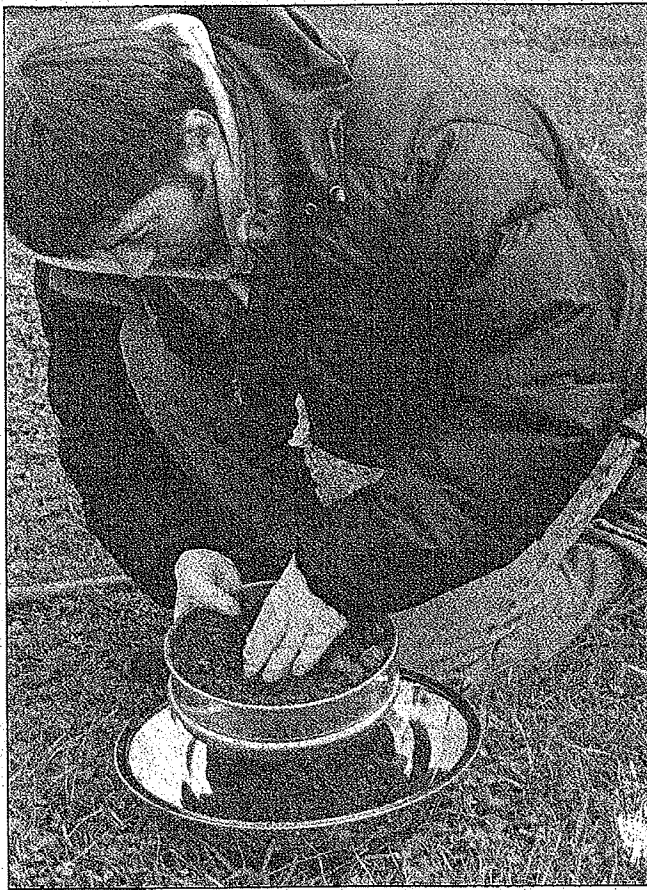


Soil sampling



Staff photo by Matt Harvey

Kyle Baicker-McKee, 23, of Morgantown mixes a soil sample Tuesday as part of the DuPont Spelter smelter property cleanup. Baicker-McKee works for Core Environmental Services Inc. of Morgantown.

Property cleanup begins in Spelter

Medical monitoring also under way as part of DuPont suit settlement

by Matt Harvey
ASSISTANT MANAGING EDITOR

SPELTER — Amid foggy conditions Tuesday morning, Kyle Baicker-McKee ran his gloved hands through dirt from the back yard of Spelter resident Lenora Perrine.

It marked a milestone: the beginning of the property cleanup portion of the Spelter smelter lawsuit against DuPont that's been years in the making.

Both soil sampling and medical monitoring, the other concession DuPont made in the settlement, began Tuesday.

Claims Administrator Ed Gentle said the medical monitoring was conducted at a Shinnston clinic, with negotiations under way to find two or three other local providers.

Medical monitoring for former residents who now live in about 25 other states will be conducted by a national company that has worked in other, similar cases, Gentle said.

The sign-up for medical monitoring is over, and technically, it's done for property cleanup, too. But Gentle said the claims office, located at the Spelter fire hall, would continue to take applications for property remediation.

Baicker-McKee is a field technician for Core Environmental Services Inc. of Morgantown. He said he was sifting five samples into one that then would be sent to a laboratory.

Thomas Rebar, senior project manager for Core, said the samples go to a lab in Greensburg, Pa.

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It takes about 10 days to get the results back, and they're then forwarded to the settlement team, Rebar said.

Core has done dozens of similar projects around the state, often working with the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection, Rebar said.

John Parrotta of JPEC LLC, another Morgantown firm, was sampling dust inside Spelter homes at the same time.

The experts are looking for traces of toxic chemicals that were known to be released from the former zinc smelter.

The settlement team hopes to clean contaminated properties in the three closest zones to the old smelter, Gentle said. Among other places, that could take cleanup operations halfway into Shinnston and out

toward Lumberport, according to Mike Jacks, executive director of the claims office.

Soil sampling likely won't be done until late winter or early spring, according to Rebar and Gentle. After that, it will be time to find a company or companies to do the reclamation work both inside and outside homes.

All but four residents of the area closest to the plant have signed up, Gentle said. He added that the settlement team will probably ask those four if they want to participate.

The high participation "speaks a lot about the community spirit and people's willingness to work together," Gentle said.

Perrine is signed up for medical monitoring as well as property cleanup. She will go for her checkup this week.

"I'm happy it's almost over," said Perrine, who was the original complainant against DuPont.