

MD-199
Talbot County

- 1860 Coal gasification operations started at site.
- 1919 S.M. Kitzmiller purchased the property and plant and changed technique to carburated water gas.
- 1922 Kitzmiller declared bankruptcy.

Easton Utility Company purchased site.
- 1955 Gas production ceased.
- 1986 Department of Health and Mental Hygiene site inspection discovered stained soil.

Site was paved for a parking lot.
- 1990 EPA prepared *Final Site Inspection Using Available Information* report and recommended no further action.
- 1996 Geraghty & Miller completed limited soil investigation for EUC.
- 2000 MDE conducted a *Site Inspection*.
- 2001 MDE completed a Brownfields Assessment, identified soil and ground water contamination, and recommended site remediation.

FORMER EASTON GAS MANUFACTURING PLANT
Easton, Maryland

Site Location

The former Easton Gas Manufacturing Plant (Easton Gas) is located at 1 South West Street, in the town of Easton, Talbot County, Maryland. The site is southwest of the State Road 33 (St. Michaels Road) intersection with Washington Street. Talbot County is in the Coastal Plain Physiographic Province on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. Easton is at the head of the Tred Avon River, which flows southwestward into the Chesapeake Bay.

The Easton Gas site comprises approximately 0.75 acre of land in a mixed-use area of commercial and residential buildings. The site currently includes a two-story building and a parking lot. As defined by Town officials, Dover and West Streets limit the site to the north and east, respectively, and a municipal parking lot bound it to the south. An entrance to the parking lot and the Easton Police Administration Building constitute the western boundary of the site. Easton Gas is partially paved. The property is flat, but exhibits a slight slope toward the southwest.

Site History

Coal gasification operations began on the site around 1860. The Easton Gas and Light Company owned and operated the plant, and provided lighting to public, commercial and domestic clients. The plant included a land parcel extending beyond the actual limits of the site and housing the present day Police Administration Building, among other government offices, on Dover Street. S. M. Kitzmiller purchased the property and the plant in 1919. Kitzmiller converted operations to the production of carburated water gas to replace the conventional method of coal gasification, but declared bankruptcy by 1922. The Easton Utility Commission (EUC) purchased the

property in 1922 and continued with the production of gas. EUC ceased all on-site operations in 1955 but still owns the property. EUC's maintenance personnel currently use the site. The existing building houses the offices of the cable locators who use the parking lot for their personal vehicles.

Typical coal gas plants generated quantities of coal tar, ferric wastes, ferrocyanides and ammonia. Waste disposal practices during the time of operation were not documented. Available records contain no information regarding the disposal of the wastes generated at Easton Gas. An August 1986 report associated with the Easton Police Administration Building adjacent to the site speculated, "The possibility exists that some of the . . . [related] substances remain on-site."

Environmental Investigations

Regulatory permits were not issued historically. Easton Town Officials had no permitting documentation in their records for the Easton Gas site.

In 1990, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) prepared a *Final Site Inspection Using Available Information* report for the Easton Gas facility. EPA did not collect groundwater or soil samples. The report referred to a 1986 site inspection by the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's Waste Management Administration that reported stained soil was discovered and then paved over during construction of a parking lot for the Police Administration building. The report recommended No Further Action under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act.

In April 1996, Geraghty & Miller completed a limited soil investigation at Easton Gas for EUC. Geraghty and Miller collected soil samples for analysis of volatile and semi-volatile compounds, cyanides, arsenic and chromium. Laboratory results revealed excessive soil contamination. The Geraghty and Miller investigation also documented the occurrence of free product on site.

In December 2000, the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) conducted an initial site inspection, preparatory to performing a Brownfields Assessment of the Easton Gas site. In January and February 2001, MDE collected surface and subsurface soil samples and groundwater samples for the Brownfields study. MDE restricted the investigation to the boundaries of the property. The analytical results, reported in a *Brownfields Assessment Report* dated June 2001, show that soils and groundwater underlying the investigated area are contaminated by volatile and semi-volatile organic compounds (in particular, coal tar and tar-like wastes, petroleum and petroleum-related compounds), and metals. MDE recommended active remediation of the site.

Current Status

The Easton Gas site is scheduled for further investigation followed by the implementation of the remediation plan during Fiscal Year 2002. Funding for these actions will come from the State Capitol Project accounts using Hazardous Substance Response Plan. The site has also been selected for the construction of a State Service Center. The remediation of the site will occur in conjunction with the construction of the Service Center.

Facility Contacts

Arthur O'Connell, Chief, Site and Brownfields Assessments/State Superfund Division
Maryland Department of the Environment
410-631-3493