

From: Pitts, Ted <TedPitts@gov.sc.gov>
To: Soura, Christian <ChristianSoura@gov.sc.gov>
Date: 6/9/2014 1:47:34 PM
Subject: FW: Letter From Cayce CM With Added Details

From: Elise Partin [mailto:elisepartin@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, June 09, 2014 11:25 AM
To: Pitts, Ted
Subject: Letter From Cayce CM With Added Details

May 8, 2014

On Friday June 29, 2012, at approximately 8:57 a.m., the Cayce Department of Public Safety responded to a fire at the premises of World Wide Recycling at 2350 Foreman Street in the City. The fire involved wooden pallets and large quantities of plastic materials located on the premises, including shredded plastic pellets, plastic containers and plastic decking boards. The employees did not have a burn permit from the City to burn these items.

The City's efforts to fight the fire, aided by the efforts of the other fire units rendering aid, continued into Saturday, June 30. On Saturday, June 30, it became apparent that the City did not have the specialized heavy equipment needed to remove the debris and concrete structures so that water could be directed onto the fire. At 1:16 pm, City and County Fire command staff advised the City Manager that they had exhausted their options for fully extinguishing the fire and that, in their opinion; no other public agencies in the State had the means available to fully extinguish the fire. DHEC advised the City Manager that they did not engage in firefighting operations and declined to assist in providing a means to extinguish the fire while remaining fervent that the fire needed to be extinguished.

At 2:39 pm, DHEC informed the City Manager that the Governor could "see the fire from her window" and that the Governor's office had called them and asked what Cayce was doing to put out the fire. At 3:00 pm, the representative of the business located on the property declined the City and DHEC's request that the business assume responsibility for removal of the remaining structure and debris and extinguishing the fire. At this point, there existed an emergency situation involving an environmental hazard to Cayce's citizens and a potential danger to air and water quality. The City Manager asked DHEC what they would recommend and she was told that they would hire a specialized company to come in and put the fire out. She asked for the names of those types of companies and Mr. Paul Lee from DHEC provided her with the name of three different companies that specialized in fire suppression and environmental clean up when hazardous materials are involved.

At 5:34 pm, the City Manager determined it necessary under the advisement of DHEC, as an emergency measure, in order to suppress and control and extinguish the fire to contract with Hepaco, LLC, a rapid response emergency services company, to provide the heavy equipment needed to remove the structure and debris and extinguish the fire. This company was recommended to staff by DHEC and the City and County Fire Command Staff and is on State Contract with DHEC for these types of services.

During the fight with the fire, the runoff of water, which potentially included constituent elements of the burned plastic and fire-fighting chemicals, entered a creek that flows into the Congaree River, upstream of the City's water plant intake. After sampling results indicated contamination in the River, DHEC and the City decided that the City's water plant should be closed as a precaution. The plant remained closed until 4:24 pm on July 3. As a result, the City had to purchase water for its customers from the City of Columbia, the City of West Columbia, and the Joint Commission systems on an emergency basis.

The World Wide Recycling fire cost the City of Cayce in excess of one million dollars. The City's overall General Fund budget is only approximately ten million dollars a year and this fire used up

almost all of the City's reserve funds. We have been in litigation with the owners of the property since the fire but they do not have any insurance so our hopes of getting reimbursed are slim.

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