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4 of 143 children show increased levels Blood lead level tests show no problems



concern are those surrounding the Blackwell Industrial Park, where the smelter plant was located, with the two housing developments immediately south of the plant location singled out for concern.

In addition to Ms. Elder, two other officials attended the meeting, Scout Thompson of the Department of Environmental Quality, and Thomas Trebonik, of Mintech Inc. of Tulsa, the consulting engineering firm conducting the soil tests.

Higher than normal levels of lead were found at Washington grade school and at Beatty-Rodgers Park last fall.

Officials began removing the contaminated soil from the two areas and transferring it to the former Blackwell Zinc Smelter site.

Elder said the age group of greatest concern were those six months to six-years-old because their nervous systems are developing and above average levels of lead affects that development.

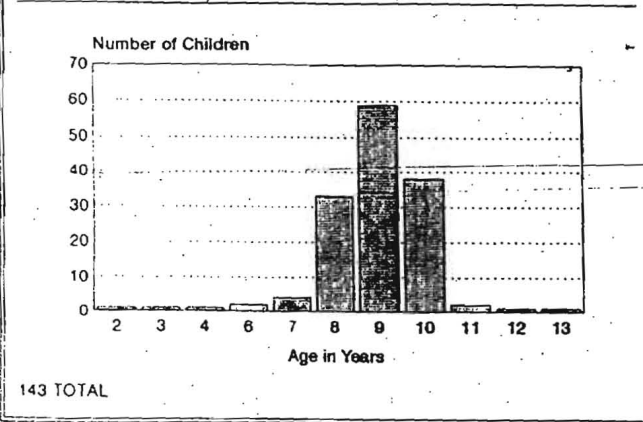
The six months to six-years-age group may also have hearing or growth problems because of above average levels of blood lead, as well as other problems, Elder told the group.

She said children in this age group are likely to eat dirt and ingest contaminants.

Those tested at the Kay County Health Department were second and third graders last year, said Ms. Elder.

Any testing at the County Health Department through the end of July will be free, said Ms. Elder.

BLACKWELL LEAD PROJECT
 NUMBER OF CHILDREN TESTED



TEST RESULTS. — Monty Elder, who is with the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality, gives the results of the testing of 143 school children for blood lead levels at a public meeting Monday night. (J-T Photo by CWA)

By CHARLES ABBOTT
 J-T Staff Writer

Ninety-seven percent of 143 Blackwell school children tested for possible above average blood lead levels tested negative, according to an official with the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality.

Monty Elder told those attending a public meeting Monday that only four of the 143 children tested registered above average

blood lead levels and those four were in the "borderline" area of concern.

"None were classified in medical emergency" of testing, said Ms. Elder.

Some 20 people attended the meeting, held in the City Commission Room at the City Administration Building. The meeting was sponsored by the Blackwell Environmental Steering Committee.

The areas of town of greatest

"If any parent is still concerned, who would like to still take advantage of the free blood level testing, call the Health Department by the end of the month and they will make arrangements," said Ms. Elder.

The Kay County Health Department's phone number in Blackwell is 363-5520.

Elder said for the four who tested above average in blood lead levels, "we're concerned and follow-ups will be done in six months."

She said all four were eight- or nine-years-old.

Engineering consultant Tom Trebonik said removal of soil from Beatty-Rodgers Park and Washington school has started. The soil is

being transferred back to the former smelter site.

Blackwell's zinc smelter closed in 1974.

He said work will be done at the old smelter location to prevent erosion of the soil.

"Once the soil is taken back to the smelter, new soil will be applied to prevent erosion and give vegetation. Our main goal is to determine what vegetation works best," Trebonik said.

James E. Kerrigan, director of Environmental Planning for AMAX, owner of the former smelter facility, was at the meeting and said "we really appreciate the cooperation that we've had" from city officials and from the community.