

Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League

www.BREDL.org PO Box 88 Glendale Springs, North Carolina 28629 BREDL@skybest.com (336) 982-2691

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Contacts:

Charles Utley (706) 772-5558

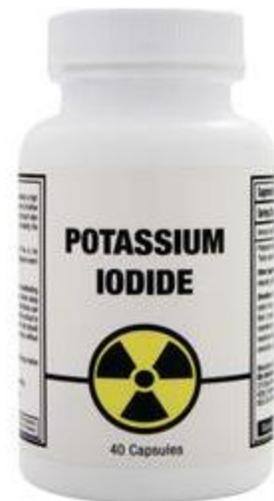
Louis Zeller (336) 982-2691

Group Launches Radiation Protection Project

Today at a press conference in Augusta, a group launched a new program to protect residents from nuclear power plant accidents. The group, Concerned Citizens of Shell Bluff, will be meeting with residents of Augusta, Waynesboro and nearby communities within the emergency zone around the Plant Vogtle nuclear power station. The project centers on one of the most dangerous pollutants, radioactive iodine, which can affect the thyroid gland.

Beginning Saturday, the citizens group will hold a series of educational events which will provide protective potassium iodide tablets to residents in the potential fallout zone. Potassium iodide is a harmless salt which when taken properly can prevent the cancers and other negative health effects of radioactive iodine emitted during a nuclear accident.

Rev. Charles Utley, the leader of the program, said, "We realize that this is not a one-time fix all project but a catalyst to equip the residents with the necessary knowledge and tools needed." He said that the group has secured donations from a private foundation which will help provide enough potassium iodide tablets to protect hundreds of the families most at risk.



Meetings will be held in local churches, community clubs and stores in the target area.

The group displayed a diagram of the thyroid gland which will be used to give a clear picture of the function and protection of this gland.

The program will also consist of a public information campaign to include newspapers, radio and person-to-person advertisement. Claude Howard, a member of the group, said, "We will use every possible avenue to get the word out to reach the maximum number of people." The group will hold community meetings to establish contact information and to assist in case of a nuclear accident or melt down. He added, "The overall object of this project is to provide the education and tools needed to be better trained and equipped to protect ourselves and our families from radioactive fall-out."

Lou Zeller, Executive Director of the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League, said, "The US Food and Drug Administration has concluded that potassium iodide is an effective and safe means of reducing the risk of thyroid cancer in people who inhale or ingest radioactive iodine-131 after a nuclear accident." He added, "It's best to be prepared."

The Concerned Citizens of Shell Bluff was founded in 2010 and is a chapter of the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League. The League has chapters and projects in seven states and has worked for three decades to protect public health and the environment.

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