Message

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Subject: USS Lead - Press

East Chicago press clips
US EPA Region 5 – prepared by the Office of Public Affairs
October 12, 2017

NWI Times **Scientists for a day: East Chicago students test their backyards for lead contamination**
WFYI **East Chicago School Children Take Lead Testing Into Own Hands**

http://www.nwitimes.com/news/local/lake/scientists-for-a-day-east-chicago-students-test-their-backyards/article_66abd71a-0a09-5ad5-9d07-f2273a94c9b8.html

Scientists for a day: East Chicago students test their backyards for lead contamination

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- Oct 11, 2017 Updated 2 hrs ago EAST CHICAGO — Seventh-grader LaTorya Crawford said she heard stories about how the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency found toxic lead south of her neighborhood, in the city's Calumet sections.

And, on Tuesday, the East Chicago Urban Enterprise Academy student-turned-scientist learned the results of her own experiment: She had lead in her own yard.
Lead exposure, even at low levels, can have lifelong negative effects on school-age children's academic ability and behavior.
The news scared 12-year-old LaTorya, but she plans to warn her younger cousins not to play in the dirt.
"I'm going to tell them so they don't get hurt," she said. "It's kind of scary. I don't want them to get sick."
LaTorya was among the 175 students from ECUEA and Joseph L. Block Middle School who participated Tuesday in NAACP Indiana's "Our Community Scientists" initiative, a joint effort with Indiana State University and the Union of Concerned Scientists to empower youth, at ECUEA.
Students received free air, soil and water testing kits with instructions on how to test for lead in their homes. They also were instructed to bring in samples so Indiana State University staff can test for lead at Tuesday's event.
Just a handful of samples were tested Tuesday, but ISU collected all samples with plans to report results back to the schools.
About half a dozen soil samples tested at levels near or above the EPA's residential cleanup threshold of 400 parts per million. Two Block Middle School students' drinking water detected lead levels above the EPA's Lead and Copper Rule threshold of 15 parts per billion.
The issue of lead in drinking water is unrelated to lead in soil at the EPA's USS Lead Superfund site, where EPA's cleanup of soil is ongoing. Up to 90 percent of the city's aging water service lines are made of lead.
ISU associate professor of geology Jennifer Latimer cautioned parents and children not to get a false sense of security if results are negative for drinking water, saying one result is only a snapshot of lead service lines.

"Don't make this a one-time thing. Just because you test negative once, it doesn't mean it's going to be negative the next time. Keep testing," she said.
ISU will accept students' follow-up data and report results back to the schools, she said.
"I think part of the purpose of this is to show them that they have the power to reduce their exposures. They're empowered to make a difference in their community," Latimer said.
ISU urged students to let their water run cold for up to 5 minutes before drinking, cooking or brushing their teeth.
Children were advised not to allow younger children to place dirt in their mouths or to play in contaminated dirt.
Mitchell Cole, a science teacher at ECUEA, said Tuesday's experiment shouldn't end here.
"Today brought an awareness. We asked students 'Is this something you wanted to just experience today? Just to have a great time? Or is there a need for us to have this in the future?'" Cole said. "This is important. They need to become their own advocates for clean water, clean air, clean soil."
Students received NAACP Indiana Our Youth Scientist backpacks, T-shirts and a certificate.
Denise Abdul-Rahman, state director of the NAACP Climate and Environmental Justice program, said the initiative was created in response to EPA budget cuts and ongoing regulation rollbacks under President Donald Trump's administration.
"It's the whole legacy, really, of agency failure here in East Chicago. We have to teach the children and community to fend for themselves. How do you fend for yourself? You learn how to collect your own data and you learn how to protect yourself," she said.

https://www.wfyi.org/news/articles/east-chicago-school-children-take-lead-testing-into-own-hands
East Chicago School Children Take Lead Testing Into Own Hands

Nick Janzen
Children at the East Chicago Urban Enterprise Academy school learned how to test air, water and soil samples for lead Tuesday with help from the NAACP.
The school sits right across the street from the USS Lead Superfund site, a federal toxic waste clean-up site contaminated with lead and arsenic.
Principal Veronica Eskew says the lead testing let her students take ownership over how lead poisoning affects them.
"Giving them the opportunity to have a voice, to have a better understanding of what is happening in their environment, was heart-stopping for me," she says.
Eskew says some of the samples tested Tuesday did come back positive, and the school will continue to help students cope with what that means.
The NAACP also held a training at Joseph L. Block Middle School in East Chicago Tuesday.
Jacqueline Patterson, director of the NAACP Environmental and Climate Justice program, says it was an "inspiring" day.
"To watch the students come together and decide how they're going to tell their story and to see the spark in their eyes and to see the commitment and to the see the empowerment that they feel from being able to really have self determination in their communities," she says.
Patterson says the lead testing training in East Chicago is a pilot program, and wants to take it to Florida, Colorado and Michigan next.
The organization says the testing is necessary because the local, state, and federal response to protecting the community has been inadequate.
Last week, the Environmental Protection Agency announced an agreement with USS Lead, Mining Remedial Recovery Company, Arava Natural Resources Company and Mueller Industries to begin investigating contamination in the non-residential part of the Superfund. The agency will also start testing the area's groundwater, something residents have long advocated for.

Sincerely,

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