

# HERALD BANNER

## Resident helps prevent environmental damage

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— Authorities say an alert area resident helped bring attention to a hazardous materials spill before it caused significant damage.

“We got it cleaned up in the nick of time,” said Hunt County Fire Marshal Richard Hill, saying it started to rain almost the moment the spill was cleaned up.

“That could have been bad,” he said.

Hill said Quinlan Fire Chief Steve Bowen received a phone call Monday evening from a concerned resident reporting an unknown hazardous material spill on County Road 2426 in the Union Valley area.

Bowen then contacted Chief Environmental Enforcement Officer Mike Pierce who in turn contacted Hill. Hill said the Union Valley Volunteer Fire Department also responded.

“We found out that S.J. Louis Construction Co. had attempted to move their portable diesel tank and turned it over causing a diesel spill. We’re guessing it was between 800 and 1,000 gallons,” Hill said.

The company had been laying a water pipeline between Lake Tawakoni and Lay Ray Hubbard and was apparently moving equipment when the spill occurred, Hill said. However, Hill said representatives with the company did not bother to alert county officials about the spill.

Instead it took an alert resident, who noticed apparently noticed a smell, to report the spill.

“We appreciate concerned citizens reporting anything they see suspicious in the area,” Hill said.

Hill said Pierce contacted the construction company and was told they would send out clean up crews in the morning.

However, with rain storms blowing up, county officials told company officials they could not wait until the morning.

“Pierce said they needed to get an environmental cleanup crew to the scene immediately or face criminal charges,” Hill said.

Environmental clean up company Cactus Environmental arrived around 10:30 p.m. and finished up “just as it began to sprinkle rain” preventing the spill from spreading, he added.

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