



## RESULTS OF COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL SAMPLING AND PATH FORWARD ——— IN THE COLLEGEVILLE, HARRIMAN PARK AND FAIRMONT NEIGHBORHOODS, NORTH BIRMINGHAM, AL

Number 2 (CORRECTION—July 2011)

April 2011

### INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is announcing to the community at large the results of environmental sampling conducted by Walter Coke (formerly, Sloss Industries) in the Summer of 2009. EPA previously released this information to community leaders and residents whose yards were sampled. EPA's goal is to keep the local community informed and engaged. Walter Coke agreed to sample yards, drainage areas and public areas in North Birmingham for chemicals of potential concern, namely arsenic (As) and Benzo(a)pyrene toxicity equivalents (BaP TEQ). The purpose was to investigate the presence of these chemicals of potential concern in soil. EPA provided oversight of these sampling activities in the adjacent neighborhoods of the facility.



*An example of a soil sample being taken in a front yard.*

### FINDINGS

In the Summer of 2009, soil samples were collected at numerous properties. After an in-depth laboratory analysis of the soil samples, a Walter Coke sampling report, rigorous EPA review and comments, and EPA risk assessor evaluations, the results show some levels of As and BaP TEQ is present above EPA's cleanup levels at some of the school and residential properties sampled.

#### *School Properties*

EPA notified the school district verbally in Spring 2010, then formally in October 2010.

- **Riggins Alternative School:** EPA determined that BaP TEQ was above cleanup levels at several sampling points. Follow-up action included re-sampling, soil removal, and soil and grass replacement by Walter Coke.
- **Hudson K-8 School:** EPA determined that BaP TEQ was above cleanup levels at several sampling points for the former school. Follow-up action included re-sampling at the new school, soil removal, and soil and grass replacement by Walter Coke.
- **Carver High School:** EPA determined that BaP TEQ and arsenic was above the cleanup level. The school district has restricted access with security fencing until soil removal is implemented.
- **Calloway Head Start School:** BaP TEQ and arsenic were not detected at or above EPA's cleanup level.

#### *Residential and Other Properties*

From the overall sampling results of 76 properties (included residential yards, schools, Public Housing, rights-of-way, a church, and off-site Walter Coke property), EPA identified about 30% (previous version mistakenly stated 35%) of properties above cleanup levels in Collegeville, Harriman Park and Fairmont neighborhoods.

In November 2010, EPA and ATSDR (Agency for Toxic Substances Disease Registry—a health agency) held one-on-one information sessions with the residents of the properties that were sampled in 2009 to personally explain the results. A broader environmental information session is scheduled for May 19, 2011, to explain the sampling results, soil cleanup action, and future sampling to the community at large.

## INTERNET LINKS

Be sure to visit <http://www.epa.gov/region4/foiapps/readingroom/index.htm> as documents related to this sampling event become available.

## ADDITIONAL ACTIONS:

- Walter Coke will be releasing a cleanup report for both Hudson K-8 and the Opportunity Academy at Riggins in early summer 2011.



*School cleanup actions at Hudson K-8 School, March 2011.*

- EPA reports that Walter Coke has agreed to the cleanup of 23 properties (previous version mistakenly stated 27 properties), which are above the soil cleanup levels. It is anticipated that soil removal and replacement will begin in summer 2011.
- EPA is working on a new legal document for Walter Coke. The purpose of the document is to extend the environmental soil assessment and cleanup in the neighborhoods surrounding the facility. Public comments on this document will be invited.
- ATSDR is making a final determination about the safety of gardening. This health agency is evaluating soil data during their "Health Consultation" process.
- Details of additional actions will be presented at the community meeting on May 19th, 2011.

## BASIS OF INVESTIGATION

The Congressional law, the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) authorizes EPA to require facilities to examine the nature and extent of their potential pollution that may endanger human health or the environment. Currently, the lead regulatory program on this sampling matter is the EPA's RCRA Corrective Action program in the Southeast Region 4 Office in Atlanta.

## HEALTH QUESTIONS

The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) is our lead federal agency on public health issues.

For the public, ATSDR has created Fact Sheets on frequently asked health questions on Arsenic and Polycyclic Aromatic



*A one-on-one information session, November 2010.*

Hydrocarbons (PAHs), related to the two chemicals of potential concern. To view these 2 Fact Sheets produced by ATSDR on the internet, please refer to the following web-site pages:

**Arsenic** <http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/tfacts2.pdf>

**PAHs** <http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/tfacts69.pdf>

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Please contact the following individuals:

### EPA Community Engagement

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### ATSDR (Federal Health Agency)

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