

1,000 apply so far for medical monitoring

DuPont claims office holds 20 town hall meetings in 2 weeks

by Matt Harvey
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SPELTER — More than 1,000 people have signed up for the medical monitoring program as part of a class-action settlement with DuPont over pollution from the Spelter smelter.

That's according to Ed Gentle, the claims administrator for the case. He spoke Friday afternoon after the claims office had concluded its 20th town hall-style meeting over a two-week period.

The process will continue with registration available weekdays at the claims office through Aug. 31. The number of people signing up is likely to grow

because of the approximately 1,000 additional forms handed out for distribution during the town hall meetings, Gentle said.

The amount signed up so far is "a good showing," Gentle said.

Perry Jones, one of the lawyers who represented the class action, thought the number of people signing up "probably would have been a little bit more than that at this point."

"I don't know that I'm disappointed," Jones said. "A couple hundred — I'd have been disappointed. Over 1,000 — that's a

pretty good start. I hope people take advantage of this program."

Gentle wouldn't divulge how many of those who signed up for medical monitoring actually will go ahead with testing. It was necessary to register for the program to be eligible to receive a one-time payment from the settlement, but it wasn't a requirement that those signing up follow through with actual monitoring.

The town hall participants offered plenty of good suggestions for the property cleanup part of the settlement, Gentle said.

While medical monitoring is to be paid for by DuPont on an as-needed basis, there is \$34 million available to clean homes and soil in the Spelter area.



Gentle

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DuPONT

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But class-action expert Dr. Kirk Brown previously opined it would cost about \$57 million to complete the cleanup.

Harrison Circuit Judge Thomas A. Bedell will have the final say on the structure of the cleanup.

But Gentle promises class action members will have plenty of input, likely to include a

chance to vote via a mailed questionnaire. They also probably will get a chance to address the court at a "fairness hearing," according to Gentle.

One of the issues is whether testing should be mandatory or optional. Also: Whether to use Brown's test results to structure a cleanup plan, or whether to do new testing, Gentle said.

Those with questions or comments can contact the claims office by calling (304) 622-7443 or (800) 345-0837; or by e-mailing perrinedupont@gtanslaw.com