

Judge raises registration payout in DuPont suit

Spelter-area residents who sign up for medical monitoring program now get \$400

by Matt Harvey
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CLARKSBURG — Current and former Northern Harrison Countians now have twice the incentive to register for the medical monitoring program created by a class-action settlement with DuPont over pollution.

The settlement's claim administrator, Ed Gentle, said the payout for simply registering for medical monitoring is now \$400. It had been \$200 until Harrison Circuit Judge Thomas A. Bedell signed an order Thursday.

The number could go even higher, depending on whether turnout remains low.

But there's still plenty of time to sign up to collect the money — four months, in fact. The deadline is Aug. 31. Those who sign up for medical monitoring also have the choice of opting out of the actual testing and monitoring.

The medical monitoring program began two months ago, and about 2,200 people have signed up, Gentle said.

The \$400 figure was calculated by projecting that 6,600 people will eventually sign up for medical monitoring, Gentle said.

slow down," in which case the payout amount would be adjusted upward.

The money is coming from a one-time payout pool of \$4 million set aside as part of the settlement. Some of the money in that pool also has been used to pay for the costs of running the program.

Meanwhile, Gentle and Michael Jacks, executive director of the claims office, are working toward finalizing the other part of the settlement: Property cleanup.

Class-action members have been mailed a questionnaire of approximately 20 pages, Jacks said. It seeks input on how best to frame the property

cleanup program.

Around mid-May, another mailing will go out that will summarize the results and invite class-action members to a fairness hearing before Bedell in early June, according to Jacks and Gentle.

Around 3,000 questionnaires were mailed, with approximately 250 to 300 of those completed and returned thus far, Jacks said.

However, he predicted more will come in before the May 1 deadline.

There is \$34 million available to clean homes and soil in the Spelter area.

In addition to property cleanup and the one-time med-

ical monitoring payout, the other cost agreed upon in the settlement is the actual medical testing program. That will be paid for by DuPont on an as-needed basis.

The lawsuit had accused DuPont of polluting the area around its Spelter smelter with carcinogens.

Those who would like to still sign up for medical monitoring, or with questions such as whether they are eligible, are urged to contact the claims office. It can be reached at (304) 622-7443 or (800) 345-0837, or by e-mailing perrinedupont@gtanslaw.com

Or, visit the settlement website at www.perrinedupont.com