

PRESS RELEASE

On October 31, 2012 the Butte Silver Bow Health Department will release the draft of the Health Studies Work Plan required by the Unilateral Administrative Order under the EPA Superfund program. This document will include a plan for both Superfund and Non-Superfund proposals to the EPA as required. The release of this document will begin a 60 day public comment period. A minimum of two public meetings are planned during the public comment period, the first to be on December 3rd and the second will be held in January, 2013 to discuss proposed changes to the plan prior to submission of the final plan which is due on February 28, 2013.

The Superfund portion of the health study plan was accomplished by development of a database through a contract with Environ by Atlantic Richfield. This database will assess the effectiveness of current abatement activities by conducting an assessment of blood lead levels of children and adults in the community over an extended period of time along with the residential testing data of homes in the priority soils area as defined in the agreement. After this assessment is complete, effectiveness of the original plan will be reviewed and changed if necessary with the agreement of all parties involved.

The Superfund and non-Superfund issues were identified during three community listening sessions held in April and May of 2012 and are the result of comments voiced by participants of these meetings. The main concerns were identified as:

- What is causing the current Air Quality problems? What is in the dust we are breathing?
- Do we have higher cancer rates than other communities and are they caused by environmental contaminants?
- Why are the Contaminants of Concern limited to Lead, Arsenic, and Mercury?
- Are there cumulative effects of environmental contamination of one or more contaminants of concern or other chemicals
- What effect has there been on our water supply? Is our drinking water safe?

After these public meetings, a 7 person advisory committee was appointed by the Board of Health. This advisory committee will provide support and guidance to the Public Health Department throughout this process. Advisory committee members were selected from a pool of applicants who provided letters of interest as requested to the Health Department. The expertise of the board members represents a wide variety of professional and technical resources from Silver Bow County.

Several fact sheets have been prepared to address some of the questions asked and we will continue to put additional findings out to the public as we accumulate more information. These fact sheets will be available on the web site after approval by the advisory committee.

A copy of the proposed plan as well as current fact sheets may be accessed on the Butte-Silver Bow web site at www.bsb.mt.gov. Comments related to the plan may be emailed to thocking@bsb.mt.gov for evaluation and inclusion as appropriate into the final version of the plan.