



## Habersham County CCI August 31, 2007

In July 2007, a resident of Demorest, Habersham County contacted the Georgia Division of Public Health (GDPH) with cancer and environmental health concerns. The resident documented numerous community members, along with herself, who had been diagnosed with cancer. On July 28<sup>th</sup>, she sent GDPH a letter documenting cancer diagnoses in her county. GDPH sent her cancer cluster inquiry request to Georgia Comprehensive Cancer Registry (GCCR) on July 31, 2007 and later provided them a copy of her letter. GDPH mailed the resident a letter with a CHP program brochure on August 3, 2007. She was contacted again by telephone on August 10<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, and finally on August 20, 2007. During one of these calls, she also requested an investigation into four companies near her home. She states that she is on the public water supply and that the only odor she notices regularly is asphalt. She also reports that she has respiratory issues.

In addition, the resident felt that she and other residents have been exposed to environmental contamination. She specified four companies she felt contributed to environmental contamination in her community. In response, GDPH reviewed environmental data concerning the companies to investigate and respond to the resident's concerns. From these sources, GDPH concluded that no elevated rates of cancer are present for Habersham County or the City of Demorest (30535) and/or Clarkesville (30523). In addition, all four companies are approximately 5 or more miles from her community and have no history of regulatory compliance violations.

The city of Demorest is located approximately 81 miles northeast of Atlanta in Habersham County. Clarkesville is located approximately 3 ½ miles away from Demorest and is the county seat. Habersham County was established in 1818 and has an estimated population of 41,112. The estimated population of Demorest and Clarkesville is 1800 and 1250 respectively.

GDPH reviewed the Environmental Protection Division's (EPD) 2007 Hazardous Site Inventory (HSI) to determine if the resident lived near any known hazardous waste

sites. The resident does not live within 5 miles of any of the four listed sites. Among the four companies she specified: Hanson Aggregates SE, Tugalo Construction Company, a salvage yard, and the city dump, none of these companies had any history of compliance violations.

GDPH also reviewed the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Toxic Release Inventory data ([www.tri.gov](http://www.tri.gov)) and Enforcement and Compliance History Online (ECHO) ([www.epa-echo.gov](http://www.epa-echo.gov)). The Toxics Release Inventory (TRI) is a publicly available EPA database that contains information on toxic chemical releases and other waste management activities reported annually by certain permitted industry groups as well as federal facilities. None of the companies were listed in the TRI. ECHO is a site that provides information about compliance inspections, violations, and enforcement actions against companies for violating regulatory standards. ECHO listed two of the companies in their records, Hanson Aggregates SE and Tugalo Construction, but there has been no history of compliance issues or violations. In addition, a nearby salvage company, Nation Auto Salvage, was listed in ECHO, but it also had no history of compliance issues or violations.

The Georgia Comprehensive Cancer Registry (GCCR) is a population-based registry that collects, maintains, and analyzes cancer incidence data in Georgia. On July 31<sup>st</sup>, GDPH consulted with the GCCR to determine if elevated cancer levels existed in Habersham County. On August 2, 2007, GCCR verified that there are no elevated numbers of cancer cases for the cities she mentioned. On August 2, 2007, GCCR mailed to the resident an analysis of cancer data in Habersham County and the two requested zip codes. A final letter from GDPH was sent to her on August 28, 2007 with the results of the environmental investigation.

### Conclusions

Documentation of environmental contamination does not exist in Demorest and/or Clarkesville. Therefore, GDPH has no evidence to determine if an exposure pathway to environmental contamination exists.