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Top Stories

New head of EPA's field office looks to prepare for dredging

JIM KINNEY , The Saratogian

04/02/2004

FORT EDWARD -- The new head of the EPA's Hudson River Field Office wants to use his experience redeveloping polluted industrial sites to help communities on the Hudson River prepare for a post-dredging situation.

'I'm a Hudson River person,' Dave King said. 'People are going to have a clean river section. I think it's going to draw a lot of people. The economic development opportunities are enormous.'

King, 55, succeeds N.G. Kaul. Kaul, a former head of water quality for the state Department of Environmental Conservation, held the post since it was created in 2002. Kaul died in February at the age of 57.

King will be a point of contact for local residents as well as town, county and village officials as the EPA moves forward with its plans to dredge PCBs from the Hudson River.

General Electric Co. dumped 1.3 million pounds of PCBs into the Hudson River from 1947 to 1977. The EPA has ordered GE to dredge 2.65 million cubic yards of PCB-laden sediment from the river's bottom between Hudson Falls and Troy.

The project will be the largest Superfund environmental cleanup in history. It is expected to take six years, beginning in 2006.

Waterford Supervisor John Lawler, chairman of Saratoga County's PCB dredging committee, would like King to have an understanding of how the project will change every community along the river.

Lawler, along with many other local officials, is a vocal critic of the EPA and the way it is handling the cleanup.

'The person in this position has to have credibility, honesty and integrity,' Lawler said. 'To the best of my knowledge, this person has those qualities.'

King spoke by phone from Syracuse where he is head of SUNY's Center for Brownfield Studies. He teaches at the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry but mostly works with communities along the Mohawk River on industrial cleanup projects.

He plans to continue as an adjunct professor when he starts with the EPA Monday.

King said he knew Kaul well when they both worked for the DEC, where King



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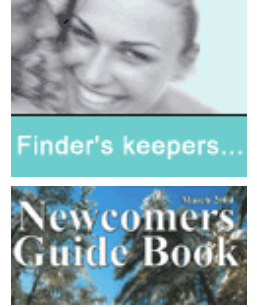


worked after getting his environmental engineering degree from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. King later worked as an engineer for a private firm in Albany. From 1993 to 2003, he worked on environmental cleanup projects for Niagara Mohawk Power Corp.

One of his NiMo projects was the old coal gasification plant on High Rock Avenue in Saratoga Springs. He said the company still uses that site, but many of the sites he worked on were redeveloped.

'That's what I want to do here,' he said. 'I don't want to make dead zones behind chain-link fences.'

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Rory O'Connor

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