

Published: 11.11.2008

Lukeville station leak costs \$45K

ARIZONA DAILY STAR

Gringo Pass Inc. will pay \$45,000 for a leaky underground storage tank at a gas station near Lukeville, the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality announced Monday.

The violations of the company's gas station along Highway 85 in the Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument date back to 1998.

Gringo Pass also will reimburse the state for money it already spent on corrective action. ADEQ is still working to determine if groundwater was affected by fuel-contaminated soil there.

- Send News & Notes notices to business@azstarnet.com or by fax to 573-4144.

All content copyright © 1999-2008 AzStarNet, Arizona Daily Star and its wire services and suppliers and may not be republished without permission. All rights reserved. Any copying, redistribution, or retransmission of any of the contents of this service without the expressed written consent of Arizona Daily Star or AzStarNet is prohibited.

News

Local veteran fighting DEP over oil tank clean-up

Tuesday, November 11, 2008 1:39 AM EST

By HENRY MOORE

From the cockpit of his P-51 Mustang, John Fitch was executing a plan that was carefully staged. It was Nov. 18, 1944, and allied intelligence had located a concentration of Hitler's new jet aircraft, the ME 262, hidden in the forest alongside the Autobahn in Germany. Fitch and his fellow pilots were operating in three squadrons, two of which would divert the attention of anti-aircraft fire, while his group attacked from a third direction and destroyed twelve enemy jets on the ground. One, however, was noticed by Fitch in flight and climbing off to his east.

He peeled off and opened fire early. "Flashes of my fire lit up one engine." The jet crashed soon after.

Hit by ground fire in 1945, Fitch spent the final 11 weeks of the war as a prisoner.

Though he doesn't consider them the enemy, 90-year-old Fitch is now battling the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection for help in resolving a problem of contamination. He had always monitored the fuel-oil usage in the vintage colonial that he and his wife Elizabeth purchased in Lakeville in 1958. Recently, he suspected that the underground storage tanks were leaking and arranged for a contractor to remove them. Soon after starting the process in October 2007, it became apparent that the tanks had indeed been leaking and Fitch notified the DEP.

The DEP responded to Fitch's notification on Nov. 1, with a letter of acknowledgement. At his expense, Fitch was required to test his and neighboring wells for the presence of petroleum. Originally, five wells, then eight, were identified as needing testing every four months. The agency required that Fitch produce data maps and laboratory testing, that could only be prepared by environmental and engineering professionals. The expenses mounted, Fitch said.

Two thousand tons of contaminated soil were removed from the tank location and were now in large piles on other portions of the property. Though he faced significant expense already, Fitch now had to find a way to dispose of the contaminated soil.

Though his accomplishments are many, Fitch is not a wealthy man. Following the war, he became a world-renowned race car driver, inventor, consultant to automobile manufacturers, as well as designer of a prototype car, which he continues to drive today. He drove Mercedes race cars in the 1950s for the factory team in races around the world, including LeMans, competed in the American-made Cunningham's, and managed the Corvette team for GM in the

11/13/2008
1960s.

Local veteran fighting DEP over oil ta...

Research by Fitch revealed that one method of removing oil contamination from soil was financially viable. A plan was submitted to the DEP and subsequently rejected. That left one costly alternative — to truck the dirt from Lakeville to Waterbury for incineration. The estimated cost is between \$100,000 to \$200,000, which, when added to his professional, legal, testing and original tank removal costs, would bring expenses to approximately \$350,000.

Local politicians have been unable to find a solution. Connecticut Sen. Andrew Roraback is familiar with the situation and receives calls regularly from friends of Fitch asking for assistance.

Aware of Fitch's failed proposal, Roraback commented that he "wished the DEP were more creative" in assisting homeowners with solutions to these problems.

Fitch is juggling this problem among others. His wife, Elizabeth, has been receiving care in an assisted living facility. Coping with Lyme disease and emphysema has slowed the man, but not the mind. Uncompleted projects complete for his attention — projects whose rewards might save him from financial ruin.

Friends of John and Elizabeth Fitch have set up a fund for donations to help pay the accumulated costs. "The Friends of Fitch Homestead Fund" is administered through Salisbury Bank and Trust Company. Though the amount to date has been small compared to legal expenses already incurred, Fitch said he is grateful for the help.

Henry Moore can be reached by e-mail at hmoore@registercitizen.com

URL: <http://www.registercitizen.com/articles/2008/11/11/news/doc49192188d3983284944561.prt>

© 2008 registercitizen.com, a [Journal Register](#) Property

Rutland Herald

This is a printer friendly version of an article from www.rutlandherald.com
To print this article open the file menu and choose Print.

[Back](#)

Article published Nov 1, 2008

Insurance on hook for waste cleanup

By [Susan Smallheer](#) Herald Staff

SPRINGFIELD — A group of insurance companies representing the owners of the Springfield Shopping Plaza, the family of S.R. Young and Bradford Oil will pay the state of Vermont close to \$1 million for cleaning up soil and groundwater pollution from the former GoGoGas service station.

More than 12,000 gallons of gasoline leaked from rusty underground storage tanks at the gas station, said Assistant Attorney General Michael Duane.

"There is some residual contamination in the groundwater," said Duane, noting that the pollution had not affected any private wells in the area, nor had it reached the nearby Black River.

The gas station no longer exists, as it was shut down in 1996 after the leaks were discovered and the tanks dug up, according to Duane.

The leak was first discovered when the tanks underwent routine testing and water was found in the tanks, indicating a leak. He said it was unclear how long the tanks had been leaking, but said they had been installed in the 1970s.

Currently, only double-lined tanks of a certain kind of material can be installed, he said.

When the tanks were dug up, rusty holes were discovered in the tanks, he said, and the pollution was located.

Duane said the state had spent close to \$600,000 on cleaning up and monitoring the pollution from the service station, and the state had successfully sued the owners of the land, the underground tanks, and the gas station itself for the costs and interest.

Duane said the issue was slated to go to trial in September, but a mediator sat down with all the parties, reaching the settlement.

The money will go back into the state's underground petroleum storage tank protection fund.

"This will reimburse our funds," Duane said, noting that the owners of every underground gasoline tank paid an annual fee of \$100 which went into the fund.

Duane said the family of S.R. Young owned the tanks and Springfield Realty Co., which owns the Springfield Shopping Plaza, were "very cooperative" in working with the state to clean up the site and resolve the matter. Bradford Oil operated the gas station.

Duane said the insurance companies involved were Stonington, Northern Security and Great American Insurance Co. They represented Springfield Realty, the family of S.R. Young, and Bradford Oil.

The assistant attorney general said that several more years of monitoring and cleaning up of groundwater would be needed, and that the costs to do that were included in the \$940,000 figure.

GoGoGas and its owner, Bradford Oil Co., are involved in a second pollution case in Springfield. The second GoGoGas location, which is on Clinton Street next to the new Springfield Police Station, is the source of underground pollution as well.

Duane referred questions about the second GoGoGas case to Chuch Schwer, with the Agency of Natural Resources. Schwer could not be reached for comment Friday.

Contact Susan Smallheer at susan.smallheer@rutlandherald.com.
