

Carson homes sit over benzene, methane

By Gene Maddaus Staff Writer

Posted: 08/28/2009 06:14:48 PM PDT

Shell Oil Co. has discovered extensive contamination of methane and benzene underneath the Carousel housing tract on the southern end of Carson.

The company has begun testing to determine if the methane has seeped into homes, which could be hazardous.

Shell operated oil reservoirs in the area from the 1920s to the 1960s, before the property was sold to a housing developer, said Shell spokeswoman Alison Chassin.

At the time, oil was stored in below-ground reservoirs lined with concrete, not the above-ground tanks that are used today.

Some of that oil appears to have seeped into the soil and the groundwater, creating the recently discovered contamination.

There are about 275 homes in the Carousel tract. Shell plans to hold a public meeting next week to explain the results of the preliminary tests and to seek permission to take core samples on private property.

"Chemicals are a serious matter," said Barbara

Post, president of the Carousel Homeowners' Association. "We have to trust that Shell is going to take care of it for us."

Shell has been doing public workshops on the testing this summer, and recently briefed local officials and lawmakers on the results.

Chassin said that the levels of benzene and methane underground are "elevated," but did not have more specific results.

"We don't believe that there is reason to be concerned from a safety perspective," Chassin said. "But we felt like it was the right thing to do to make sure there were not the same levels detected on residential properties."

The Department of Toxic Substances Control began testing in the area more than two years ago to determine if there was contamination from the old Turco Products plant at Sepulveda Boulevard and Main Street.

The tests showed potentially hazardous levels of benzene, a carcinogen. That led to further investigation, which showed that some of the contamination was linked to the old Shell reservoirs.

The Regional Water Quality Control Board is now overseeing Shell's testing in the area.

"Right now it's at the very preliminary stages," said agency spokesman Steve Cain. "We are trying to identify what is at the site and where it's located."

Advertisement




Bring the Classroom to Your Home
 With a Degree Online From Florida Tech


APPLY TODAY!
FloridaTechOnline.com/FD | 1-888-253-5946

Print Powered By  FormatDynamics™



DailyBreeze.com
LAX TO L.A. HARBOUR

So far the testing has been conducted in the public rights of way. This week, Shell began going door-to-door to seek permission from homeowners to do testing in their yards.

Shell has set up an information line for residents at 310-857-2335.

gene.maddaus@dailybreeze.com

Advertisement



Florida Tech
UNIVERSITY ONLINE

**Bring the Classroom to Your Home
With a Degree Online From Florida Tech**

 **APPLY TODAY!**
FloridaTechOnline.com/FD | 1-888-253-5946



Print Powered By  FormatDynamics™