



# EPA

# ANACONDA / YERINGTON MINE

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY • REGION 9 • APRIL 2005

*Yerington, Nevada*

## EPA “Scanner Van” to Look for Radiation in Yerington Area

Residents of Yerington will see a rather unusual and official-looking vehicle driving on and around the Anaconda/Yerington Mine site and throughout the Yerington area the last two weeks in April. This radiological “Scanner Van” belongs to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA’s) Radiation and Indoor Environments National Laboratory in Las Vegas. This vehicle is used to find buildings and structures contaminated with gamma radiation as well as locate gamma radiation in open areas. Beginning April 18, use of the Scanner Van will mark the start of efforts to determine where radiological contamination may be located beyond on-site areas already identified. As a screening device, the van can provide much information but it does not take the place of an aerial survey, which EPA believes may still be necessary.

### How Does the Scanner Van Work?

With the ability to scan for radiation much faster than field teams on the ground, the vehicle is equipped with a sodium iodide detector which can find gamma radiation at very low levels. The operator of the system coordinates with the driver as the vehicle is driven by areas of interest. Radiation irregularities are identified and recorded on a computer. From this data, other staff with hand-held radiation detectors can investigate these areas further to determine the types of materials producing the radioactivity.

Inside the Scanner Van, a large collimated (produces beams of parallel rays of light) lead shield holds a 4x4x16-inch sodium iodide detector. The shield is cut in such a way that the detector “looks” out the right side of the vehicle in a 55-degree arc. The right side of the vehicle is made of thin aluminum. The shield/detector system is positioned for optimal viewing. The driver has to coordinate movement of the vehicle with the equipment operator, who sits at a console in the middle of the van. As the vehicle travels at 5-10 mph, the operator watches the scanning on a computer screen and makes decisions about what appears to be

irregularities. The data is collected along with any comments or explanations from the operator, as well as with information from the Global Positioning System which pinpoints exactly where the measurement occurred. The Scanner Van is typically driven both ways on a road since it only scans from the right side of the vehicle.

### Results of Survey to Community

What is learned from the Scanner Van survey will be reported to the Yerington community as soon as EPA has collected, analyzed and, if necessary, completed any follow-up surveys.

### Come See the Scanner Van!

You are welcome to visit the Scanner Van to get an orientation from our laboratory experts and see how it works. Although we have not, at this time, set a date and location for the open house, the van and staff will be available to all community members at some point during the visit to Yerington. Watch your local newspaper for specifics on the show-and-tell activities.

### INFORMATION REPOSITORY

Some reports and data on the Anaconda/Yerington Mine site are currently available at the library listed at right. We will be adding new information as it becomes available.



#### Lyon County Library

20 Nevin Way  
Yerington, NV 89447  
(775) 577-5042

Hours: Mon, Wed, Fri	9 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Tues, Thurs	9 a.m. to 8 p.m.
Sat	9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

# For Further Information

If you have questions about the Scanner Van survey or anything connected to the Anaconda/Yerington Mine site, or if you would like to be added to the site mailing list, please contact the EPA staff listed below.

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Please leave a message and your call will be returned.

