

Ameren Illinois says Alton Post Office project is on schedule

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
February 13 2017 9:15 AM



ALTON - After the demolition of the **Alton Post Office**, once standing on **Belle Street**, officials from **Ameren Illinois** said the project is continuing at its scheduled pace.

The former post office was once the site of a gas facility opened in the late nineteenth century, which served the heating and lighting needs of both the city and its citizens.

After it was decommissioned in the 1940s, the area was buried and the post office was built. Due to the nature of what was buried, however, the possibility of residual pollutants caused by coal tar still exists. To remedy this situation, Ameren Illinois has undertaken the responsibility of cleaning the site.

Project supervisor **Dave Palmer** said crews have moved to the next phase of the project in recent weeks, which includes boring into the soil to take soil and water samples. Those samples will be sent to a lab to determine the extent of possible contamination. Palmer and **Ameren Illinois Communications Executive Brian Bretsch** each said that contamination is not a risk to a general public at this time, and the project is being done to ensure no future hazards can affect Altonians from that site.

"We put fencing around the site, because we still have trip hazards, and we don't want people walking around the area and possibly getting hurt," Bretsch said of a locked gate currently surrounding the perimeter.

After the soil and water samples have been extensively analyzed, Ameren Illinois, with the assistance of the **Illinois Environmental Protection Agency**, will begin work to clean the site. In previous interviews with Riverbender.com, Bretsch said Ameren Illinois will continue to clean the site until the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency deems it needs no further remediation.

Alton Mayor Brant Walker and **Alton Building and Zoning Director Greg Caffey** previously told Riverbender.com the city was looking forward to the site's complete remediation to be used in the future as a possible commercial or residential property. Bretsch could not comment on that, but did say in previous interviews the entire process may take several months.

Palmer said an estimated completion time could not be given at this time, due to the extent of contamination being unknown at this time. Palmer and Bretsch said they would continue to update the public as the project continues.

