

# Demolition begins at former Alton Post Office

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer  
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**ALTON** - The former **Alton Post Office** on **Belle Street** should be completely demolished by the end of the week, **Ameren Illinois Communications Executive Brian Bretsch** said.

Demolition began at the site on Dec. 22, starting on the north end, where the loading docks once were. Bretsch said the entire post office should be razed by the end of this week, but said weather conditions could possibly push it to next week. He assured it would definitely be completed by next week. After the building has been completely razed, Bretsch said soil samples will be conducted.

"Once the building is completely gone, we will return the week of Jan. 18," he said. "We will have folks out there taking groundwater and soil samples."

The cleanup effort being undertaken by Ameren Illinois at the site is due to the site's former life as a natural gas dispensary. Before closing after World War II, the site provided cooking gas and streetlight fuel to the residents and City of Alton. Unfortunately, the storage tanks for the gas created coal tar, which was buried underground after the closure of the facility.

Bretsch said Ameren Illinois is voluntarily working with the **Illinois Environmental Protection Agency** (EPA) to ensure the subterranean coal tar never becomes an environmental or health issue for residents. As of now, Bretsch said there is no immediate risk to resident health or safety during the cleanup.

"The first thing we did before razing the building was a 10 day asbestos abatement," he said. "That was the first thing we did to prep the building and ensure safety. Once it was all removed, we waited about a week to start the demolition."

After the groundwater and soil samples are taken, Bretsch said they will be sent to a lab for analysis. Following that analysis, Bretsch said Ameren Illinois will work with the Illinois EPA to plan the area's remediation. After that plan is created, Bretsch said Ameren Illinois will get to work remediating the ground with the goal of it one day being used for commercial or residential space. He said the process usually takes between 12 and 18 months to complete.

"Our goal is to complete the project and receive a letter from the Illinois EPA recommending no further remediation," he said.

Demolition to the building is being done by **Ahrens Contracting**.

Drone footage courtesy of the 1st MidAmerica Sky Cam. For more information about **1st MidAmerica Credit Union** visit <http://www.1stMidAmerica.org>