

Reporter Carl Franson, left, undergoes gas-mask test by Rocky Flats official Jim Denis before a journalists' tour of facilities. By Glenn Asakawa / Rocky Mountain News. FILE: ROCKY FLATS

'TARGET LETTERS' SENT IN FLATS PROBE

Rocky Mountain News

(RM)

- SATURDAY MAY 18, 1991

By: BILL SCANLON ROCKY MOUNTAIN NEWS ENVIRONMENTAL WRITER

:

A federal grand jury investigating alleged wrongdoing at Rocky Flats has sent out 10 "target letters," including one to a dead former plant manager, sources confirm.

The letters advise former and current high-level plant officials that they are under investigation and could face indictment. Target letters give recipients time to seek lawyers and put together documents.

Their delivery means the two-year investigation by the U.S. attorney's office may be near an end. Indictments could be returned by late next month, sources say.

A grand jury was empaneled in August 1989, shortly after 70 agents from the FBI and Environmental Protection Agency raided the plant. The agents were searching for paperwork and other evidence indicating Rocky Flats was burning and storing waste illegally, deliberately dumping poisonous chemicals into Walnut Creek and sugarcoating environmental problems.

Rocky Flats, which makes triggers for nuclear weapons and reprocesses plutonium, was operated by Rockwell International until late 1989, when the current operator, EG&G Inc., took over.

Most of the people who were sent target letters are believed to be high-level Rockwell managers.

One letter was sent to former plant manager Dominick Sanchini, who had retired from Rockwell and died last year, sources said.

SMALL FLATS FIRE DOUSED

Rocky Mountain News

(RM)

- FRIDAY MAY 17, 1991

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