



## Branch - Hillsdale - St. Joseph Community Health Agency

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"Your Local  
Health Department"

**NEWS RELEASE UPDATE (Prior release dated 10-24-16)**

**July 13, 2018**

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### **Vapor Intrusion Investigation in Sturgis, MI**

**Coldwater** - The Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency has been involved with a vapor intrusion investigation in the City of Sturgis since late 2016. The Sturgis Municipal Well site was placed in the Superfund Program in 1984 due to chemical contamination from the Kirsch Company that impacted the local drinking water wells. In 2016, the site was 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 property, Newell Brands, Inc., has been actively conducting the vapor intrusion investigation as required by the EPA. The purpose of the investigation was to determine if there is a possible risk to health of the people living in the homes in the affected area. The area of the investigation includes a three-block area which includes: E. West Street north to E. Hatch Street and Jean Street west to Maple Street. All the homeowners in the affected area were contacted by Newell to request access agreements to allow the indoor testing. In all there were 47 homes within the affected area and of that 38 of the homeowners agreed to have testing conducted. As of this date there are still 9 homes that have not signed access agreements and therefore have not had any testing conducted.

Over the course of many months, all 38 homes had indoor air testing done and 4 of those had indoor air tests above the health standard and mitigation systems were installed. As the investigation progressed it was determined that another test called sub-slab testing should also be conducted as this test gives a better indication of the **potential** for indoor air contamination. This test requires drilling through the basement floor and placing a tube that collects the vapors accumulating below the slab of the home. There were 17 homes that agreed to this type of testing and of those 11 found significant levels of vapor and these homes were also mitigated.

All the costs of the investigation including the air and sub-slab testing and mitigation installations are being covered by Newell Brands. There have been numerous attempts to obtain access agreements from the remaining 9 homes but as of this date it has not been successful.

The Newell Brands Inc. investigation is being conducted with the regulatory oversight from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and the public health evaluation from the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS). The Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency (BHSJCHA) has assisted with communication to property owners and home occupants. 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](mailto:ferrisj6@michigan.gov)

**Health Concerns & Actions:**

MDHHS Contact Information: Lisa Quiggle, toxicologist, 517-284-4812 ;[quigglel@michigan.gov](mailto:quigglel@michigan.gov)

**Local Public Health:**

BHSJ Contact Information : Rebecca Burns, Health Officer, 517-933-3040; [burnsr@bhsj.org](mailto:burnsr@bhsj.org)

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