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Navy levels with residents on dioxin

Officials say test results will be shared

By **DONALD V. ADDERTON**
THE SUN HERALD

■ GULFPORT — The Navy has promised residents living near the Naval Construction Battalion Center that results from dioxin testing will be shared openly.

In the wake of state environmental reports indicating that soil on the military compound may contain higher than recommended toxic levels, the Navy has announced a comprehensive plan to test the area.

"This is your conduit to what the Navy is doing," Cmdr. Ron Dewey said Wednesday night at a community meeting to introduce the 15 members of the Restoration Advisory Board. "We want community input."

The board will have input into decision-making concerning the Installation Restoration Program, Navy officials said.

Dewey told about 25 residents living near the Seabee base that documenting whether there is contamination will be an arduous, time-

consuming process — but that the public will receive answers.

Dr. Marland Dulaney, a Florida-based toxicologist hired by the Navy, said dioxin presents a paradox.

"Controversy surrounds dioxin because of what the human studies show and what the animal studies show," said Dulaney, the risk assessor for the project. "At this point I do not have enough to support a cause-and-effect relationship."

Meanwhile, Anita Madison, who lives in Ladner Homes on 30th Street, said she and her three children usually develop a rash from the water when they bathe.

"We drink the water, it cramps your stomach," Madison said. "Who do I hold responsible, because I did not have these problems before."

The Navy did not have a ready answer for Madison.

"There is a lot we simply do not know," Dulaney said. "That is why you have to tell us. We are here to help you."

Dulaney said he would be monitoring the living habits of residents in the surrounding area to see if a correlation could be drawn.

"We want to find out how people are being exposed, or not being exposed," Dulaney said.