

# **RAILROAD COMMISSION OF TEXAS**

## **NEWS RELEASE - December 17, 2003**

MICHAEL L. WILLIAMS  
*Commissioner*

VICTOR G. CARRILLO  
*Chairman*

CHARLES R. MATTHEWS  
*Commissioner*

### **VOLUNTARY CLEANUP PROGRAM SEES FIRST COMPLETION**

AUSTIN -- The Texas Railroad Commission Friday certified its first Voluntary Cleanup Program (VCP) success, announcing the completed cleanup by Willow Falls Development Ltd. of a contaminated site in Harris County.

Willow Falls Development, a developer overseeing the construction of a 5.6-acre storm water retention basin, in Tomball, Texas, entered the program in January of 2003. Now, less than 11 months after the application for participation, more than 500 cubic yards of contaminated soil at the site has been removed and remediated.

Commissioners said the program's root foundation allows for expeditious redevelopment of contaminated land because of the fundamental design of the VCP.

"This is a positive example of what can be accomplished through public/private partnerships, coming together to provide for the good of all Texans," said Chairman Victor Carrillo. "With this mindset, we can continue to form such partnerships to quickly and effectively solve other potential contamination hazards."

"This program should encourage landowners looking to develop retail, commercial, and residential properties, while also eliminating the environmental threat to Texas lands and groundwater," said Commissioner Charles Matthews. "With programs like this we are proving that government and business can work together in safeguarding our environment."

"This program was designed with the understanding of the necessity for quick response to redevelopment of contaminated land when a company finds sufficient cause for concern," said Commissioner Michael Williams. "Creating an environment where business can come forward in such a fashion to solve such problems is an opportunity we are proud to afford our fellow Texans."

Cleanup activities at the Willow Falls site focused on soil sample testing to determine the extent of contamination as well as the excavation of crude oil impacted soil. Commission staff spent 12.5 hours reviewing the project with a total cost to the developer of \$1,000.

As of today, there are 19 other sites currently in the VCP with another pending in the application process. The Commission's VCP program was established by rule in June 2002. The program allows industry operators, landowners and developers who did not cause or contribute to contamination to receive expedited site review and a certificate of completion upon cleanup with a release of liability to

the state. An initial \$1,000 application fee is required to cover the cost of Commission staff oversight of the cleanup.

The Commission is proud of the effects of this program and wishes to invite interested parties to consider applying for the VCP. For more information, contact the Commission's Site Remediation Section of the Oil and Gas Division at (512) 463-6765 or access the website at <http://www.rrc.state.tx.us>.