



## PostBusiness

# Transforming asbestos into cash

By ANDE WELLING

Removing asbestos from buildings is nasty business — workers wear head-to-toe, filtered HazMat getups to isolate and bag the deadly carcinogen, then dispose of it in special storage sites.

The work is slow, cumbersome and expensive. And the deadly asbestos dust can leak in the process. But New York businessman Tony Nocito has found a better way.

Con Edison and Madison Square Garden have already hired his firm, Manhattan-based Abcov, to remove the lethal insulation and fireproofing by turning it into inert "sand."

"We finally have the process down

to where we can do it any place and the cost is competitive," Nocito said.

The Federal Environmental Protection Agency first approved Abcov's method of destroying asbestos in 1992. Unlike conventional methods, Nocito says Abcov's system actually changes the chemical composition of asbestos to make it nontoxic.

Typically, removal involves spraying asbestos with a wetting agent to reduce dust and securing it in plastic bags that are transported to regulated landfills, dumped, and covered with dirt.

But from the site to the landfill, the bags can easily burst, releasing microscopic particles into the air that can

cause cancer. And asbestos makers and users can be liable for the health effects decades later.

Nocito's process involves wetting asbestos with a special solution that actually destroys the crystal structure at the heart of asbestos' danger.

It then moves through a series of shredding and mixing tanks, infusing the material with acids that reduce it to a harmless sludge of sand and lime that can be easily disposed of.

Over 70 major U.S. firms are facing crippling asbestos-related liabilities. That's a huge opportunity for Abcov's cheaper, faster and safer process, and with more than a decade of experience, Nocito is now marketing his system nationally.