

## EPA official: City treated tainted waste

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JACKSONVILLE — Hazardous wastes from Vertac Chemical Corp.'s plant may have been discharged into Jacksonville's old sewage treatment plant, where they escaped federal monitoring and testing, an EPA official said Tuesday.

Michael Slimak, deputy director of the Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Environmental Process and Effects Research in Washington, D.C., said he was told during a visit to Vertac in 1983 that the company had a "discreet conveyance" that carried processed wastes to the city's old East Sewage Treatment Plant off Loop Road. The east plant was closed in 1987.

Vertac was only permitted to discharge wastes into the West Sewage Treatment Plant on Redmond Road, city officials said Tuesday.

The east plant, which only accepted domestic and light commercial wastes, was never monitored or tested for hazardous waste contamination, including dioxin, EPA officials said Tuesday.

Moreover, the east plant effluent was released into an "unnamed ditch, Jack's Tributary, and the Bayou Meto," which runs through part of Holland Bottoms and into Lenoke County, Dick Morris, Jacksonville Sewer Department's manager, said Tuesday.

For several years, People Against a Chemically Contaminated Environment, a local environmental group, has

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