

**BLUE CHIP PRODUCTS
Elton, Maryland
(Non-Master State List Site)**

Cecil County

1921	Textured Yarn Corporation operated on the site.
1973	Remanufacture of automobile starters and alternators commences at the site. The County Commissioners of Cecil County take fee simple title to the Blue Chip site.
1988	Investigation of an abandoned underground storage tank reveals the soil and groundwater is contaminated with Volatile Organic Compounds.
1996	The Blue Chip Site closes operations.
2000	The MDE issues a Notice letter to Safeguard Scientific, Inc. for the on-site contamination at the Blue Chip site.
2001	March 13, Safeguard Scientific, Inc. waived all interest and forfeited any ongoing rights to purchase the Blue Chip facility in Elkton to the County Commissioners of Cecil County.

Site Location

The Blue Chip Products site is located in Cecil County, MD in the city of Elkton. The site address is 301 Singerly Avenue. The site is approximately 0.87 acres of developed land. It includes an abandoned structure that had been last utilized to house a manufacturing facility.

Site History

The on-site structure was reportedly built in 1921 and served as a manufacturing facility for the Textured Yarn Corporation. Operations at the site, from an unknown date until 1973, consisted of repackaging of yarn products. Remanufacturing of engine starters and alternators reportedly commenced at the site in 1973, and in 1978, rebuilding of starter drives and solenoids was initiated. During this time frame, the site operated as Blue Chip Products. Blue Chip was a subsidiary for Safeguard Scientifics, Inc. The Blue Chip plant closed in August 1995. Since then, the site has remained vacant.

The County Commissioners of Cecil County are the current site owners. The Commissioners acquired fee simple title of the property on April 3, 1973 as a result of a loan provided to Blue Chip from the Maryland Industrial Finance Board (MIFB) for \$554,000. During this period, the MIFB required local jurisdictions to take title to property in order to secure the financing. The County subsequently entered into a 15-year lease agreement with Safeguard. According to the terms of the lease agreement, Safeguard was given the right to purchase the site upon the expiration of the lease on December 31, 1988.

On March 13, 2001, Safeguard Scientific, Inc. waived all interest and forfeited any ongoing rights to purchase the Blue Chip facility in Elkton to the County Commissioners of Cecil County.

Environmental Investigations

In 1988, a 3,000-gallon underground storage tank (UST) reportedly containing spent caustic detergent wash water was removed from the ground adjacent to the building wall, near the southeastern end of the structure. Soil samples from the UST excavation and groundwater samples collected from monitoring wells installed near the removed UST yielded high concentrations of tetrachloroethene (PCE) and trichloroethene (TCE) as well as lower concentrations of several other volatile organic compounds (VOCs).

From 1989 through 1998, additional monitoring wells were installed and sampled in an effort to define the extent and degree of the soil and groundwater contamination at the Blue Chip Products site. Data received from testing of groundwater quality from on-site monitoring wells indicate that high concentrations of VOCs were detected both on-site and off-site during the groundwater sampling event conducted in 1998.

Current Status

On December 4, 2000, the MDE issued a Responsible Person Notification letter to Safeguard Scientific, Inc. for the contamination documented at the Blue Chip site. On March 13, 2001, in a letter to the Commissioners of Cecil County, Safeguard waived its interest and forfeited title to the Blue Chip site. On

March 19, 2001, the MDE issued a letter to Safeguard indicating that it no longer viewed Safeguard as a Responsible Person by virtue of site ownership interest in the property.

The MDE is currently undertaking a Step - Two Site Investigation of the Blue Chip site to determine the current condition of the soil and groundwater quality.

Future Activity

The Blue Chip site has been designated for further investigation using Capital Budget funding. The primary purpose of this site investigation will be to determine if the existing levels of groundwater and soil contamination at the site constitute a threat to human health or the environment. The MDE will contract with an environmental consulting firm to complete a review of all of the existing data in order to provide a comprehensive assessment of the site. The contractor will collect soil samples from the area of the former detergent wash water UST to delineate the extent of the unsaturated soil VOC contamination. The contractor will also collect groundwater samples to determine existing conditions at the site, and to determine the need for additional groundwater monitoring wells to fully delineate the groundwater contaminant plume.

During a site visit on August 13, 2001, two piles of sediment/slag were observed on the second floor of the structure where engine starter remanufacturing equipment was reportedly located. The MDE will collect a sample (for metals analysis) of the unknown material to determine if it should be disposed of as a hazardous waste.

Facility Contacts

Art O'Connell

Maryland Department of the Environment
State Superfund Division

(410) 537-3493

Site Repositories

Maryland Department of the Environment
Waste Management Administration
2500 Broening Highway
Baltimore, MD 21224