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NEWSPAPER ARTICLE "DIOXIN WORRIES SEABEE NEIGHBORS" NCBC GULFPORT MS  
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# Dioxin worries Seabee neighbors

By **PATRICK PETERSON**  
THE SUN HERALD

**GULFPORT** — Despite a diligent and expensive dioxin cleanup, neighbors of the Seabee Center still fear the carcinogen they've been exposed to for 30 years.

While mere traces of dioxin from the herbicide Agent Orange remain in ditches in and around the base, neighbors fear the levels were higher years ago.

"We played in those ditches. We have some concerns," said Susanne Davis of Long Beach, who grew up near the Seabee Center, where her father was a fireman.

Davis and her sister, Judy Dauro, were among about 30 concerned citizens at a Tuesday meeting of the federal Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry. The agency agreed to study concerns

of citizens whose families might have been exposed to dioxin, which was stored at the base in the 1970s.

Davis' and Dauro's father, Luke Papania, died at 64 from liver and stomach cancer, and the women wonder if his cancer was related to dioxin.

"He was around it a lot," said Davis.

The Seabee Center has spent nearly \$40 million to clean up dioxin that leaked into the ditches. And \$10 million more will be spent to clean and restore wetlands along 3,000 feet of the creek outside the base, said Gordon Crane, environmental manager for the Seabee Center.

Scientists won't take blood samples because dioxin on the base is confined to soil, and most dioxin is passed to people through food.

"It won't tell you where you were exposed," said ATSDR toxicologist Scott

Sudweeks. "There hasn't been any indication of current exposure."

In researching old records, one resident found that fish tested in 1979 had high levels of dioxin near the base. Her family ate fish from the creek.

"We do question past exposures," said Marie Hansen, 32, who has lived near the base for 18 years.

Hansen is one of the residents who have asked the ATSDR to conduct a complete health study of present and former residents.

"The cancer rates to us look alarming," Hansen said. "That's why we're asking for the health study."

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