



# *On the Penobscot*

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## **Orrington Officials Talk about Possible Redevelopment at HoltraChem Site**

Future economic development opportunity in Orrington was the focus of a recent article in the Bangor Daily News (BDN) as town officials discussed the community's long-term strategy. The discussion included the potential redevelopment of the 240-acre former HoltraChem site.

In the BDN article, writer Brian Swartz reports that Orrington Town Manager Paul White and Ronald Harriman, the town's economic development consultant, have been busy setting the table for future development.

Harriman is quoted saying in the article, "we've had businesses knocking on our door, [representing] significant economic development, and the town wasn't ready. Now the town's being quite proactive to plan for the future. Orrington has been doing long-range planning to take advantage of economic opportunity."

In 2008, Orrington established a program that lets the town authorize tax-increment financing (TIF) districts. According to White, the goal of a TIF district is "to assist with improvements to your community's economic development efforts."

White said that Orrington has two TIF districts, the first one is at Snow's Corner Plaza on the River Road (Route 15) and the second is on Snow's Corner Road in North Orrington.

Swartz then asked Harriman and White to "gaze farther into the future" and discuss the former HoltraChem property that runs from the River Road to the Penobscot River. The town owns the vast site, but Mallinckrodt has agreed to purchase the land where the environmental cleanup work will occur.

"This is a prime site for economic development," Harriman told Swartz, explaining that a paved road and rail line already access the site, which fronts deep water on the Penobscot.

***Redevelopment Continued on back page***





# Mild Winter Spurs Progress at Site

It was a disappointing winter in New England for snowmobilers and skiers, but the mild temperatures have proven to be a boon to engineers and construction workers at the former HoltraChem manufacturing plant where site work remains on schedule.

The most dramatic illustration of the unseasonably warm winter is the sudden rise of the new groundwater treatment plant near the administration building. The new state-of-the-art system will take over the critical work of pumping groundwater from the site through a sophisticated system of tanks and filters. This work is currently being done in a fabricated metal building at a different location on the back of the former manufacturing site. The existing system is too large and inefficient for the current and future groundwater treatment needs.

Once the new building is completed and operational, site workers will be able to demolish the existing treatment building, one of the last remaining structures on the site, as part of the continuing demolition being conducted in preparation for the final environmental remediation.

“Groundwater extraction and treatment has been a key environmental management strategy by Mallinckrodt US LLC for more than a decade,” says Kathy Zeigler, Director for Environmental Remediation for Mallinckrodt, the company that has taken responsibility for the site cleanup.

After HoltraChem closed the plant in 2000 and then dissolved as a corporation, Mallinckrodt expanded its role in the site cleanup process and developed a



*Workers remove the maze of steel that once held the plant's power transformer.*



*One of the site's last remaining buildings is down to its bare steel.*



*Finally reduced to rubble, the remains of the building are removed for disposal.*



more robust groundwater system to pump thousands of gallons of groundwater daily through the treatment plant.

Groundwater extraction and treatment at the site was highlighted by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) in 2001 for dramatically decreasing the level of contaminants in the groundwater. The system pumps water through a series of tanks that filter out contaminants. Once that filtered groundwater meets drinking water standards, it is discharged to the Penobscot River.

The new groundwater system was designed after engineers evaluated the existing system to find ways of making it more energy efficient and even more effective. The new design will significantly reduce energy use and costs and will permit groundwater engineers to separate storm water from groundwater flows.

Zeigler said the new system will be fully operational before soil remediation work begins and that it will treat site groundwater for the foreseeable future.

The completion of construction and launch of operations at the new groundwater treatment plant are currently scheduled for this summer.



*Site engineers, enjoying the mild winter weather, prepare to pour the foundation for the new groundwater treatment building.*



*The energy-efficient building is insulated as inside finish work began.*



*The exterior of the groundwater treatment plant is completed.*

## Redevelopment *Continued*

Mallinckrodt announced in October 2010 that it had signed an agreement to acquire more than 60 acres of land on the former HoltraChem site from the Town of Orrington to help expedite completion of the environmental cleanup. As part of the purchase and access agreement, Mallinckrodt is also providing support for site infrastructure to assist the community in the eventual reuse of the approximately 200 acres of wooded land located along the Penobscot River.

Mallinckrodt has been seeking final resolution on the remediation plan for the site from the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) so that the company can complete the cleanup and allow the town to proceed with its redevelopment plans.

However, Orrington is restricted from developing the 150 acres until the Maine DEP releases certain environmental restrictions on the larger parcel, which is not impacted nor targeted for remediation.

“There are [Maine DEP-imposed] covenants on that land that restrict us from doing anything there,” White stressed. “It does hinder economic development in the Town of Orrington.”



*A warm winter day and a hot cutting torch help a worker as the final structure of a site building is taken down.*

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