

## **Excuse Me, Did You Forget Your 44 Tons of Rotting Meat?**

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Carson Walker, Associated Press Writer

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The owner of a South Dakota packing plant who left behind 44 tons of rotting kosher bison meat when he relocated his business to Minnesota has agreed to pay part of the cost of cleaning up the mess, his attorney said.

Mike Unke, an attorney for Ilan Parente, said his client will pay back some of the \$11,151 in costs it took to clean up the Bridgewater Quality Meats plant after it closed in January 2008. The meat stayed cold until the following December, when the power was cut. By June, the smell had spread to the whole town, so workers removed the mess.

"Everything is taken care of," Unke said.

The city had filed a motion to collect \$3,900 from Parente, its share of the cleanup costs, but a hearing on the matter that was scheduled for next week will likely be canceled, Bridgewater attorney Mike Fink said.

Parente is still owes \$14,085 in back taxes for the plant property and for a home he owned, and he could be subject to \$7 million in penalties from a pending lawsuit.

That lawsuit was filed after Bridgewater's sewer system began getting stopped up because of blood and other parts going down the drain at Bridgewater Quality Meats.

The state Department of Environment and Natural Resources sued the business in 2003 seeking \$10,000 per day of violation for dumping between October 2001 and October 2003. The last action on the case was a delay issued in March 2008. If convicted and assessed every day of that period, the penalty could top \$7 million.

Parente's phone number is disconnected, and his attorney said he likely doesn't want to talk.

When Parente moved the business to Dawson, Minn., he changed the name to Noah's Ark Processors LLC.

A woman who answered the phone and a man who identified himself as a manager, neither of whom would give their name, said Parente is no longer affiliated with the business.

His name was still listed on an Aug. 3 letter from the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development informing him the business was no longer

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eligible to receive tax exemptions because its wages were lower than agreed upon.

Besides that program, Parente also received a \$450,000 loan to move from South Dakota to Minnesota, which is being paid back, said Kirsten Morell, spokeswoman for the state agency.

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