

# East Palestine

## TRAIN DERAILMENT RESPONSE

Serving East Palestine, Negley, Darlington and surrounding communities

# NEWSLETTER

February 18, 2025



*A recent excavation in the east end area of the derailment site*

## EPA ADMINISTRATOR AND VICE PRESIDENT VISIT EAST PALESTINE

On Feb. 3, EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin took his first official trip in his new role, to East Palestine, with Vice President JD Vance, to mark the two-year anniversary of the train derailment. Vance and Zeldin started their day at the site of the train derailment to survey the cleanup efforts. Afterwards, they participated in a meeting with local residents and community leaders.

“After the tragic train derailment left East Palestine, Ohio, ravaged with toxic chemicals, the local community needed strong leaders to fight for them. Then-Senator JD Vance was one of the first elected officials to do so, and President Trump was on the scene within 19 days. East Palestine has a voice with President Trump and Vice President Vance in the White House. This administration will fight hard to make sure every American has access to clean air, land, and water. It was an honor to meet with local residents, and I leave this trip more motivated to this cause than ever before. I will make sure EPA continues to clean up East Palestine as quickly as possible,” said EPA Administrator Zeldin.



*Administrator Zeldin speaking at press conference*

## PROGRESS MADE

### Stream Assessments

Assessment teams are awaiting the return of favorable weather and stream conditions. Low water levels and freezing temperatures have prevented crews from safely completing accurate reassessments in Leslie and Sulphur Runs over the last few months. Although both streams were extensively cleaned last spring and summer, periodic, systematic reassessments will continue until late spring or early summer. EPA has also investigated several small sheen incidents reported by community members and will include those locations in future reassessment rounds.

### East End Update

As reported last fall, low levels of some chemicals that had spilled during the derailment (including 2-butoxyethanol

and some that are likely not derailment related were identified in the east end of the site. Norfolk Southern has continued sampling these areas with EPA direction and oversight to find the exact levels and spots of remaining contamination. A series of small excavations occurred in January, with two more planned to begin later this month and be complete in March. Waste from these excavations is designated as non-hazardous and waste hauling truck traffic is not expected to affect traffic flow on adjacent roadways.

### Groundwater Monitoring

Groundwater at and around the derailment site continues to be monitored with monthly sampling and testing, including at a number of private wells. Norfolk Southern is required

to conduct this activity by EPA's February 2023 CERCLA order. Also, if the federal government's proposed settlement is accepted by the court, it will require groundwater monitoring to continue for an additional 10 years beyond what is required by EPA's 2023 CERCLA order.

### Confirmation Sampling Complete and Rainwater Flow Restored

Confirmation sampling, or a "double-check" of the areas where contamination was removed or staged, was completed in December with crews collecting almost 3,000 samples over 14 months. These samples are used to evaluate data from soil, sediment, groundwater and soil vapor to make sure all cleanup work is done. The east end sampling discussed above is also finished, with about 1,200 samples collected. Final reporting and data review will continue into the spring. At the end of January, Ohio EPA allowed the return of natural rainwater flow near Pleasant and East Martin St. Water will no longer be collected and on the same day the final shipment of hazardous waste was removed from the site.

## IN THE NEWS

### Grant Money for Local Brownfields Site

In late 2024, the state of Ohio awarded a \$780,000 grant to the Columbiana County Land Bank to clean up and redevelop a brownfields site in East Palestine, a former gas station and auto garage at 448 E. Taggart St. This project is not related to the train derailment. The funding will be used for demolition, soil remediation and the removal of aging above-ground storage tanks and will create a development-ready commercial or industrial property. More information is available at: [epohio.org/the-columbiana-county-land-reutilization-corporation-awarded-780k-for-project-at-site-of-former-east-palestine-gas-station/](https://epohio.org/the-columbiana-county-land-reutilization-corporation-awarded-780k-for-project-at-site-of-former-east-palestine-gas-station/)

## ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

This newsletter is developed through a joint effort of state and federal agencies and community organizations. If you would like more information about topics discussed, please visit [epa.gov/east-palestine-oh-train-derailment](https://epa.gov/east-palestine-oh-train-derailment) or call EPA's Information Line at **330-775-6517**



**SCAN ME** for a list of additional resources

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