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Phelps Dodge open house draws some 150 Blackwell residents

By Charles Abbott / J-T City Editor

On Tuesday night Phelps Dodge, present owner of the old zinc smelter property, held its own meeting for the public, an open house at the Kay Room.

There were some 150 people who attended the open house, according to an estimate by Phelps Dodge.

"It was an excellent turnout," said Jim Telle, Phelps Dodge corporate communications manager.

Representatives from Phelps Dodge, the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality, the state Department of Health and Shaw Environmental and Infrastructure Inc. were at the come and go open house to answer questions from the public.

At the various tables around the room were brochures available for the public.

However, the format was apparently not what much of the public expected.

Bill Massey, formerly of Blackwell, now of Oklahoma City, said "I'm disappointed we didn't learn anything. We came to the meeting thinking we were going to find out something."

Massey said he drove up from Oklahoma City for what was expected to be a meeting.

"I was surprised. I thought there would be a presentation," said Oklahoma City attorney Mickey Walsh.

Becky Muret of Blackwell said she thought there was going to be a meeting of some kind. "People had that assumption."

Telle saw things differently. "This meeting was 'one on one' communications with the people of Blackwell," Telle said.

Telle said Phelps Dodge's first project will be soil sampling followed later in the year by a groundwater treatment facility.

Blackwell has a large plume of contaminated underground water that lies under a major portion of the city.

Telle said people "want clear answers to what what's happening in the environment, including soil quality. He said the soil sampling project is a voluntary one.

Telle said there will be more such public meetings and the response from Tuesday night's meeting would be evaluated.

Mike Cooper, of the Shaw Group, said Phelps Dodge's downtown office should be open next week. He said sampling is expected to start in June.

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Member Opinions:

By: **Bucky** on 4/13/07

I can't understand, why Phelps Dodge should be held responsible for the previous owners actions, unless they have some affiliation with them, or they just feel its there duty as the new owners to openly show their own concern to the people of Blackwell and try to clam the worries over water contamination. Bucky Bolton.

What's your opinion?

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