

## Cleanup still underway after train derailment

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**NEW AUGUSTA** — Cleanup crews continue to deal with the mess left by last week's train derailment in Perry County that spilled thousands of gallons of hazardous materials.

The incident occurred around 9 a.m. Friday, when 19 rail cars of a Canadian National Railway train left the tracks while traveling outside New Augusta.

Ernie Shirley, environmental scientist with the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality, said most of the spillage — including 50,000 gallons of crude oil, 17,000 gallons of fertilizer and 10,000 gallons of petroleum distillate — came from three of the derailed cars.

“Other ones were minor,” he said. “There were some more cars with some leaks, but they were minor in nature and were pretty localized around the tank car.”

Shirley said the cleanup will take at least five to seven days.

“Cleanup-wise, they're working on the spilled product — the crude oil and other materials that spilled,” he said. “Transfer-wise, they've got some cars there that did not spill that they have to offload, so they're in the process of contacting trucker companies for that.”

Approximately 100 railroad employees are handling on-site cleanup. About 50 government officials, firemen and police officers also are assisting with cleanup efforts.

“We're going to continue for as long as it takes to do a complete and comprehensive environmental cleanup,” said Patrick Waldron, Canadian National Railway spokesman.

The accident closed U.S. 98 for several hours Friday before the eastbound side of the highway opened to traffic late that evening. About 50 Perry County residents who left their homes because of a mandatory evacuation were allowed to return Sunday.