



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Wednesday, January 27, 2010

## **ASARCO LLC RESPONDS TO COUNTY NOTICES OF VIOLATION FOR BLOWING DUST**

Tucson, AZ – ASARCO LLC today announced immediate actions it has taken and will take to address community concerns regarding the blowing dust from the Company’s tailings impoundments south of Tucson. The Company today submitted a written response to Pima County Department of Environmental Quality for Notices of Violation (NOVs) issued for blowing dust on two different days in late 2009. Asarco self-reported both events.

“We feel very much a part of this community, given that the majority of our 2200 Arizona employees live in and around the Tucson area,” said Manuel E. Ramos, President and Chief Executive Officer of Asarco. “We are acting rapidly to address both the immediate and long term concerns related to blowing dust from our tailings,” he added.

Since the latest incident, Asarco representatives have met with over 200 residents near the mine, including attendance at several community meetings, and one-on-one visits with concerned citizens. The Company has stationed an environmental project manager, Karen Pickett, at the Rancho Resort Club House near the mine to inform residents of developments as they occur. Asarco expects to begin conducting yard cleanup operations tomorrow at local residences that were affected by the December blowing dust incident. Asarco also has requested a meeting with Pima County to discuss the Company’s response to the NOVs.

Separately Asarco has been engaged for most of the past year in a major effort to reclaim the closed tailings facilities on Indian land at the Mission Mine. This work involves placement of a 12” cap of top soil on the tops and side slopes of the impoundments. To date over 1100 acres have been capped and over 700 acres have been seeded with native vegetation.

Today’s Company response to the County addressed the specific concerns in the NOVs, describing the precautions Asarco took before, during, and after the two wind events to control fugitive dust and comply with the provisions of its air permit.

The Company also presented a draft plan to minimize the likelihood of future recurrences of blowing dust. The plan outlines how tailings dam berm construction will be modified in the future and what additional dust control measures will be employed during berm building. The changes will maximize the impoundment surface areas that will be covered with wet tailings during berm construction.



On both days for which the NOVs were issued, wind speeds at the mine exceeded 25 miles per hour. On the second day, December 22, 2009, extremely high wind conditions prevailed, creating dust storms across the State that, among other things, caused major damage and traffic fatalities on Interstate 10 in the Casa Grande area.

“The Mission Mine has been in operation for 50 years, and we sincerely regret the few incidents of blowing dust from our tailing impoundments during that time,” said John D. Low, Asarco Vice President – Mining.

Asarco is an integrated copper mining, smelting and refining company with approximately 2500 employees. The Company operates a smelter, three mines, associated mills and solvent extraction-electrowinning plants in Arizona, and a refinery complex in Texas, which includes plants that produce copper rod and cake, precious metals and by-products. For more information, visit <http://www.asarco.com>.

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