

Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency

October 24, 2016

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Updates On Vapor Intrusion Investigation in Sturgis, MI

Coldwater, MI - The Sturgis Municipal Wells Superfund Site was placed in the Superfund Program in 1984 for chemical contamination from the Kirsch Company impacting local drinking water wells. Today this superfund site is being re-evaluated for a new concern called vapor intrusion. Vapor intrusion occurs when contaminated vapor gets into the indoor air of a building.

The current owner of the site, Newell Brands, Inc., is actively conducting the vapor intrusion investigation as required by the EPA. The purpose of the investigation is to determine if there is a possible risk to the health of people that can be stopped. While there are several chemicals being investigated, the primary chemicals of public health concern are:

- trichloroethylene (TCE) and
- tetrachloroethylene (PERC or PCE).

Exposure to high levels of TCE for long periods can cause nerve, kidney and liver damage. Fetal exposure can increase the risk of developmental effects. Breathing PERC, another chemical of concern, for long periods of time may cause changes in mood, memory, attention, reaction time and vision. Liver and kidney function can be harmed from too much exposure.

The current site of the investigation includes a three block area which includes: E. West Street north to East Hatch Street and Jean Street west to Maple Street. Indoor air samples are being collected and analyzed. Families are being contacted and provided results. Health protective actions will be employed as necessary to protect the public's health. These actions could include the installation of a mitigation system to

remove vapors from beneath the home and venting them to the outdoors, where they can dissipate. This is very similar to the same systems used to address radon.

Newell Brands, Inc. held an initial meeting for the public on September 28th at the Sturges Young Auditorium and Civic Center to provide information concerning the vapor intrusion investigation. A second follow-up community meeting is currently being planned.

The Newell Brands, Inc. vapor intrusion investigation is being conducted with regulatory oversight from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality and with public health evaluation from the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency (BHSJ). Questions regarding the investigation can be directed to:

Superfund Site Investigation Questions:

DEQ Contact Information: Jessica Ferris, project manager, 517.284.5130;
ferrisj6@michigan.gov

Health Concerns:

DHHS Contact Information: Lisa Quiggle, toxicologist, 517-284-4812;
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Public Health Actions:

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