



Southwire April 11, 2006

On Thursday April 6, 2006, the Chemical Hazards Program (CHP) met with an employee from Environmental Management Strategies, TTL – Southwire’s Environmental group – for a general meeting and tour on a preliminary site visit. The company Vice President/General Council and the La Grange District Health Director also joined the meeting at various times throughout the discussion. The purpose of the visit was to get an overview of the company and their former smelting operations. The Carroll County Citizens for a Safe Environment (CCCSE) have raised questions about dioxin emissions from a previously existing stack.

Upon arrival, there was no notice of any odor or visible emissions. There was a controlled burning much like what is used to reduce methane at landfills. From on-site, there were no visible smokestacks.

Southwire is a wire manufacturing facility, producing building wire and utility cable products used to conduct electricity, including polyvinyl chloride (PVC) used to sleeve/insulate the wire. From the 1970s until 2000, Southwire had two divisions: the Copper Division and the Wire Division. The Copper Division included copper smelting. Products of the smelting are copper matte and the waste slag which is used as an aggregate in road construction. Byproducts of copper smelting include iron, lead, copper, zinc, and flue gas (a mixture of dioxins, metals, and sulfuric acid). Byproducts of the processes, including waste slag from the copper smelting operations, were collected in 3 slag/retention ponds, and waste water released to Buffalo Creek, which empties into Richards Lake. Byproducts were also released via 300 ft smokestack into ambient air. Some waste byproducts are recaptured and used as fuel.

Currently, all copper smelting operations have ceased and the Copper Division was dismantled in 2000. The Wire Division is still operating and manufactures copper, aluminum, and PVC. The surrounding area within a one mile radius is primarily residential and light industrial. Within one mile of Southwire are schools and a hospital; however they are not within the path of the modeled prevailing winds. Richards Lake is accessed by the community, and is recreationally used.

Southwire will be conducting an employee exposure assessment for dioxin. They are currently in the final stages of developing the study protocol. Southwire is preparing a protocol to test between 200 and 300 employees, half of whom would have worked in various areas of the smelting facility. It is yet to be determined whether the study at Southwire will be the same blood test proposed by CDC.

Southwire is currently undergoing RCRA supervised remediation to reduce soil and groundwater contamination. Air sampling data is not available, and without this data, we cannot determine whether the community may have been exposed to hazardous chemicals at levels that may cause adverse health effects. Based on observation and research, exposures to dioxin in air may have occurred in the past.