

# Ameren Illinois uses thermal remediation technology on old Alton Post Office site

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer  
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ALTON - Thermal remediation technology is being utilized by Ameren Illinois for the first time at the site of the old Alton Post Office on Belle Street.

Thermal remediation uses heat to extract chemical solids from the grounds of the old post office site, which once stood as a manufactured gas plant, which provided natural gas to the people of Alton for cooking and heating through the late 1800s through early 1900s. Its usage led to the coal tar residue being rememdiated beneath the surface. Ameren Illinois Program Director for Manufactured Gas Plant Remediation Dave Palmer said phase one of that remediation will begin in June and last around eight months. Phase two will also take around eight months, but may run congruent to phase one if all things are successful. Remediation is set to be complete between eight and 16 months.

"It's not a new technology, it's been around for a while in the industry," Palmer said. "It's just the first time Ameren Illinois is using it. If it works well, we'll use it in other places."

Palmer said the technology is being utilized in Alton, because the site is in a tricky location. Highways and high-traffic roads are in the vicinity of the location, as well as many as three local businesses and a sewer system built in the 1800s. Ameren Illinois's usual method of excavation extraction is not available with those obstacles.

"If it was in the middle of a grassy field, we'd be looking at an entirely different scope," Palmer said.

Ameren Illinois is under no obligation to do this remediation, and in previous interviews has told Riverbender.com it is an effort to prevent a future potential problem by being proactive. They are working on similar projects in East St. Louis and Downtown Belleville.

Once finished, Palmer said the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency will ensure the chemical compounds are in small enough amounts for the site's continued usage as a zoned industrial and commercial location.





