

**Complex Transformation Supplemental Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement
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4:16 a.m. CT

Plan to speed up Pantex cleanup

By **JIM McBRIDE**
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Pantex officials unveiled a plan Monday to speed up Pantex cleanup by six years and accelerate groundwater investigations of the Ogallala Aquifer.

The \$131 million plan sets clean up goals for the perched aquifer, an upper-level aquifer that sits above the Ogallala Aquifer, and establishes measures to protect the Ogallala Aquifer, a major water source for the High Plains.

Plant officials are asking the public to comment on the proposed plan by Aug. 16. Officials said the plan, dubbed "Environmental Management Performance Management Plan for Accelerating Cleanup of the Pantex Plant," can be found on the Pantex web site: www.pantex.com

Initially, plant officials planned to finish Pantex cleanup by 2014. The new plan proposes to complete cleanup by 2008 and save \$13 million in projected cleanup costs.

"All of this is geared toward the quick reduction of risk," Dennis Huddleston, environmental restoration manager for contractor BWXT Pantex, said during a public meeting Monday in Panhandle.

The plan says the primary risks to human health and the environment posed by the perched aquifer are from high explosive contaminants, organic contaminants and metals.

The plan also says state and federal regulators now have approved 93 Pantex sites that need no further cleanup.

Key aspects of the perched aquifer cleanup

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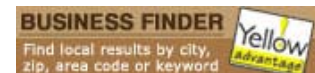
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include maintaining a pump-and-treat filtration system to remove high-explosive and chromium contaminants, continuing soil cleanup work and implementing a strategy to clean up a plume of contaminated perched groundwater.

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"The key activities associated with the accelerated cleanup of the perched aquifer project are geared toward the protection of the Ogallala Aquifer, reduction of risk to human health and the environment for on-site workers and the off-site landowners to the southeast property boundary from exposure from the perched aquifer," the plan says.

Among other cleanup strategies, Pantex officials plan to accelerate groundwater investigations of the Ogallala Aquifer, provide protection to potentially affected landowners off the Pantex Plant site and implement corrective actions to reduce risks.

Plant officials said the plan is a draft and that a final plan will be completed after public review.

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