

Around Minnesota

Minneapolis company to search for barrels dumped into Lake Superior 30 years ago

A Minneapolis company has been hired to lead a search for barrels dumped into Lake Superior 30 years ago.

The Army Corps of Engineers awarded Hazard Control Inc. a \$16,950, five-day federal contract Tuesday for the search, expected to begin Oct. 12.

The seven-year-old business sells products and services to help other companies handle hazardous materials, but its aquatic division is only a few months old.

"This is a fairly new venture for us, but we've done extensive previous investigation regarding these barrels," said owner Mike Stich. "We've done a very thorough job as far as research goes."

In the search's first phase, sonar and other electronic equipment will be used to look for the barrels. A

miniature submarine will then move into the area, take photos and pull one barrel near the surface if there's time, said Corps spokeswoman Joan Guilfoyle. A second contract to pull up a 55-gallon barrel could be awarded if they're located, she said. The barrel would be sent to a lab for testing.

The 1,437 barrels came from defense work done by Honeywell Inc. at the Twin Cities Army Ammunition Plant in Arden Hills. They were dumped into the lake between 1959 and 1961 to keep a top-secret grenade design out of Soviet hands, corps officials said.

Since then, rumors about the barrels' contents have persisted. A barge crew member reported a sludge oozing from a barrel; radioactive materials also have been suggested because Honeywell used depleted uranium in some of its defense work.