor. Workers had to move several industrial presses and a massive dry cleaning machine. Miniature excavators were used inside the shop, said EnviroForensics owner Stephen Henshaw. The equipment had to be small enough to fit through the shop's doors.

The shop was closed for a week, with workers digging for 18 hours at a time to get the job done. Workers had to dig up

the soil down to the bedrock. The porous nature of limestone meant that the bedrock wasn't flat.

"Sometimes we had to use picks and shovels to get the dirt out of those little undulations," Henshaw said.

The contaminated dirt was taken to a hazardous waste landfill in Detroit, Henshaw said. A fill material was added to the formerly contaminated areas and new concrete or asphalt set over the top.

Cleaners reopens in 1 week

Bloomington Cleaners reopened July 7. The business will send reports of the cleanup to IDEM. From there, they can earn certification as a clean site. The clean-site certification means the business has satisfactorily gone through the remediation process and meets all the regulatory standards, Henshaw said.

More information is available at www.enviroforensics.com or by calling 866.888.7911



Bloomington Cleaners will be sending reports of the recent remediation to state officials to earn a clean-site certification.