

U.S. Senator Rick Santorum tours area on Wednesday (excerpt)

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Elsewhere, Santorum met with residents in Emporium, hearing their concerns over local issues and the war in Iraq, among other issues.

On the local front, Cameron County watershed specialist Jim Zoschg Jr. talked about a devastating train derailment that happened in Gardeau in southern McKean County on June 30. The train, operated by Norfolk Southern, derailed, sending caustic chemicals into the nearby Portage Branch of the Sinnemahoning River.

Within 24 hours, there was almost a complete fish kill as well as other aquatic life for 35 miles away. This is a major concern for the area, which is largely dependent on tourism.

Zoschg was concerned that "Norfolk Southern can't weasel out of the damage they have caused." He asked for any assistance that Santorum could give in making sure they are held responsible for what they have done.

The railroad is claiming the accident could not have caused the fish deaths below Emporium, according to Zoschg. Santorum said he will have the issue checked into.