

Toxic chemicals traced to south county barn

10-26-84

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WATSONVILLE — Investigators have traced 18 barrels of toxic chemicals dumped alongside roadways here earlier this week to a barn on property located off Green Valley Road.

No arrests have been made.

Armed with a search* warrant, investigators went to that barn Thursday night and discovered 16 more barrels of chemicals, some of them leaking.

Assistant District Attorney Bob Patterson said this morning that a state environmental inspector recognized markings on barrels discovered Monday night alongside Browns Valley Road and Wednesday morning in a creekbed off Eureka Canyon Road.

The markings, Patterson said, matched those found on barrels in this county two years ago. They were part of an illegal dumping case in another county.

Based on that discovery, Patterson said,

a warrant was obtained to search a barn on property located up a dirt road off Green Valley Road. The search warrant did not list a name, just a parcel owner. In the barn, investigators found 16 barrels of hazardous and toxic chemicals. Some of those barrels contained sulfuric acid. Sulfuric acid also was in some of the barrels discovered Monday and Wednesday.

Patterson said no one was at, or in the vicinity of, the barn when investigators and law enforcement officers made their search.

With no suspect located, Patterson was reluctant to discuss many of the details of the search, nor would he elaborate on the information from the state investigator which led them to that barn.

The IT Corp. of Martinez, toxic spill cleanup specialists, were on the scene late this morning, packing the barrels in containers for transport to a toxic waste dump near Coalinga.

Patterson said the county has been as-

sured money for the cleanup from the federal EPA "superfund."

Three hundred Corralitos residents were evacuated Monday night after a deputy discovered 14 barrels of chemicals alongside Browns Valley Road near the Corralitos Creek Bridge. Sulfuric acid was steaming from some of the barrels.

Nearby residents were evacuated to shelters for some six hours until the chemicals in the barrels could be identified. Preliminary tests show the chemicals included cyanide, sulfuric acid, isopropyl alcohol, hydrochloric acid and butyl alcohol.

Wednesday morning, a lumbering crew found four more barrels in a creekbed off nearby Eureka Canyon Road.

Authorities surmised that the first 14 barrels accidentally fell off a truck which entered a curve near Corralitos Creek Bridge too fast. But, they said, they believe the truck was headed for Eureka Canyon Road to illegally dump those barrels anyway.