U.S. EPA FACT SHEET

ANNISTON PCB SITE

ANNISTON, CALHOUN COUNTY, ALABAMA

August 2002

I. *INTRODUCTION*

Decades of industrial activity have caused significant contamination problems in the western portion of the city of Anniston in Calhoun County, Alabama. Specifically, PCBs and lead have been discovered at elevated levels throughout parts of the city in commercial and residential areas and in area creeks, rivers, flood plains and lakes. EPA and ADEM are responding to these contaminated areas and have instituted numerous activities and programs throughout Anniston.

EPA is fully committed to protecting human health and the environment in Anniston. EPA will continue to work in a cooperative fashion with state and local government, industry, and the citizens of Anniston, to fashion a timely, efficient, comprehensive cleanup plan for the contaminated portions of the city.

II. *BACKGROUND INFORMATION*

The Anniston Polychlorinated Biphenyl (PCB) Site consists of residential and commercial properties located in and around Anniston, Calhoun County, Alabama. The Site is being investigated for PCBs and other contaminants by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Previous site investigations by the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH), the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM), the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), and EPA Region 4 have determined that PCB contamination is evident in the Anniston area.

The Solutia facility in Anniston, Alabama, is one of two facilities in the United States that produced PCBs (Aroclors). PCB production ceased in 1971 in Anniston. The Solutia Anniston plant occupies 70 acres of land, about 1 mile west of downtown Anniston. The site is bounded to the north by the Norfolk Southern and Erie railroads, east and west by residential properties, and south by U.S. Highway 202. The Solutia facility includes two landfills which received PCB waste material.

The facility is regulated under the Alabama Hazardous Waste Management and Minimization Act (HWMMA). EPA has authorized ADEM to implement the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) through the HWMMA in lieu of the federal RCRA program. Through investigations initiated under the RCRA program, EPA and ADEM have determined that the Solutia facility, the adjacent community, and the drainage ditches exiting the property as well as the downstream waterways (Snow Creek, Choccolocco Creek, and the Coosa River-Lake Logan Martin) are contaminated with PCBs.

Solutia has conducted investigations of the facility and adjacent community and has instituted interim measures toward eliminating further releases and minimizing human exposure. The company is currently investigating the downstream waterways to assess the human health and environmental impacts in these areas.

III. *ACTIONS TO DATE*

In July 1999 ADEM and the EPA RCRA program requested involvement by EPA's Emergency Response and Removal Branch (ERRB) to conduct a time critical investigation of the Anniston Site. The EPA Region 4 ERRB is performing an ongoing removal assessment of the soil contamination at the Anniston Site. Since February 2000, EPA has conducted numerous sampling events for residential, public, and commercial areas around the Solutia facility. EPA has also conducted public availability sessions to interpret sampling results for property owners.

In October 2000 Solutia entered into an Administrative Order on Consent (AOC) with EPA to sample properties in west Anniston for PCB contamination. Under the order, Solutia must address any property where PCBs are found at a level that could cause short-term health concerns. This work is being done with close supervision by EPA. In October 2001 EPA and Solutia entered into a revised AOC expanding the physical area of sampling and remediation from the October 2000 AOC.

In May 2001 EPA's Environmental Response Team released a final report on its evaluation of potential PCB releases from the Solutia facility, including two landfills on plant property which have been of great concern to the community. The report indicates several areas where additional study and/or work is recommended to ensure that the facility is not an ongoing source of PCBs. EPA and ADEM are presently working to reach consensus on how to implement these recommendations.

The Agency for Toxic Substance and Disease Registry (ATSDR) and the Alabama Department of Public Health have conducted several exposure investigations and health consultations.

IV. *CURRENT STATUS*

Solutia, under EPA authority, continues to sample within the zones indicated in the AOC to identify PCB contamination. Eight hundred and eighty (880) properties have been sampled by EPA and Solutia, Inc. Twenty-five (25) residential properties, with greater than or equal to 10 parts per million (ppm) PCBs, have been identified for removal actions to address short-term risks. Nine (9) removal actions have been completed by Solutia, Inc. with EPA oversight. Four (4) properties are to be or have been purchased by Solutia, Inc. (3 of which are scheduled for cleanup in August. Eleven (11) properties have not provided access due to litigation. One property has not provided access (nonlitigant). EPA continues oversight of PRP activities.

EPA is presently negotiating a Consent Decree with Solutia and Pharmacia (formerly Monsanto) that will be lodged and entered in federal District Court. The Consent Decree will require that Solutia/Pharmacia undertake a major study and evaluation of the PCB contamination

in Anniston following the comprehensive and strict requirements of the federal Superfund process. The community will have the opportunity to comment on the Consent Decree after lodging in federal District Court. The comprehensive study will evaluate the extent of the contamination, the risks it poses, and the final clean up options. The study will be overseen by EPA.

V. *FUTURE ACTIONS*

Following completion of the comprehensive study, EPA will select a final remedy after a public input process. A Consent Decree with Solutia/Pharmacia will be initiated by EPA to implement the final remedy which would also involve oversight by EPA. The work would include designing, constructing and operating the selected remedy.

If EPA and Solutia/Pharmacia are not able to reach agreement in the near future regarding the comprehensive study, then EPA may propose listing the site on the National Priorities List, perform the study itself, and seek reimbursement from Solutia/Pharmacia.

VI. *COMMUNITY OUTREACH*

On February 2, 2000, EPA opened a community relations center (CRC) located in downtown Anniston, Alabama. The CRC serves the community as an information center. Through the CRC, EPA has held public meetings open to all citizens to explain EPA's activities and receive input from the community and has performed extensive door to door outreach to develop ties with local citizens and obtain access to sample and/or clean up their property.

EPA has utilized its Environmental Justice Office to coordinate outreach activities including a tour of Anniston by the National Environmental Justice Advisory Council (NEJAC). The EPA staff is also working very closely with three community groups, Community Against Pollution (CAP), Citizens for Environmental Justice, and Sweet Valley/Cobbtown Environmental Justice (SVCEJ) Task Force to ensure meaningful community involvement in EPA's activities at the site. EPA has provided Environmental Justice Small Grant funding for the local community to hire consultants and provide community outreach.

EPA and the Agency for Toxic Substance and Disease Registry (ATSDR) established the Southeast Pediatric Environmental Health Speciality Unit (PEHSU) in Fall 1999 as a regional center for pediatric environmental health. The program is designed to (1) reduce environmental health threats to children, (2) improve access to expertise in pediatric environmental medicine, and (3) strengthen public health prevention capacity. Key focus areas of the unit are medical education and training, telephone consultation, and clinical specialty referral for children who may have been exposed to environmental hazards. Since fall of 2000, the Southeast PEHSU at Emory University has been assisting with Continuing Medical Education in Anniston, Alabama.