



# United Metals, Inc. Hazardous Waste Site

State Road 71, Simsville

## Florida Department of Health Finds Site Contaminated; However, Public Not Threatened

The Florida Department of Health (DOH) is investigating the United Metals, Inc. (UMI) hazardous waste site. There are elevated levels of some chemicals in the soil and underground water (groundwater) at the site. Some of the chemicals can cause health effects if people come into contact with them for an extended period of time. The site, however, is not a current public health hazard because the public is not coming into contact with the chemicals. The site is fenced, with locked gates and warning signs.

Florida DOH recommends that environmental agencies continue finding out how far the contamination extends.

### Public Meeting

Tuesday, December 10, 2002

7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

MARVIN Chapel

Freewill Baptist Church

4885 Magnolia Rd, Marianna

DOH will discuss its findings and seek public input. DOH wants to know what you think about the site, especially your concerns

### About the Site

The 180-acre UMI site is on State Road 71 near Simsville, FL, about 10 miles southeast of Marianna.

From 1979 to 1991, UMI recycled copper, brass, tin, and aluminum. They also recycled automobile batteries for lead and plastic. UMI is no longer in business.

### Florida DEP and U.S. EPA Findings

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) reported UMI's recycling processes created up to 5,000 gallons of wastewater daily. UMI put this wastewater in holding ponds. Florida DEP found many chemicals at the site. It called in U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to help.

U.S. EPA found that sediment from the holding ponds had elevated levels of arsenic, antimony, and lead. In a drainage area west of the site, lead levels also were elevated. In September 2002, EPA proposed adding this site to its National Priorities List (NPL).

Florida DEP found elevated levels of lead, zinc, nickel, and manganese in the water and sediments of both Dry Creek and the Chipola River. Storm water runs off from this site into Dry Creek, which empties into the Chipola River.

### DOH Findings

In January 2002, U.S. EPA asked Florida DOH to assess the public health threat at the UMI site. A DOH health

risk assessment compares levels of chemicals present to national guidelines. Florida DOH uses the guidelines set for children's health. If there are no expected health effects at children's levels, DOH would not expect to see any effects for adults.

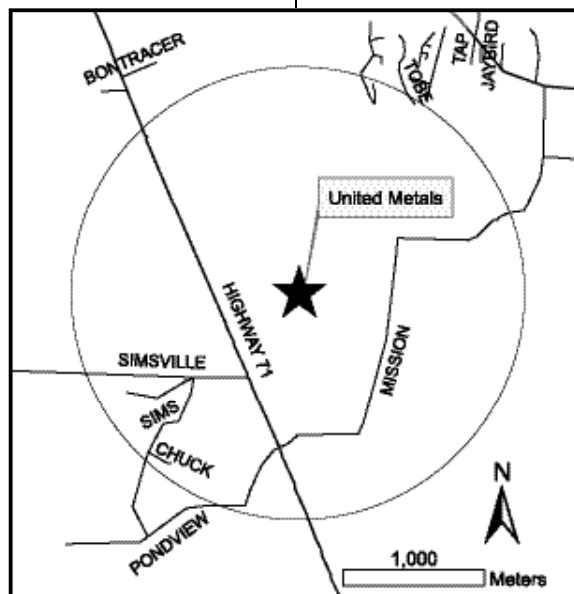
Florida DOH finds that levels of arsenic, cadmium, lead, manganese, and nickel on the site could cause illness if people were exposed over an extended (30-year) time.

**Arsenic:** in soil at the site and in groundwater under the site. Daily exposure for 30 years to these levels could increase the potential for stroke and lung cancer.

**Cadmium:** in groundwater under the site. Daily exposure for 30 years could increase the likelihood of kidney and blood problems, and increased systolic blood pressure. In animals it has affected behavior.

**Lead:** in soil and groundwater at the site. Daily exposure for 30 years to these levels of lead could increase the possibility of disruption of responses,

reflexes and learning, motor activity, decreased sperm motility and impotence. **Manganese:** in groundwater under the site. Daily exposure for 30 years could increase the potential for nerve degeneration, a change in brain enzymes, and mild neurological signs. **Nickel:** in groundwater under the site. Daily exposure for 30 years could increase the potential for allergic skin rash.



## Blood Levels of Lead in Children Checked

Jackson County Health Department found lead at levels above guidelines in two nearby private drinking water wells. Because of this, Florida DOH worked cooperatively with the county health department. The Jackson County Health Department tested five children who drank water from the wells. Children were tested because they are more sensitive to lead than adults. **DOH found no elevation in the children's measured blood lead levels. Consequently, Florida DOH does not expect these levels to cause illness.**

Jackson County Health Department will be monitoring these wells on a regular schedule.

With regard to lead from water pipes, the U.S. EPA recommends flushing cold water pipes before using the water. They suggest running the water until it becomes as cold as it will get. This can take as little as 5 to 30 seconds if there has been recent heavy water use. Examples of heavy water use are showering or toilet flushing. If there has been no recent heavy water use, it could take running the water 2 minutes or longer. The more time water has been sitting in a home's pipes, the more lead it can contain.

## Information about Chemicals

Here is some general information about chemicals and hazardous waste:

- Almost any chemical can be harmful at certain amounts.
- An elevated level of any chemical does not mean it will cause health effects. Other things must be considered.
- A "pathway" is a way for chemicals to come into contact with people. There must be a pathway or no one can be exposed.

## Florida DOH Recommendations

- The site owner should ensure that access to the site continues to be restricted.
- In order to find out how far the contamination goes, involved agencies should collect and analyze additional samples of soil and groundwater.
- Discarded equipment and tanks containing water on the site are a hazard and should be removed or drained.

Copies of the two Florida DOH Health Consultation reports are at the Jackson County Public Library, 2929 Green Street, Marianna, and at the Jackson County Health Department, 4487 Lafayette (U.S. 90), Mariana. You may also call Beth Copeland toll free at (877) 798-2772 and have one mailed to you. The document will be posted on the DOH website at: [www9.myflorida.com/environment/hsee/superfund](http://www9.myflorida.com/environment/hsee/superfund)

## More Information

For more information about hazardous substances identified in this fact sheet, see U.S. ATSDR ToxFaq on the Internet at [www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaq.html](http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaq.html), or request them by telephone, toll free: 888-422-8737.

### What the Florida DOH and ATSDR do.

- Seek out the concerns and questions of the affected community and respond to them.
- Conduct evaluations of potential health effects, if any, at a hazardous waste site.
- Advise the public on how to protect themselves from future exposure to site chemicals.
- Inform communities of our findings and recommendations concerning the site.
- Inform the community's healthcare professionals of our findings, and give them information.
- Do biological exposure investigations, if indicated, and
- Advise cleanup and other agencies on health issues.

### What the Florida DOH and ATSDR do NOT do.

- We do not make or enforce laws or rules concerning hazardous waste.
- We do not provide medical services.
- We do not provide funds for cleanup or relocating people.
- We usually do not take samples, using those taken by agencies funded to do that work.
- We do not do worker investigations.

For more information about DOH work at hazardous waste sites in Florida, see our website:  
[www9.myflorida.com/environment/hsee/Superfund](http://www9.myflorida.com/environment/hsee/Superfund)

### For More Information About Health:

Shaun Crawford, Health Scientist OR  
Susan Bland, Exposure Investigations  
Bureau of Environmental Epidemiology  
Florida Department of Health  
4052 Bald Cypress Way, Bin #A-08  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1712  
Toll Free during business hours 1-877-798-2772  
or (850) 245-4299

### For More Information About Cleanup:

Joe Alfano, U.S. EPA Project Manager  
61 Forsyth St., SW  
Atlanta, GA 30333  
Toll Free during business hours: 1-800-435-9234  
or 404-562-8939