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## Toxic crash leaves bad taste in mayor's mouth

**Budesheim says Gov. Corzine didn't call after incident**

BY DONNA ROLANDO  
Staff Writer

As the cleanup of toxins left from an overturned tanker on Interstate 287 winds down this week, Mayor William Budesheim is blasting the governor for not making so much as a phone call, he said, to see how the borough survived.

Budesheim is certainly no fan of Governor Jon Corzine in light of the financial blow dealt to Riverdale with \$232,000 in state aide cuts.

Although Riverdale was on the map when it came to these cuts, Budesheim said it apparently was not when it came to acknowledgement from the governor about the devastating effect of the overturned tanker with a hazardous load of flammable methyl methacrylate that spilled out onto northbound I-287.

"He's done nothing," said Budesheim, who is also Riverdale's Office of Emergency Management coordinator. "Literally hundreds of thousands of people were affected. There was not even a fly over (by the governor). Nothing."

When the May 7 accident closed a highway stretch for almost 12 hours at milepost 53, the mayor

said, the impact was enormous.

"Almost 100,000 cars use that stretch of I-287 a day (most of the time with two occupants). How many jobs did these people not get to?" Budesheim said.

Then there was all the traffic that diverted to Route 23 and Hamburg Turnpike, clogging those roads as well, along with the small army of first-responders, some from as far away as Parsippany-Troy Hills, that took time off from their jobs to help Riverdale with its emergency.

Although the state police, Department of Transportation and Department of Environmental Protection made up New Jersey's on-scene presence, Budesheim said a word from Corzine was also warranted.

The highway cleanup took the rest of the day on May 7 but off-site cleanup, where contaminant entered one or more drainage ditches, took somewhat longer.

Karen Hershey, spokeswoman for the Department of Environmental Protection, said Tuesday, this cleanup is now "winding down."

On Monday, DEP was overseeing the unclogging of a storm drain that was full of debris that "trapped some of the product," Hershey said.

"I believe this will be done soon," she said, hoping that yesterday would be the conclusion of the cleanup that was tackled with vacuums and absorbent booms in ditches that did not lead to water sources.

Already concluded is the air

monitoring that had followed the accident for a matter of days as a nail-polish-like odor flowed into sections of town from storm drains and even closed the Riverdale School, an elementary school, for several days. The odor was not a sign of danger in the air, Hershey said, but it was taken seriously and cleaned out wherever it surfaced.

All the air monitoring results came out in the acceptable range, she added.

Despite the satisfactory levels, Mayor Budesheim has decided to ask the state to continue to test periodically over the next few months as an added precaution.

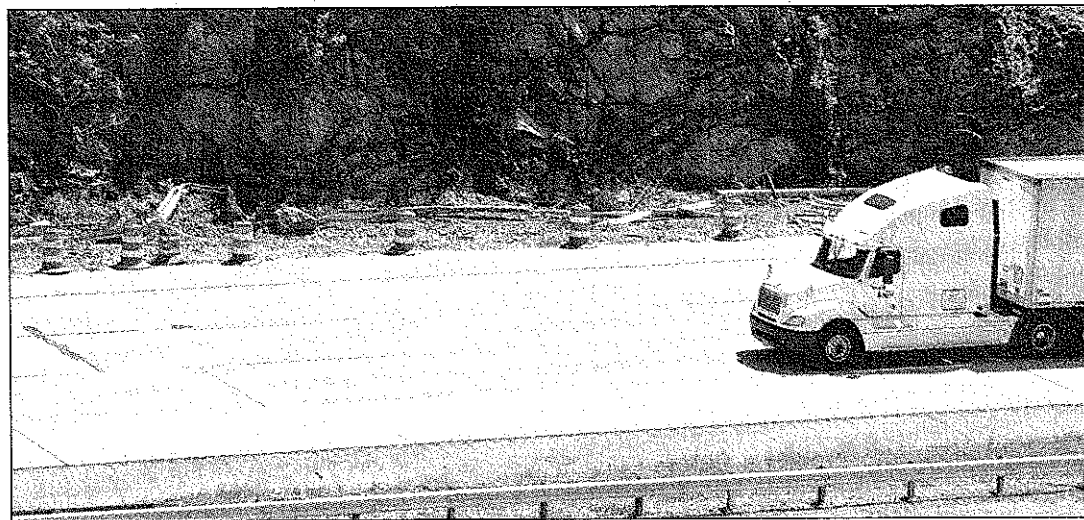
Hershey said, "I'm sure if the mayor requests it the DEP will consider it."

A second precaution this week involved the testing of the water supply on Monday. This was billed as just a precaution because DEP has stated that the contamination did not get into Riverdale's aquifer. Still Budesheim said that residents deserved the added assurance of getting current test results. Passaic Valley Water Commission tests the water system quarterly, and methyl methacrylate is one of chemicals tested for.

The mayor said Riverdale just moved up the test to address concerns.

The results are expected Thursday and will be posted on the municipal Web site, along with other pertinent updates on tanker-related testing, the mayor said.

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STAFF PHOTO BY JOE SARNO

Some evidences of cleanup activity remain where a tanker carrying a chemical load overturned May 7 on Interstate 287 northbound in Riverdale, closing a stretch of the highway for more than 12 hours. The state Department of Environmental Protection was winding up its cleanup this week and hoped to finish soon.