

# First town meetings held in wake of DuPont lawsuit

Area residents attend sessions in Spelter to learn more about cleanup as part of class-action settlement

by Matt Harvey  
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CLARKSBURG — Residents learned more Monday about cleanup of land and homes near the old Spelter smelter as part of a class-action settlement.

The first three of 18 town meeting sessions were held at the Perrine DuPont settlement office in Spelter. Sessions from 9 a.m. to noon, 2-5 p.m. and 6-8 p.m. were to continue today through Saturday at the office, located at the fire hall.

Marc Glass, remediation/technical consultant for the settlement, said they're hoping to begin

work on soil cleanup in Spelter as soon as April. Homes in that zone closest to the old DuPont zinc smelter then would be cleaned up, with work branching out to homes in other zones after that.

Ed Gentle, settlement claims administrator, noted Harrison Circuit Judge Thomas A. Bedell's order establishing the property cleanup program hasn't finalized whether soil



Glass



Gentle

cleanup will be mandatory.

Claims office officials are hoping residents with the 250 specific properties will be willing to participate in

soil cleanup, but there's still the potential it could become mandatory, Gentle indicated.

The conservative approach is to make sure that soil gets cleaned up first so it doesn't blow around the area and spoil areas once they're cleaned up,

Glass said.

The court, with a pool of about \$34 million set aside for property cleanup as part of the settlement with DuPont, has authorized \$5,000 "inconvenience" payments for the soil cleanup properties, Gentle said. Those who get their homes cleaned up will receive \$500 in "inconvenience" payments, Gentle said.

As of early Monday afternoon, about 70 people had filled out paperwork to sign up for property cleanup, said Christy Mullins, executive assistant for the claims office.

There are about 2,500 properties that are eligible for



Harbison

cleanup, Gentle said. Those who have applied have been from throughout the area, according to Katherine "Kip" Harbison, a senior associate with the Alabama law firm where Gentle is a partner.

Requests for proposals are being drawn up now and hopefully will go out to contracting companies in the next few weeks, Glass said. The claims

office also plans to conduct some additional testing in September, which also will be contracted out through the same kind of process.

Meanwhile, members of the claims office continue to sign up members of the class action for the medical monitoring program. Those who sign up for medical monitoring are eligible for a cash payout, whether or not they choose to go through with medical testing.

Anyone with questions about either medical monitoring or property cleanup can call the claims office at (304) 622-7443 or show up there during business hours.