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Environmental Protection
Agency

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Environmental NEWS RELEASE



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EPA to oversee lead cleanup near Pilsen high school

Chicago (Oct. 5, 2015) -- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency today announced a settlement with H. Kramer & Co., the City of Chicago and the BNSF Railway Co. to remove lead-contaminated soil near the Benito Juarez Community Academy in Pilsen. The alley at 21st Place behind the H. Kramer foundry and a portion of the BSNF railway spur at 21st Place and Cermak Road will also be paved to eliminate potential exposure to lead. EPA will oversee the cleanup, which is expected to begin this month and to be completed by the end of the year.

EPA has been investigating lead contamination in the Pilsen neighborhood since 2011. Soil samples collected in 2012 and 2013 from the alley, the railroad spur and several nearby residential properties showed lead contamination at levels which require cleanup. EPA continues to investigate lead contamination at the residential properties.

A 2013 consent decree signed by EPA, the State of Illinois and H. Kramer & Co. to resolve alleged Clean Air Act violations required the company to install new state-of-the-art pollution controls to reduce lead emissions. On Aug. 24, 2015, EPA released air monitoring data which demonstrates that the area around the facility now meets federal air quality standards for lead.

EPA continues to work closely with the City of Chicago and neighborhood organizations to provide information to residents about steps they can take to reduce exposure to lead contamination.

More information about soil contamination in the Pilsen neighborhood is available at <http://www.epa.gov/region5/cleanup/pilsenareasoils/>.

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