

# Dusty complaints

## Miami Township residents demand action on Brewer plants

By Ron Liebau  
Valley Post Staff Reporter

MIAMI TOWNSHIP—The president of the Brewer Co. sympathizes with the residents of Zeh Acres who complain about dust from his two asphalt manufacturing plants on the Little Miami River at Camp Dennison.

"To be honest, an asphalt plant is probably not the most desirable thing" to have in a neighborhood, said Pinckney Brewer.

But, he added, the plants themselves are in a commercial area in Hamilton County. And, he emphasized, the plants meet all state and federal clean air standards.

TO MRS. Charles S. Blankenbuehl, 6111 Riverview Lane, Miami Township, such statements are of little consolation.

She and 15 other families who live in Zeh Acres subdivision directly across from Camp Dennison complained repeatedly to the Southwestern Ohio Air Pollution Control about emissions from Brewer's two plants.

The first complaint about dust from the plant was recorded on Aug. 16, 1977. The latest one was made June 29, 1979.

IN EACH instance, Inspector Ray Silbernagel checked the plant to see if the complaints were justified. On some occasions, he instructed Brewer management to check their equipment and make alterations.

William Brewer, the Newtown-based company's executive vice president, has acknowledged dust problems caused by equipment or truck traffic.

"We now have installed all necessary duct work and parts recommended by our emissions engineer, and the noise and fugitive dusts have virtually been eliminated," Brewer said in a Dec. 5, 1978 letter to Silbernagel.

SOME PROBLEMS, however, persisted. Several complaints in April again made mention of the dust from the plant. At his own initiative, Silbernagel reported that he observed excessive amounts of dust and warned the company.

William Brewer told Silbernagel in a letter in May that the company had taken additional steps, including the hiring of environmental specialists, to reduce air pollution.

"We are sorry to have inconvenienced anyone from one of our operations," he said in his letter. "We will take the necessary steps to correct any infractions."

ALTHOUGH THE records of the air pollution control indicate that inspectors have followed up on citizen complaints, Mrs. Blakenbuehl thinks she and neighbors are being ignored.

"We feel that it is serious, but nobody else seems to," she said.



Mrs. Blankenbuehl wipes dust from side of her home.

Richard B. Lemkuhl, supervisor of air pollution control inspection in Sharonville, said his inspectors have made regular visits to Brewer's asphalt plants.

BY LAW, he said, only one inspection is required per year to check for emissions from smokestacks. Brewer has passed each inspection, he said.

Kemkuhl said Brewer, like any other asphalt manufacturer, will have a certain amount of trouble with dust.

"They handle gravel and they dry it in order to get the asphalt emulsion to mix with it," he said. In that drying process, Lemkuhl said dust is a by-product which is scattered unless properly collected.

BREWER USES a wet scrubber device at one of its two plants. The other, newer one installed to handle production demands for I-275 roadwork, employs a baghouse—essentially hundreds of vacuum cleaner bags.

"They should police the unit and replace the bags as soon as they are damaged or they get holes in them," Lemkuhl said.

Pinckney Brewer, a resident of Miamiville, which is near the plants, said the newer plant will be closed once I-275 work is completed. He

expects a shutdown sometime this fall.

Brewer also said his company has done everything possible to limit dust and noise.

Mrs. Blankenbuehl, who has lived at Riverview Lane for eight years and has nothing between her and the plants except the Little Miami River, wrote a recent letter to Brewer expressing concern.

"The pollution and filth produced from these machines are detrimental to our health as well as the health of our children," she said in a letter signed by other residents of Riverview Lane, Bett-Ann Lane and Loveland-Miamiville Road.

Mrs. Blankenbuehl asks for Brewer's "cooperation and benevolence" to solve the problem.

Brewer said that letter was the first communication he has had from residents. He said he has not prepared an answer.

Mrs. Blankenbuehl's letter raises the possibility of residents filing a class action suit against the Brewer Co., but she said that is a last resort.

"No one really wants to go that far. We're not trying to get any personal gain out of it; we just want it stopped," she said.

Neither Brewer or Lemkuhl sees any health hazards associated with the dust particles.