

New Ulm Hg Spill

Craig Schafer
Emergency Management Unit



Minnesota Pollution
Control Agency

February 7, 2017



Resident requests Dumpster Tip

- Resident calls solid waste hauler and requests a dumpster dip
- Hauler dispatches driver to go to the residence and tip the dumpster
- Single tip, not on a route, out and back
- Driver notices a bottle in a tin coffee can that falls out of the truck, next to the dumpster during the tip, but lowers the dumpster, unhooks, and returns to the shop

2/7 Cont....

- After returning to the shop, driver checks the “tub” in the rear of the compactor truck and sees a “puddle” of something silver, liquid, and shiny.
- Driver immediately consults the owner, who contacts New Ulm Public Safety and they meet back at the residence



2/7 Cont...

- Hauler meets with New Ulm Fire Chief and Police Dept at the residence
- Observe the bottle and coffee can. The bottle is “heavy” and they see a puddle of the shiny liquid in the snow, and more puddles and scatter spots in the alley.
- Fire Chief contacts County HHW director who instructs them to cordon off the alley and immediately notifies the Minnesota State Duty Officer.

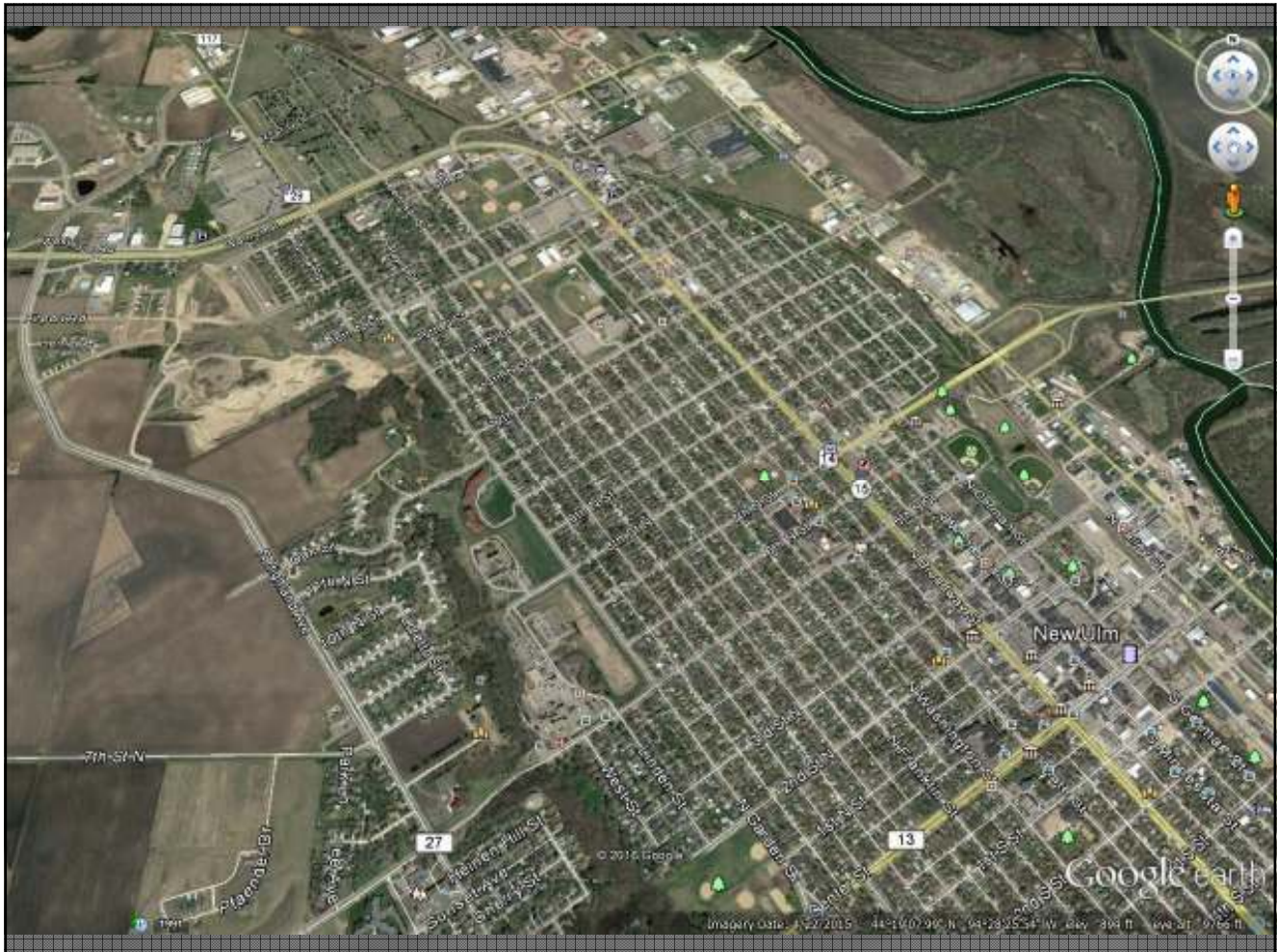






MN DO links to EMU McMahon

- Lisa links to the incident and confers with them regarding cordoning off the alley and checking for additional impacts between the alley and the waste hauler's facility
- Lisa contacts Full Service State Contractor West Central Environmental Consultants (WCEC) and requests that they immediately respond to the site to evaluate the release and begin recovery.



2/7 cont.

- Initial screening detects no additional impacts along Garden St between alley and hauler's facility
- New Ulm Public Safety informs local residences the importance of staying away from the incident site and sets up a security plan to ensure site security when active recovery and mitigation activities are not going on.

2/7 cont.

- WCEC arrives on site at 2000 hrs and does site size up, and site safety plan
- WCEC conducts recon of alley, source residence area, and compactor truck yet that night
- Operations continue until 0100 hrs on 2/8





2/8/17

- EMU McMahon and Stafne mobilize to site from St Paul
- EMU Schafer mobilizes to site from Marshall
- WCEC initiates operation at @ 0800 hrs.
- EMU agrees to hire Bay West to focus on residential screening and required mitigation as separate priority
- EMU McMahon, Stafne, and Schafer meet with New Ulm Fire Chief and Police Chief and agree on command and response structure.
- NUFD, and EMU staff interview property owner at fire station

2/8 cont.

- McMahon and Stafne work with Bay West on residence and clear the other residences that could have had impacts
- All additional residences screened clear
- Source residence had heavy impacts in garage, minor impacts in entryway and in kitchen area
- WCEC focused on alley mitigation and restoration as #1 priority





Divided the work site priorities

- Getting the alley and the residence was the number one priority
- The compactor truck and dumpster were secured and left to be dealt with after the alley and the residence were cleared.
- The compactor truck was wrapped and sealed to ensure that it wouldn't be impacted by weather and to limit any secondary exposures

How clean is clean?

- EMU consulted with Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) to confirm what we wanted to use for clean-up criteria.
- MDH had developed Advisory Guidance for the MPCA for a similar incident in Rosemount, MN.
- We decided, based on our consult, to use a goal of 300 ng/m³







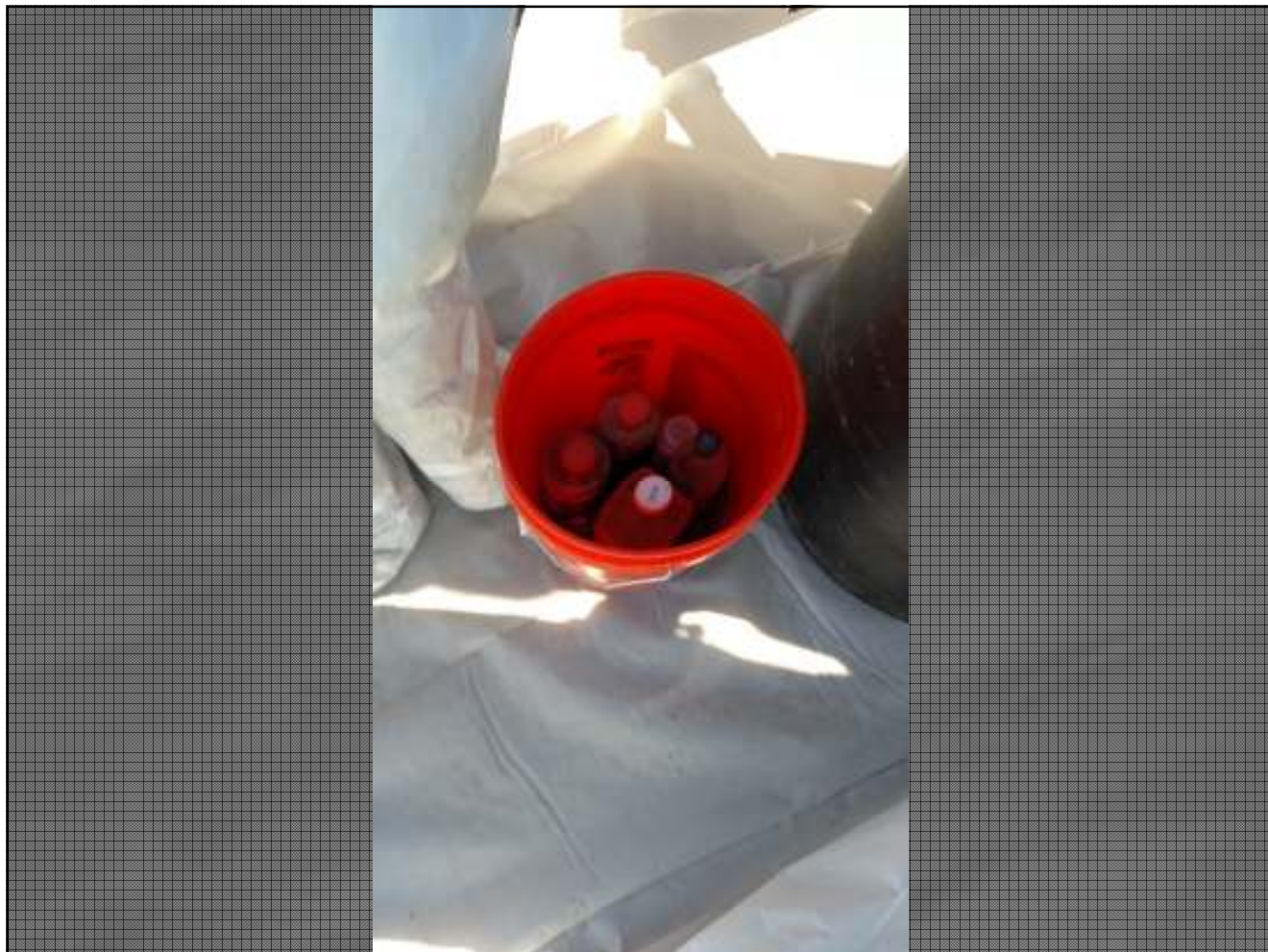
The Alley and Residence are cleared

- The decision was made to clean the dumpster on site in the alley prior to moving
- The alley was cleared in the morning on Saturday, February 11th.
- The residence was cleared on Friday, the 10th.
- The garage was cleared early afternoon on Saturday, the 11th.


Focus on putting the truck in service

- Efforts to clean and clear the truck began on Monday, February 13th
- Two days of Level C confined space entry to clear the truck.
- The truck and the dumpster were cleaned to less than 1000 ng/m³
- Waste was secured at hauler's site and a direct pickup was arranged through our HHW program









QUESTIONS?