



Bill Richardson  
Governor

**NEW MEXICO  
ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT**

*Office of the Secretary*

Harold Runnels Building  
1190 Saint Francis Drive (87505)  
PO Box 26110, Santa Fe, NM 87502  
Phone (505) 827-2855 Fax (505) 827-2836  
[www.nmenv.state.nm.us](http://www.nmenv.state.nm.us)



Ron Curry  
Secretary  
Jon Goldstein  
Deputy Secretary

January 21, 2009  
For Immediate Release

Contact: Marissa Stone, NMED Communications Director  
(505) 827-0314 or (505) 231-0475

**Environment Department Negotiates Agreement Leading to Water Service Connections  
for Residents in Homestake Mill Area**

*Department Will be in Grants Today to Answer Questions*

(Santa Fe, NM) The New Mexico Environment Department and Homestake Mining Co. of California entered into a Memorandum of Agreement in which the company voluntarily agreed to connect residents within a designated area near the Homestake Mill site to the Village of Milan's water system.

Homestake is the owner and operator of the Homestake Mill and Superfund site north of Milan, N.M. Members of the department will be available to answer questions on the agreement at a meeting, sponsored by **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 6 from 6 to 8 p.m. today, Jan. 21 Cibola County Building, 515 High St. in Grants. NMED will also hold a water fair to test well water from private wells only in the San Mateo Basin from noon to 5 p.m. today, Jan. 21 at Cibola County Building, 515 High St. in Grants.**

"Our primary goal is to ensure residents in the area are protected and have access to clean drinking water," said New Mexico Environment Department Secretary Ron Curry. "This agreement will ensure that residents have access to clean drinking water as soon as possible."

Homestake will, as part of the agreement, notify certain property owners of their opportunity to be connected to the village's water system; reimburse property owners previously on a private well supply for domestic drinking water who have paid for their own connections to the village water system since 2004; and plug any existing wells at the request of the property owner. The department has notified residents in the area of the potential health impacts from using private well water in the area.

(<http://www.nmenv.state.nm.us/OOTS/documents/PR-SanMateo-1-8-08--Final2.pdf>)

"Homestake has been in discussions with NMED for approximately two years on this issue," said Homestake Project Manager Alan Cox. "We are pleased to have reached an understanding with the State to voluntarily assist in providing a safe drinking water source to several residents in the valley."

The Village's water system is regularly monitored by the department's Drinking Water Bureau to ensure compliance with federal drinking water standards.

The agreement provides water connection services to 16 designated residences around the mill site. Other property owners can contact Homestake for information on whether their property is also eligible. Property owners will have four months from being notified to agree to be connected.

Residents in the area notified the department of well water problems at a public meeting in August 2005. The department and Homestake agreed to sample residents water in the vicinity of the well site in response to those concerns.

NMED is in the early stages of investigations within the San Mateo Creek basin near of the Homestake Mill site to better understand, and potentially address, possible ground water contamination from past uranium mining and milling activities. The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission has required remediation of ground water contamination at the Homestake Mining Company uranium mill site since the 1970s. Recent ground water quality data from samples collected in and near abandoned uranium mine shafts in the Ambrosia Lake area also indicate the occurrence of ground water contaminants in concentrations exceeding maximum contaminant levels and state drinking water standards within this area of the basin.

For copies of the MOA or more information, call Dana Bahar with NMED at (505) 827-2908 or Al Cox with Homestake at (505) 287-4456 or visit: [http://www.nmenv.state.nm.us/gwb/New\\_Pages/public\\_notice.htm](http://www.nmenv.state.nm.us/gwb/New_Pages/public_notice.htm).

###