

Remediation completed in Spelter smelter class action suit

by Austin Weiford
STAFF WRITER

SPELTER — The remediation of the Spelter area due to contaminants from a zinc smelter owned by DuPont has been completed.

The remediation was the result of a jury verdict in 2011 that allowed for clean-up of the area.

Edgar Gentle, the settlement claims administrator over the settlement property remediation program, said the affected area was divided into zones designated 1A, 1B, 2 and 3.

Zone 1A properties were to be remediated by soil removal and replacement, as well as an intensive interior remediation for all inhabited structures to recover settled and accumulated particulates containing elevated concentrations of heavy metals.

All other zones (1B, 2 and 3) were to receive tiered lev-

els of interior remediation, based on radial distance from the former smelter site, with no soil remediation.

Paul Emerson, remediation manager for Gentle, Turner, Sexton and Harbison LLC, said the remediation's purpose was to clean homes and soil of certain trace metals.

"The contaminants that were monitored during the remediation were lead, arsenic and cadmium," Gentle said. "We measured each area before and after remediation to make sure there was an improvement and that the levels of those substances were in line with the accepted standards."

For properties that received soil remediation,



Gentle



Staff photo by Matt Harvey

Shown is the site of the former smelting plant at Spelter that played a key role in munitions manufacturing.

heavy equipment and vehicles were necessary.

"We dug up the top 6 inches of soil on these properties," Emerson said. "The soil was removed and replaced."

With approval of the court, Gentle maintained a budget

for local road improvements to mitigate impacts from the operation of heavy equipment during the Soil Remediation Program.

As a result, the money from the settlement will pay for the repaving of all roads

in the towns of Spelter and Erie, which lie in remedial zone 1A, at an estimated cost of \$243,348.

Gentle said the remediation program took a "Boy Scout approach" when it came to the areas affected by heavy equipment used during the program; the goal was to leave the area in as good of or better condition than when the work began.

"Some of the heavier trucks damaged roadways, and we wanted to repair that," Gentle said. "We repaved some roads and made other infrastructure improvements."

Additional infrastructure improvements, estimated at a value between \$200,000 and \$250,000, included installation of new drains, drop inlets and reparation of existing drains; cleaning of existing ditch lines; paving or re-surfacing of several alleyways; and sidewalk repairs.

After the remediations

were finished, the surplus money from the settlement was distributed equally among claimants. Gentle said the amount came to around \$4,000 per family.

In addition to the remediation, the settlement also established a voluntary medical monitoring program to last for 30 years, in which eligible claimants can be monitored for any adverse health effects from the contaminants, including lead poisoning, cancer, gastrointestinal problems and respiratory problems. Tests will be conducted every two years.

Gentle said all areas that had been remediated were tested for contaminants before occupancy was resumed, and that all had fallen within acceptable, safe measures of the materials.

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