

February 19, 1997

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: R. Jan Appel, Secretary of Sparton Technology, Inc.  
(517) 787-8600, ext. 3952

**STATEMENT OF SPARTON TECHNOLOGY, INC.**

"In response to the City of Albuquerque's criticism, it is essential for citizens to know that Sparton Technology has spent more than \$6 million to date on analysis and remediation efforts to correct the contaminated groundwater that resulted from the operation of our Coors Road facility between 1961 and 1983.

"We will spend more to implement a solution, but that solution must be workable and affordable. Unfortunately, while Sparton Technology has proposed and is willing to start such a solution, the City of Albuquerque, Bernalillo County, the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) are not.

"One of many Albuquerque companies that supported the United States government's defense program at the height of the Cold War, Sparton Technology manufactured high reliability switches and controls for use by Sandia National Laboratories in developing nuclear weapons. An unfortunate but typical byproduct of electronic equipment manufacturing is the generation of hazardous wastes.

"Despite our adherence to all applicable laws and regulations in place at that time, Sparton determined in 1983 that our operation had contaminated the groundwater near the Coors Road facility. Sparton acted cooperatively to correct the problem. In 1983, we stopped the manufacturing processes that led to the environmental impairment. That same year, Sparton worked with the New Mexico Environmental Improvement Division, and under a state-approved plan, we closed the storage ponds and on-site sump area that were found to have caused the contamination problem, to the satisfaction of the State.

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"In 1987, when it became apparent that contaminants had spread beyond the facility boundaries, Sparton and the EPA entered into an agreement, an Administrative Order of Consent (AOC), which became effective Oct. 1, 1988. The AOC established a formal process by which Sparton and the EPA would develop a corrective measure for responding to the release of the contaminants into the environment.

"Sparton has been neither reluctant nor resistant to accept its responsibility to correct the contamination. Indeed, we have acted in good faith and satisfied our obligations under the AOC, meeting the schedules and deadlines set forth in the AOC.

"It is the regulators -- not Sparton -- that must accept responsibility for any significant delays that have occurred in correcting this matter.

"Sparton has proposed a viable, cost-effective solution that meets the most pressing concern for Albuquerque's citizens, which is to stop the spread of the contaminants now.

"In fact, on Feb. 12, in cooperation with the NMED, Sparton completed installation of five vapor recovery wells on site to recover contaminants in the ground above the groundwater. We are testing those wells this week.

"Sparton is ready to immediately use proven technologies to stop the migration of the contaminant plume. We want to install a containment well at the plume's outer-most edge. This well would pump out the contaminated water at a rate of 200 gallons a minute. The water would then be cleaned through a well-known technology known as air stripping. The end product would be water that is safe to drink. This safe, clean water would then be returned to the aquifer via the Calabacillas Arroyo.

"The EPA, on the other hand, wants Sparton to spend between \$15 million and \$26 million on an approach that includes technology that is not workable and that we insist offers no more protection for human health or the environment than the method Sparton has proposed.

"It is unfortunate and dismaying that the City of Albuquerque, which has been slow to involve itself in the formal remediation process, suddenly seeks to define for itself a role that is clearly outside the process. The City's legal action at this juncture can only cause further delays in implementing remediation."

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## **Some Facts About Sparton Technology, Inc.**

Sparton Technology, Inc. is a New Mexico corporation and wholly owned subsidiary of Sparton Corporation, based in Jackson, Michigan.

Sparton Technology is headquartered at 4901 Rockaway Blvd. in Rio Rancho, and currently employs 240 New Mexico workers at its Rio Rancho, Deming and Albuquerque facilities. The company today manufactures microprocessor-based monitoring and control systems for telephone companies around the world.

Sparton Technology has had manufacturing operations in New Mexico since 1961. Between 1961 and 1983, the company manufactured high reliability switches and controls for use by Sandia National Laboratories in developing nuclear weapons.

In early 1994, Sparton Technology ceased production of the nuclear weapons components at its Coors Road facility in Albuquerque.

In 1983, the company closed two on-site waste water storage ponds and sump area that were found to have contaminated groundwater in the vicinity of the plant. Sparton Technology is involved in an ongoing environmental remediation process with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to address the contamination problem.