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# Blackwell Journal-Tribune

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## Sabin asks questions about contamination removal

By: Dear Editor:

Following are questions that I believe the public has a right to know before all this even begins. I know I want to know, and I assume everyone else is entitled to the same information.

1. Will they dig right up against the foundation of the houses and/or other buildings?
2. Will Phelps Dodge remove the contaminated soil under my storm shelter so there won't be any contaminated water entering my shelter in the future?
3. What will happen to the house when they dig next to the foundation?
4. Do they plan to remove the contaminated soil under the house and garage and/or other outbuildings or structures, or leave it there to contaminate my yard again?
5. Will they remove the fences, plant growth and trees, and replace them?
6. Will they replace the water lines, sewer lines and phone lines?
7. Will all work conform to the current building, health, and safety codes?
8. Will they pay the relocation expenses for the families while they are removing and replacing this toxic soil?
9. Will the families that live next door to the lot being removed have to live in the contaminated dust, or be relocated during the digging and removal in that area?
10. How long do they figure it will take to complete each piece of property?
11. Will they replace the contaminated soil on public property, like streets, parks, parking lots, sidewalks, etc.?
12. Will there be a guarantee that no more contamination will occur when they get done?
13. Will they pay for the damages caused by their equipment, trucks, or shoddy workmanship, if any?
14. How long do they calculate it will take to do the whole town?
15. Do they plan to do the whole town?
16. What's the reason if any, that they won't relocate the city of Blackwell?
17. Where do they plan to dump the contaminated soil they remove, and not contaminate someone else's property?
18. If it's unsafe to live in this town, and everyone moves, would they still remove the topsoil as planned today?
19. What about all the proliferation of contamination while they are digging, loading and hauling this contaminated soil?
20. Can Phelps Dodge guarantee everyone will be safe, and be able to live in a safe and healthy environment when they are done with their "mickey mouse" program?
21. If the whole town isn't cleaned up, how will this solve the contamination problem and provide a safe place for our families?
22. If they remove the top 18 inches, does that remove all the contamination?
23. If it takes 100 years and more to pump the contaminated water out from under ground, does that mean that the contamination still exists in the ground?
24. How does Phelps Dodge plan to stop it from raining and/or flooding, and bring more of this contamination to the surface in the future, into your new yard?
25. This underground and surface contamination has spread from west of 24th street, east to the river, how much further will this continue to spread over time?
26. Are there ordinances that prohibit contaminating the ground with any toxic or unsafe and unhealthy materials in the city of Blackwell?
27. If this is a violation, why isn't Phelps Dodge being prosecuted by the City of Blackwell for their liability for allowing this contamination to spread to this dangerous degree exposing everyone in the city to this toxic chemical?
28. The City does not hesitate to prosecute the people of Blackwell for much less serious violations of ordinances, why should Phelps Dodge be treated any different?

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### Blackwell

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29. Everyone has the right to decide for himself whether or not they want to live in this contaminated city with his children and families. If this is something to be taken lightly, why are the DEQ, courts, federal and state officials involved in this situation?

30. There will be a tag on your property deed, stating that your property is contaminated. This cannot be negotiated, it is a Federal law for your safety, and the safety of anyone that intends to purchase your property in the future.

When all these questions are answered, it will be quite plain to everyone that there is no easy quick fix to this unhealthy, unsafe and dangerous situation threatening our children and families for the next 100 years and more. I think it's time to get the priorities straight and get a grip on the true value of the people living in Blackwell, and not just the people in city hall. There has to be some serious consideration and communications between city officials and the public before this is allowed to continue any further under the present excepted agreements between city hall and Phelps Dodge.

**Leonard Sabin**

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