

# From the Compliance Corner:

by Bill Morris

## Have You Seen a Ghost?



Every once in a while, someone will buy a piece of property and while clearing off a section of land, and doing some excavating, they may come across what appears to be old gasoline tanks.

If the property has had a Phase I site assessment done (research on past uses of the property and site inspection) and there are no listed registered tanks on the TCEQ PST Registration Database, as well as no evidence of vent lines, dispenser islands or fill tubes for fuel tanks, then these discovered gas tanks are considered to be **ghost tanks**.

These tanks must be removed following current TCEQ protocol. So who pays for cleanup if contamination requires remediation? The bad news, the property owner! The good news, the property owner will not have to pay tank registration fees from 1987 to September 2007.

If it was obvious there were tanks there, (old service islands are visible, vent lines) but they weren't registered, the property pays for cleanup and past due tank registration fees.

**Recommendation:** Before someone buys a piece of property at a "really good deal" have a Phase I site assessment done by a qualified environmental consultant. If there are known tanks, have a Phase II (soil & groundwater sampling) done also. Some of these "**known ghosts**" (old tanks not used for many years) can come back to haunt the property owner.