

# Three Mile Isle radiation is low; residents return

**HARRISBURG, Pa.** — Relieved officials say first tests detected no noticeable radioactive contamination in residents around Three Mile Island, where area streets and shops are bustling again for the first time in 11 days.

Jim Lyman, spokesman for the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, said the free testing, which will continue in Middletown, has shown no trace of contamination in the first 40 residents.

"All of the scans have been negative for radio nuclides that have been detected in releases from TMI (Three Mile Island)," said Lyman. "These are people who live in immediate vicinity of the site."

Lyman said the absence of radiation contamination was encouraging to local dairy farmers, who feared that high iodine levels which can cause thyroid cancer might show up in their milk production.

More than 400 persons immediately signed up for the tests, which are conducted outside the Middletown Borough Hall in a mobile scientific lab with a sophisticated scanning device rushed in from Ohio.

The tests will be conducted 24 hours a day until all area residents who want one have been examined.

The streets and shops of Middletown, three miles from the Three Mile Island atomic plant, bustled with women and little children again Tuesday for the first time since the nation's worst nuclear accident occurred March 28.

Over 59,788 children resumed classes at 23 schools closed March 30 by Gov. Dick Thornburgh, who advised pregnant women and preschool children to flee a five-mile area around the plant.

The governor rescinded all his directives Monday, declaring the area safe again.

NRC officials said temperatures continued to subside within the stricken Three Mile Island power plant where a core meltdown was feared as late as last week.

As engineers gingerly nursed the malfunctioning reactor to a safe, cold shutdown, NRC officials were expected to reveal soon the scope of damage to the reactor's seething innards.

Some of the 36,000 enriched uranium fuel rods were thought to have ruptured when a streak of malfunctions and human errors sent temperatures and pressures on a nightmarish pattern.

Hanchett said a utility company worker was permitted to make a manual sampling of water in the reactor core to assess damages and get a better grasp of radiation levels. In contrast to previous core sampling attempts, the worker's body received little radiation, he said.

# Texas is a candidate to store nuclear waste

**AUSTIN** — An official with the Bureau of Economic Geology said his office is investigating two sites in Texas for possible storage of high level nuclear wastes.

E.G. Wermund, associate director of the bureau which is part of the Texas Geological Survey, told members of the Senate Natural Resources Committee Tuesday that his office is cooperating with the Department of Energy in its national program to find storage for commercial nuclear waste.

Wermund said possible sites are in the Palo Duro Basin of the Texas Panhandle and the Tyler Basin of East Texas. He said the bureau is studying the geological possibilities of storing the wastes in these areas, while commercial firms are studying the environmental aspects of such an action.

Wermund testified before the committee to support a bill by Sen. Roy Blake, D-Nacogdoches, which would require firms or individuals who plan to store high level radioactive waste in Texas to be licensed by the Natural Resource Council, a group composed of the governor and several state agencies' representatives.

One committee member, Sen. E.L. Short, D-Tahoka, said the Legislature should not instigate such a bill, which he said would encourage federal officials to locate storage areas in Texas.

Wermund said it is too early to tell if either of the Texas sites could possibly store nuclear wastes for 200,000 years — the length of time the wastes would remain radioactive. He said an area in Washington state currently appears to be the most appropriate place for storage found in the national studies, with Texas next in line.

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