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## Radioactive waste brought to landfill Preliminary testing by state and county show normal levels at schools

by **DELORES ROWLAND**  
Estill Tribune News Editor

Estill countians were angry and shocked Thursday to learn that radioactive waste had been dumped at the Blue Ridge Landfill on Winchester Road.

Judge/Executive Wallace Taylor said he learned about it that afternoon from news media. The story had broken

earlier that day in an article in the Courier-Journal.

According to the news article, two state agencies are investigating after receiving a tip.

"Based upon our host agreement, they had no right to bring it from out of state," said Judge Executive Wallace Taylor.

The county had entered

into the host agreement with Waste Management, Inc., which operated the landfill in 1995. Under the terms of the host agreement, when a new operator takes over, the agreement is still binding.

The agreement was made for ten years or the life of the landfill, and even years beyond that.

As Taylor stated, the

agreement states the landfill can take no out of state waste. It also states the landfill cannot accept radioactive or other hazardous waste.

The landfill is also not permitted by the state to take radioactive wastes. Illinois is the only state which can send radioactive waste to approved landfills in Kentucky.

Taylor stated at a press conference Friday afternoon that the waste was hauled to the local landfill, now operated by Advance Disposal, in 50 tractor-trailer loads between July and November of last year.

Investigators said that about 1,500 tons were in those trucks which possibly came from Ohio, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania.

A company called TENORM Services, LLC in West Liberty, Ky. possibly arranged for disposal or hauled the waste to the local landfill. Taylor said Friday that he had been unable to contact the sole owner of that company.

According to the Kentucky Secretary of State's webpage, TENORM Services was incorporated in December 2014.

TENORM stands for the type of waste that was brought to the landfill. The acronym stands for Technologically Enhanced Natural Occurred Radioactive Material. Often the first two letters are left off, and the waste is referred to as just NORM.

The radioactive waste lies below the earth's surface, but it is brought upward during processes such as fracking, oil drilling, and mining. However, the radioactivity of the waste becomes

more concentrated during those processes.

"This could be perfectly innocent. This could be a criminal act," Taylor stated. "Just give us a little time."

State agencies conducted tests at the high school and middle school on Saturday. The results were that all tests came back normal.

The county also hired an agency to test the schools and the landfills. Those tests were done on Sunday and came back with the same results.

Water was also tested, but results of that were not expected to be back until Tuesday.

Taylor said the landfill will also be doing their own tests, but he stated the landfill was going to pay for the cost of the county's tests estimated to cost over \$10,000.

A public forum was set for 6 p.m. on Tuesday at the high school.

"We don't want people to think we're covering something up," Taylor stated.

Arthur Ballard, Director of Operations for Estill County Schools, stated attendance was down a little on Friday.

"It was not nearly as bad as what we thought it might have been," he stated.

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A press conference was held Friday afternoon for local leaders to discuss radioactive wastes which had been brought illegally to the local landfill. Pictured left to right are Ronnie Riddell, director of Estill Emergency Management Agency, Arthur Ballard, Director of Operations for Estill County Schools, and Estill Judge/Executive Wallace Taylor.



The rite of spring is the blooming of the daffodils.

## Local republicans must go to McKee to vote in caucus

The Kentucky Presidential Caucus for the Republican Party is set for this Saturday. There will be no voting sites in Estill County.

Local voters who did not

vote by absentee can go to the Old Jackson County Courthouse in McKee and vote between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.

Voters who were registered to vote Republican as of December 31, 2015 are eligible to vote in the presidential caucus.

The names of some presidential candidates whose names appear on the ballot may have already withdrawn from the election.

There will be no Democratic caucus in Kentucky, but there will be a Democratic presidential primary during Kentucky's regular primary election in May.

### Obituaries

Ronald Abernathy, 72  
Archie Kendrick, 92  
Dr. Albert Rhoton, 83  
Joe Anna  
Robertson, 91  
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## Salmonella investigation continues; public risk diminishes

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Feb. 25, 2016)— The Kentucky Department for Public Health (DPH) and the Estill County Health Department continue to investigate a local outbreak of salmonellosis that has sickened numerous people in the area.

"We do not believe that there is any on-going threat to the public at this time," said Dr. Kraig Humbaugh, senior deputy commissioner of the Kentucky Department for Public Health.

According to health authorities, 72 cases of illness have been reported and 12 people have been hospitalized. Most of the hospitalizations were due to dehydration and all are expected to fully recover. A local restaurant, where many of the individuals who became ill had dined, has voluntarily closed.

"Foodborne illness can be a serious concern for public health — as well as the communities that are affected," said Dr. Humbaugh. "We understand and appreciate the level of concern in the area and want to emphasize our continued commitment to helping the Estill County Health Department investigate this outbreak. We advise anyone with health concerns or questions about risks of being exposed to

Salmonella to contact their healthcare provider."

Salmonella infections are relatively common, generally resulting in diarrhea, fever and abdominal cramps 12–72 hours after infection. The illness typically lasts between 4–7 days. Although most people recover without treatment, severe infections may occur, especially in young infants, the elderly and those with weakened immune systems. The bacteria are often transmitted through contaminated food or water.

"We commend the restaurant owner for being proactive in collaborating with investigators to control the outbreak and take measures to thoroughly clean the premises," said Kenny Cole, environmental director with Estill County health department.

Despite comparisons of various foods eaten at the restaurant by individuals who became ill with those who did not get sick, investigators from DPH and the local health department have not been able to identify a specific food item as a source of the outbreak. Often the source is never found.

Approximately 550 cases of salmonellosis are reported each year in Kentucky.

More information on Salmonella and how to prevent it can be found on the CDC website at <http://www.cdc.gov/salmonella>.

Salmonella is a bacterium that can be found in the intestines and feces of animals. Salmonellosis is often contracted from eating raw eggs or raw poultry or having those products touch other items that are then eaten (such as using the same cutting board for raw chicken and produce). Salmonella can also be found in reptiles and amphibians, like snakes, iguanas, turtles, lizards and frogs that people keep as pets. Salmonella can be transmitted to people by touching and handling those

animals even when they appear healthy and clean.

Handwashing should always be encouraged after playing with pets, especially in young children. Salmonella can occasionally be found on contaminated produce items, so all produce should be thoroughly washed and scrubbed before eating. In general, the FDA recommends thoroughly washing and scrubbing the rinds of all cantaloupes and melons prior to cutting and slicing, and to keep sliced melons refrigerated prior to eating.

If you believe you have experienced symptoms of salmonellosis, consult your healthcare provider.

