



JOHN EHLKE | THE BAY CITY TIMES

Construction crews continue digging uptown near the Saginaw River after finding a coal tar tank near the eastern border of the site. Construction will continue but will move closer to the river.

Tank filled with tar, water found at Uptown

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Crews working to clean up the contaminated site of the former Industrial Brownhoist buildings in downtown Bay City are now curious about what they might find next.

This month, while probing the site in search of coal tar contamination, crews from Midland-based Bierlein Cos. discovered a 70-foot tank filled with coal tar — and about 50,000 gallons of water — near the eastern border of the 48-acre site now called Uptown at RiversEdge.

Workers were not expecting to find such a tank and also were surprised by where they found it.

Mike Brandow, Bay City's economic

development project manager, said that when digging began, crews expected to find clay-walled pits filled with coal tar and some water. They expected most of the water to be found closer to the Saginaw River.

"We knew there would be some water (on the east part of the pit), but we had no idea there would be 50,000 gallons because we're so far from the river," Brandow said.

Brandow said the contaminated water was removed and transported to a wastewater treatment plant outside Bay County, and the tank — made of stone — then was removed.

The cleanup project is part of an effort to prepare the Uptown site for future development. It is being paid for using a \$200,000 Environmental Protection Agency grant. Brandow is

confident the work will not exceed that cost.

Last year, Bierlein demolished three of the former Industrial Brownhoist buildings at the site in a separate project. For that work, Bierlein paid the city about \$11,000 to take the buildings down.

Brandow said crews are unsure how much more coal tar contamination is in the area. After all the coal tar contamination is removed, crews will fill the holes with sand.

There is no timeline for completion of the cleanup work.

Industrial companies on the site can be traced back to the 1870s. The most well-known names, Industrial Brownhoist and American Hoist, operated from the 1930s to 1980s and built locomotive cranes.