Welcome to another edition of “Getting the lead out...”
This is the first edition of the Jacobsville newsletter for the 2013 construction year. Our prime article is an explanation of the delay in getting this year’s work started. We also have an interview with Dwayne Caldwell, Environmental Health Supervisor with the Vanderburgh County Health Department. What he has to say is important information for all residents in the county. Scattered throughout this issue are small colored boxes containing bits of information about the cleanup. Pay close attention to the “red highlighted box.” It contains a startling statistic that we would like to see turn out better. There is also a map and places where you can find further information about arsenic and lead. And finally, the newsletter contains information on EPA’s points of contact for the project and how to reach them.

Have a safe summer,

Dave Novak
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Community Involvement Coordinator

Where is the EPA this year?

EPA contractors were in Evansville this March to collect soil samples from the yards of more than 230 homes and is also planning the 2013 construction season for the Jacobsville Neighborhood Lead-Contaminated Soil cleanup in Evansville. We have recently received funding for this year’s cleanup work, which we expect to begin in July or August. EPA’s prime contractor has announced the request for subcontractor proposals to do cleanups in both 2013 and 2014. Once the bids are in and reviewed, a subcontractor will be selected to do the work in the neighborhoods. The work is planned to start in July or August and is scheduled to continue through November or December.

As we get closer to the start of the work, we plan on having a public meeting or open house sessions where you and other residents interested in the cleanup can come and talk to us one-on-one. These meetings will probably take place in the next month or two. If you are receiving this newsletter, or have had your yards sampled in March of this year, you will receive a post card with the meeting details. We will also place an ad in the Evansville Courier and Press newspaper.

Scattered throughout this issue are small boxes highlighting interesting bits of information about the work that is being done on the cleanup project.

An important but unfinished piece of business is the number of property owners that EPA has not been able to locate or who have failed to respond to our sampling and cleanup requests. We would like to get all of the properties at least tested, and if found to have high lead or arsenic levels, get them cleaned up. The EPA asks your cooperation in finding these property owners. We have had realtors and appraisers call us and ask if property being sold has been tested and/or cleaned, so everyone’s cooperation is important in this effort.

A Candid Look at the Lead Issues in Vanderburgh County –

An interview about lead issues in Vanderburgh County was conducted with Dwayne Caldwell, who is the Environmental Health Supervisor with the Vanderburgh County Health Department (VCHD). The Environmental Health Services Section of the VCHD regulates, investigates and mitigates environmental threats to residents in Vanderburgh County, such as lead. Elevated levels of lead have been found in and around homes in Vanderburgh County. The sources of the lead are most frequently
outdoor soil and lead-based paint.

The EPA Lead Cleanup project will address the source of lead in outdoor soil only. However, there are steps everyone can take to minimize their exposure to lead and arsenic no matter what the source may be.

EPA – What is the first thing that comes to mind in Vanderburgh County as it pertains to lead?

VCHD – The future that we are losing when children are affected by lead. They are not going to achieve their potential. When they don’t achieve their potential, we lose what they cannot become.

EPA – How big is the lead issue with children and pregnant women in Vanderburgh County?

VCHD – It’s huge. We have old housing stock here and only a small percentage of the at-risk residents are being tested. Blood lead testing is the only way to know if you’ve been exposed. Only about a third of the children who need to be tested actually get tested.

EPA – Why so few?

VCHD – Probably three main factors. The first is people don’t know they can get testing done for free. People also worry about causing problems with landlords. They think they may get kicked out if they report a property with lead problems. And finally, some people are just so overwhelmed with the day-to-day stuff, you know – a roof over their heads and bread on the table – that they don’t have the capacity to be concerned about anything beyond that.

EPA – If somebody is concerned about lead exposure, what should they do?

VCHD – The first step is to come to the Health Department, of course. We do have two people who can do blood-lead testing and can get the results in an hour or so. Any blood-lead level above 2 micrograms per deciliter will be a reason for concern and that’s where our environmental section will get involved.

EPA – Someone tests positive. What’s next?

VCHD – It’s a two prong approach – housekeeping and hygiene. Housekeeping means deep cleaning the house to remove lead dust. That involves double bucket cleaning. Cleaning the floor and woodwork and rinsing with clean water. And cleaning surfaces you might not normally clean such as window wells and the tops of door ledges, those kinds of things. And then maintaining that by dusting and damp mopping often. The other part is hygiene. A lot of children don’t wash their hands enough, and of course kids are all about putting things in their mouth, so if hands are not clean, especially before they eat or before they go to bed, they’re going to swallow lead dust. Part of it is just keeping things off the floor. We’ve had kids swallow fishing weights. Keep those kinds of things off the floor and clean up.

EPA – Are there medications for this?

VCHD – Definitely separate the child from the lead by doing the things we talked about. The child will have to be monitored by a doctor to make sure lead levels are coming down. Lead tends to exit the body on its own but everyone’s physiology is different. They may need to be treated with drugs called “chelating agents” to pull the lead out of the body. Children who are exposed to lead will also have problems with learning and perhaps with behavior, so parents will need to make sure they are monitored for development. There are standardized tests our nurses do that make sure a child is on track as far as development.

**Cleanup Goal for 2013**

- **400** – approximate number of properties to be cleaned up
- **Boundaries**: most will be north of the Lloyd Expressway
- **Projected start**: July/August
- **Expected completion**: November/December

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**Most Properties to Be Cleaned in 2013 Will Be North of the Lloyd Expressway**

Sampling in 2014 will include completion of remaining properties north of the Lloyd Expressway and the start of sampling properties south of the Lloyd Expressway.
Jacobsville Lead Cleanup

LEGEND
- Jacobsville Site Boundary
- Original Site Area ("OU1")
- Cleanup Area – 2013
- Complete (cleanup completed or sampling completed and no cleanup required)
- Parcel will be cleaned in 2013
- Sampled in March 2013
- To be sampled in the future
- Evansville Neighborhoods

Note:
The EPA soil cleanup addresses residential and high-access properties only.
EPA – Is there a way to help families that do not have insurance? How do you follow up with some parents who say they can’t afford that, so they just ignore the problem?

VCHD – That would be unfortunate. Most of the folks that we deal with are on Medicaid. They can get their services through their Medicaid physician. We also have things that we can do here in the department as far as referrals if they do not have a primary care physician. We can find someone that can take care of them. And to be honest the role of the physician is actually quite limited. Most of the things that need to be done to protect the child happen in the home. You know the housekeeping and the hygiene. You do not need to go to the doctor to get pills to fight this. You may need to go to Wal-Mart and get a mop. In fact we have those that we give out.

EPA – Do you provide families with the training to clean the home and literature to help them?

VCHD – Yes, exactly. We have a lot of good printed material that we can give them, especially on soils, cleaning, and personal habits, those kinds of things.

EPA – How does follow-up work?

VCHD – We continuously follow the child until they reach a point where their blood-lead levels drop to a safe level. If they move we refer their case to that jurisdiction.

EPA – Is lead poisoning a problem in Evansville?

VCHD – Yes. In the area bordered by the river, the Lloyd Expressway and U.S. 41, I call it the lead triangle. Those are the oldest homes in the state. They are the large Victorians built prior to 1900. A lot of them have been chopped up into two, three or four apartment units. We have a lot of absentee owners. They are run by management companies and the owners are actually New Yorkers or Californians or from some other place. The parents are low-income and there’s a large population of kids. All these factors point to serious lead-poisoning issues.

EPA – I understand the WIC (Women, Infants and Children) supplemental food program is helping out.

VCHD – The WIC people have been great. They often are the first ones to hear about new families moving into the lead triangle and encourage them to get tested. I would really like to see the school system getting onboard and promoting lead testing during its kindergarten roundup and also the faith communities could be very helpful.

EPA – How about the hospitals in the area, are they aggressive in this area?

VCHD – A lot of the hospitals rely on the Health Department to take care of the lead poisoning problem. Sadly, I think the medical profession thinks lead doesn’t happen anymore when in reality lead doesn’t change or go away.

EPA – Since this is in the tri-state area, do you get a lot of cooperation from the bordering states?

VCHD – Yes, there is. In Kentucky we have the Green River Health District. People move back and forth across the border so we get a lot of excellent cooperation from the district telling us that someone is coming over. We, of course, tell them when someone is headed to Kentucky.

EPA – What about day care centers?

VCHD – We have a lot of home day care centers and individual homes doing day care in Evansville. I’m not a real big regulation kind of guy, but no one checks these facilities for lead issues. That could be done for little cost.

EPA – We talk about lead poisoning but poison is a scary word. Is it really that bad?

VCHD – There are different kinds of poisons. There are acute poisons like say, you drink battery acid. And there are chronic poisons, like lead. Drinking the battery acid, you are going to see immediate effects and people are going to start jumping around and calling 911 and get that problem taken care of. Lead is a more dangerous poison, I think, because it accumulates in a child. It is doing damage over a long period of time. But yet you may not see it. Because there are no spots on the skin, and there is no eye dilation or anything like that. The child is being harmed, and they are looking perfectly normal. And you wouldn’t even know it until fourth or fifth
grade when Bobby, Sue or Joe are having problems learning, having behavioral problems, or having neural muscular problems. So that is why I think it’s actually a more dangerous poison, and they are looking perfectly normal. And you wouldn’t even know it until fourth or fifth grade when Bobby, Sue or Joe are having problems learning, having behavioral problems, or having neural muscular problems. So that is why I think it’s actually a more dangerous poison.

**EPA – What can the effects be later in life?**

VCHD – The major effects are on the neural muscular systems and central nervous systems. Lead essentially affects the brain. If you remember when the cars had carburetors and you got gunk in them and your car wouldn’t run. Same thing with lead and the brain. Children are going to lose IQ points. They are not going to be able to focus as well. The thinking and reasoning skills are going to be impaired. [They will develop] behavioral problems and even emotional problems, I believe those are the worst. You also having things like renal problems and even issues with dexterity in the hands.

**EPA – Does it pay for older people to get tested?**

VCHD – It certainly doesn’t hurt. Generally older folks because of our size and our metabolism, we have to be exposed to much greater amounts of lead to be harmed. You have to understand that children are still forming. Their little brains and nerves are still mending together. They’re smaller and their body mass ratio is definitely out of whack compared to us. And they have a lot more habits that cause poisoning. I see very few adults sucking their fingers and very few adults putting objects in their mouths.

**EPA – Lead in the soil, lead in the paint in the house, lead on woodwork in the house, same difference?**

VCHD – Lead is lead. Lead is an element, it’s a metal and if it’s in paint, it’s a problem. If it’s in soil, it’s a problem. If it’s in dust, it’s a problem. The only difference being the availability. Lead in paint that is intact and isn’t flaking, cracking or peeling, that’s not a problem. Lead in soil that is underneath a parking lot, it doesn’t cause a problem. It’s harmful if the lead paint is cracking, peeling, and if the soil is bare and the child is playing in it. Dust can carry lead from cracked paint or bare spots outdoors.

**EPA – Has the interest in lead blood testing increased since EPA started the lead soil cleanup?**

VCHD – It has increased because anytime something is going on and you have media attention, people get concerned enough to do some research on their own. However, it hasn’t increased enough. Many people don’t think they have a problem since they don’t live in a targeted cleanup neighborhood but they forget the historical industries in Evansville spread pollution everywhere.

**EPA – Any closing thoughts?**

VCHD – I would basically plead with parents not to fear the stigma of having a child tested and having a child evaluated. It doesn’t mean that they’re poor or uneducated or anything like that. It happens to everybody, up and down the social-economic ladder. Don’t let fear get in the way of what a child could become, and that is what I would stress.

**FINAL NOTE:** Testing is available five days a week. The Vanderburgh County Health Department has begun charging a nominal fee for adult testing only. Testing for pregnant women and children remains free, however. Patrons are encouraged to call ahead to assure someone is available to do the testing. They can call 812-435-5568. The office is open for testing Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. and is on the second floor of the Mulberry Street address.
TO VIEW THE ARSENIC FACT SHEET, PLEASE GO TO THE WEB SITE:
http://www.atrsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/tf.asp?id=93&tid=22

TO VIEW THE LEAD FACT SHEET, PLEASE GO TO THE WEB SITE:
http://www.atrsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/tf.asp?id=19&tid=3

EXAMPLE OF THE ACCESS AGREEMENT
If you receive an Access Agreement in the mail, it is important that you fill it out as soon as possible and return to EPA so that your property may be tested.
INSIDE Getting the lead out...

Getting the lead out... is published several times annually by EPA Region 5 Community Involvement Section. Its purpose is to provide up-to-date and useful information about cleanup and restoration efforts on the Jacobsville Lead Contamination site, Evansville, Ind. Call Dave Novak at 312-886-7478 or 855-838-1304, Ext. 31325, 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m., to request a free subscription or alternative format. Feedback on articles and ideas for future issues is welcome. Send comments to Dave Novak, EPA Office of Superfund (SI-7J), 77 W. Jackson Blvd., Chicago, IL 60604 or e-mail novak.dave@epa.gov.