OMAHA LEAD SUPERFUND SITE
Omaha, NE

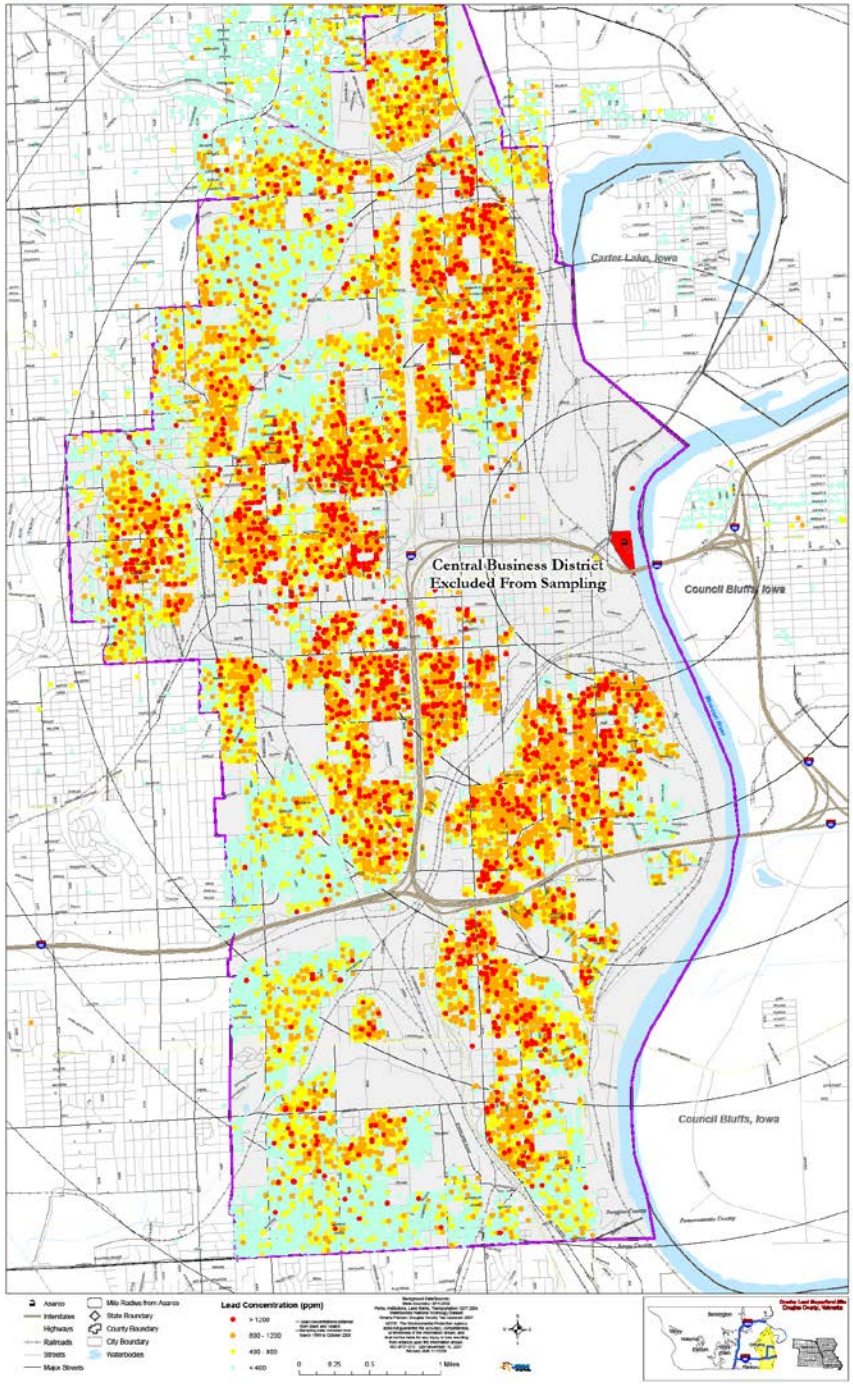
OMAHA LEAD SUPERFUND SITE

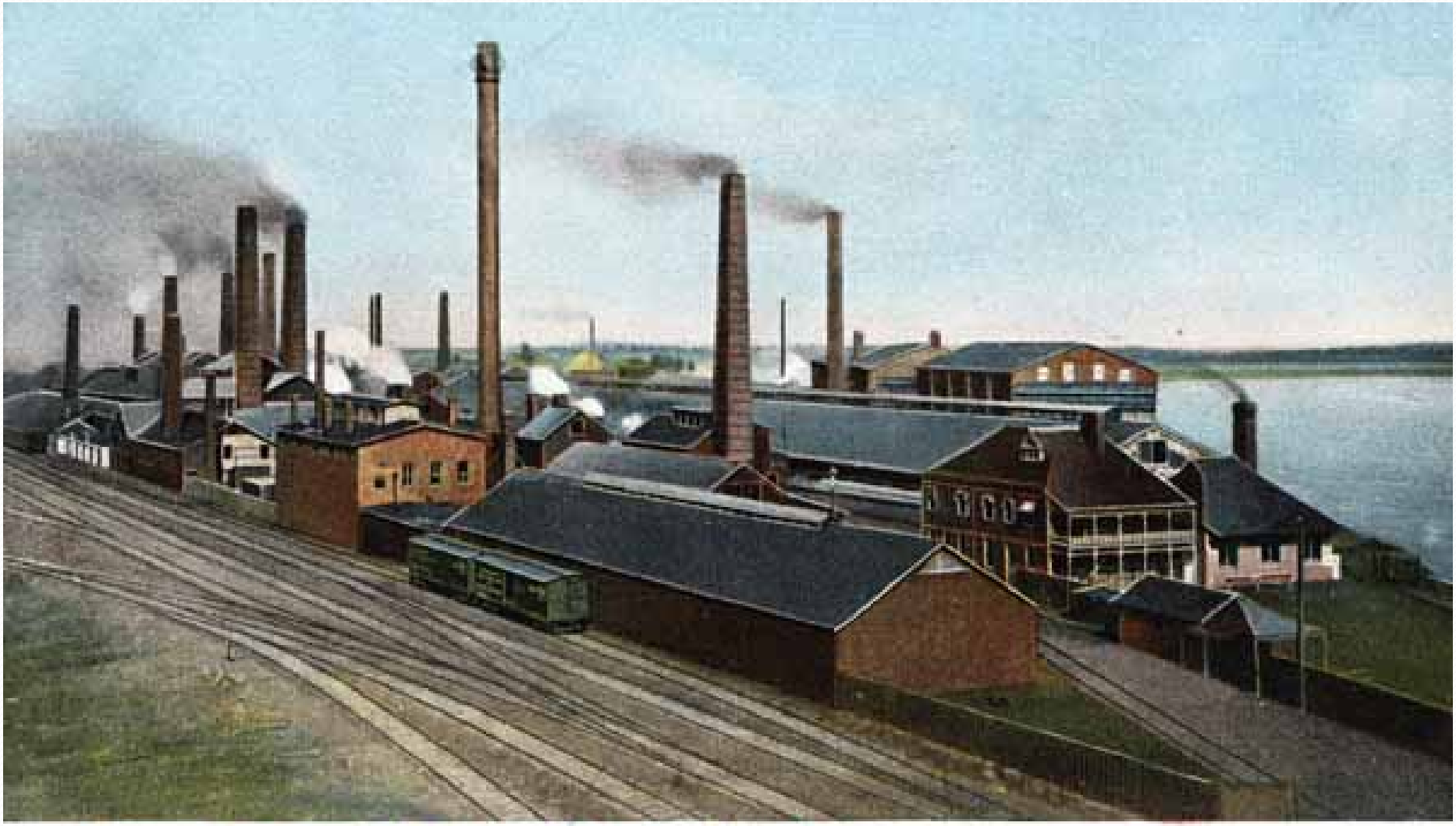
- Largest Residential Lead Site in the U.S.
- City of Omaha City Council requested assistance from EPA in 1998 to address childhood lead poisoning in Omaha
- Blood testing showed 596 Douglas County children exceeded CDC standard of 10 micrograms per deciliter (10 ug/dl) in 1998
- In 1998, EPA began investigation under the authority of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA)

SITE DESCRIPTION

- Site consists of residential and residential-like properties that contain soil lead levels above health-based standards
- Properties with lead concentrations below health-based standards not part of Site
- Soil testing indicates that about 33% of the residential properties exceed a 400 ppm soil lead screening level
- Most properties are within 2–3 miles of former smelting facilities
- Site boundaries increased 3 times as a result of sampling

Omaha Lead: Highest Mid-Yard Lead Concentration





American Smelting and Refining Co., Omaha, Neb.

No. 291. Omaha Souvenir and Novelty Co., Omaha, Neb.

SITE HISTORY

- American Smelting and Refining Company (ASARCO) operated in Omaha, NE from 1871 to 1997
- Facility located on 23-acre site at 500 Douglas Street - owned by Union Pacific until 1946
- ASARCO lead refinery processed lead bullion, recovering other trace metals and removing impurities
- Property was transferred to the City of Omaha in 1997
- Cleanup of the ASARCO facility performed by the company under a State Order

EPA RESPONSE ACTIONS

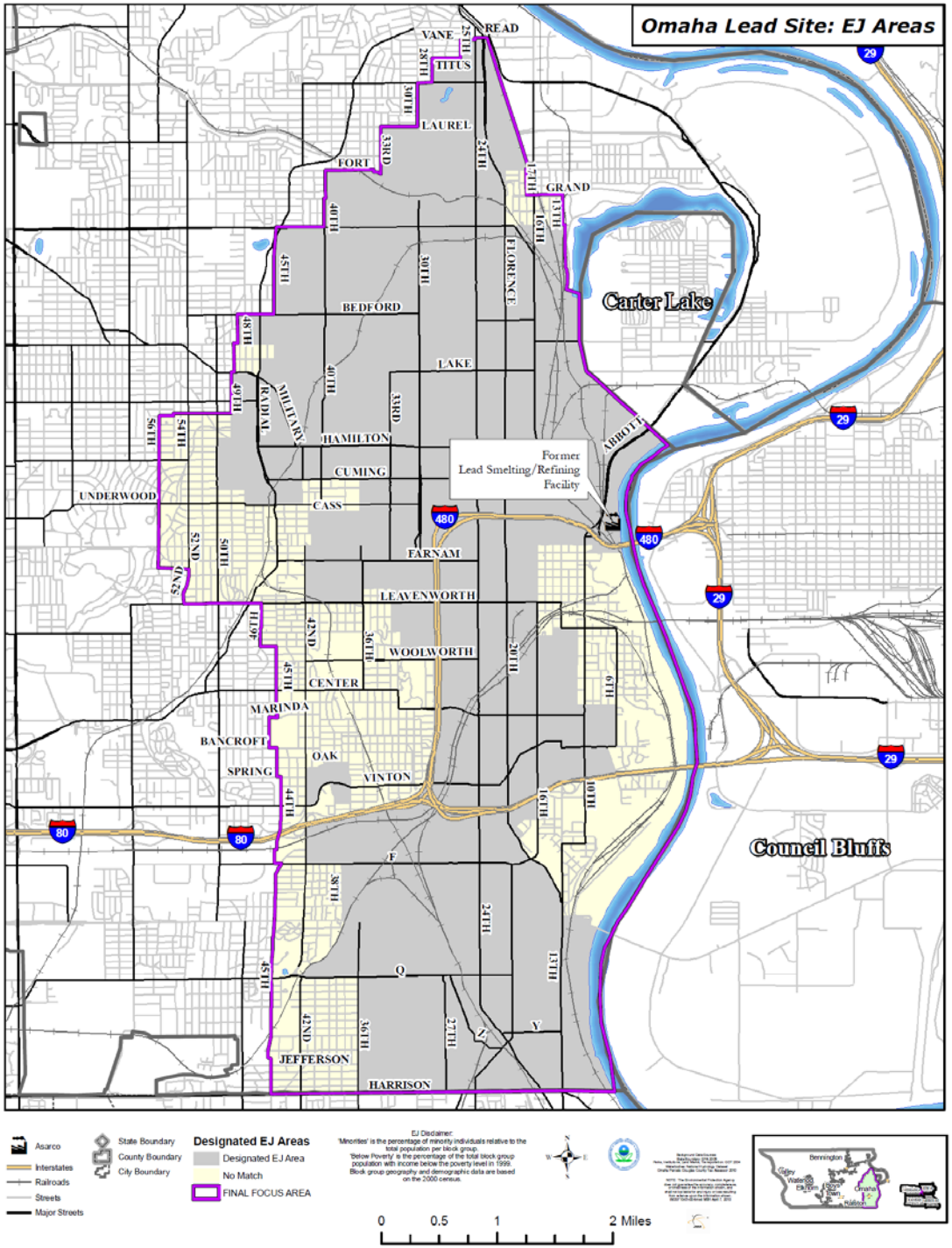
- EPA began soil cleanups in 1999 under EPA's Superfund Emergency Response authority:
  - Residential properties with a yard quadrant exceeding 1,200 ppm
  - Residences with children with elevated blood lead levels (EBLs) with a yard quadrant exceeding 400 ppm
  - Child care facilities with a yard quadrant exceeding 400 ppm

EPA RESPONSE ACTIONS

- Omaha Lead Superfund Site (OLS) added to the EPA National Priorities List April 2003
- Final Record of Decision issued May 2009
- EPA began soil cleanups in 1999 under EPA's Superfund Emergency Response authority:
  - Residential properties with a yard quadrant exceeding 1,200 ppm
  - Residences with children with elevated blood lead levels (EBLs) with a yard quadrant exceeding 400 ppm
  - Child care facilities with a yard quadrant exceeding 400 ppm

COMMUNITY CONCERNS

- Majority of site has EJ concerns: northern portion predominately African American; southern portion predominately Latino; western portion predominately of European decent
- Housing within OLS is generally 100 years old
- Parents with children very concerned about health issues: blood lead, asthma, etc
- Want everything possible to reduce the risk to children's health


Omaha Lead Site: EJ Areas
Carter Lake
Council Bluffs
Former Lead Smelting/Refining Facility
VANE
READ
TITUS
LAUREL
FORT
GRAND
BEDFORD
LAKE
HAMILTON
CUMING
CASS
UNDERWOOD
FARNAM
LEAVENWORTH
WOOLWORTH
CENTER
MARINDA
BANCROFT
SPRING
OAK
VINTON
JEFFERSON
HARRISON
FLORENCE
ABBOTT
MILITARY
RADIAL
Designated EJ Areas
Designated EJ Area
No Match
FINAL FOCUS AREA
Asarco
Interstates
Railroads
Streets
Major Streets
State Boundary
County Boundary
City Boundary
EJ Disclaimer:
'Minorities' is the percentage of minority individuals relative to the total population per block group.
'Below Poverty' is the percentage of the total block group population with income below the poverty level in 1999.
Block group geography and demographic data are based on the 2000 census.
0 0.5 1 2 Miles

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- Community expressed concerns to EPA beginning 1998
- January 2004 the Community Advisory Group (CAG)established – sponsored by Union Pacific Railroad
- EPA established two Public Information Centers (PICs) in 2004; one serving the north area and one serving the south area staffed by a bilingual person
- EPA staff met regularly with the CAG
- Fact Sheets are issued in both English and Spanish
- A brochure developed to explain the Superfund program (versions in English and Spanish)
- EPA funds Public Service announcements on cable TV describing the dangers of lead

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

(continued)

- EPA staff accepted speaking engagements to inform attendees of the project and the dangers of lead
- EPA staff participated in citizen action groups
- EPA staff were interviewed on local public access TV
- EPA produced and sponsored public service announcements on radio and local TV
- EPA sponsored public outreach by telephone
- EPA sponsored public meetings and availability session
- EPA developed OLS web site and posts information

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

(continued)

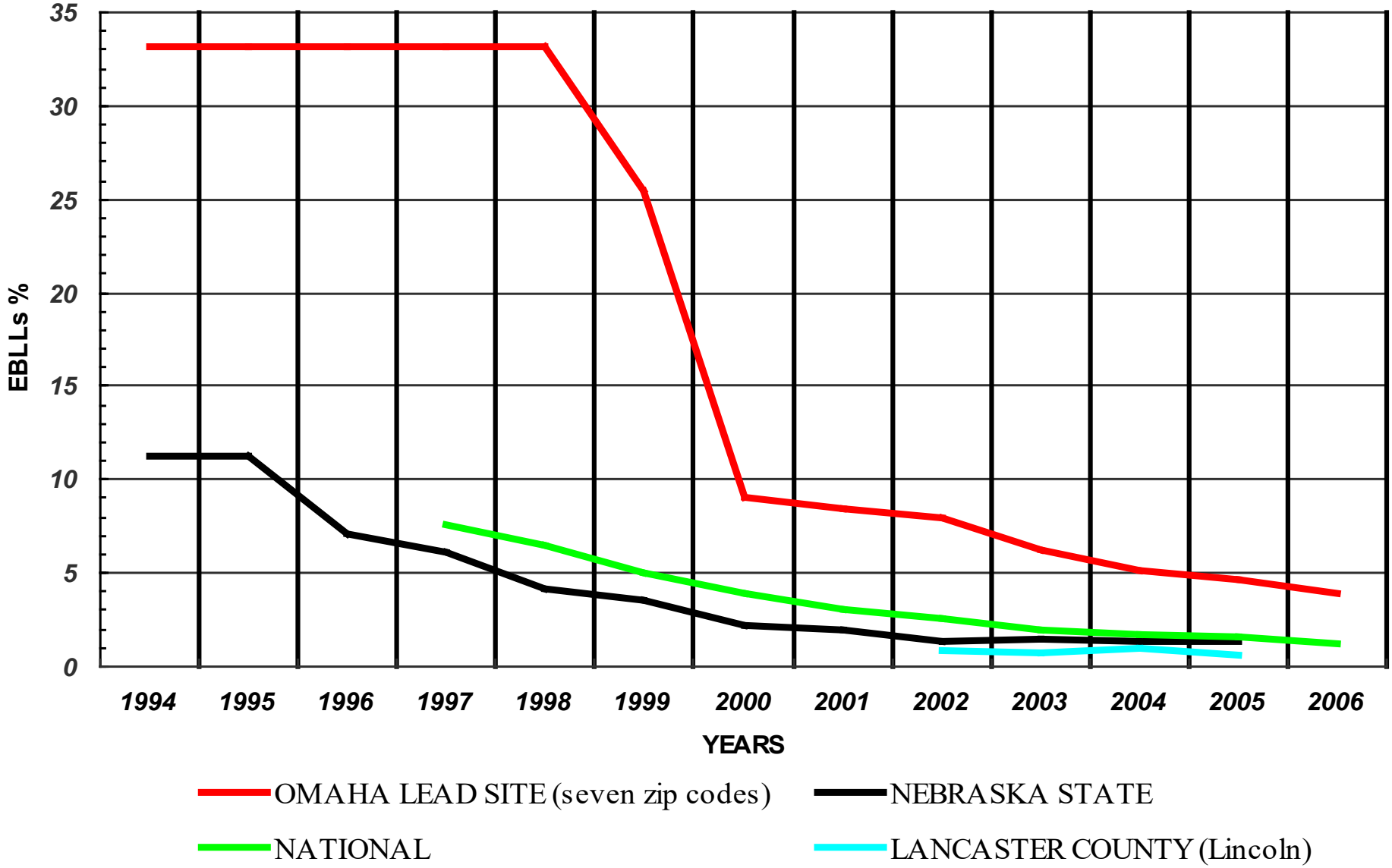
- CAG formally ceased to exist October 2011
- A new community group – Lead Poison Prevention Group -- consisting of former CAG members plus other interested parties created November 2011
- Lead Poison Prevention Group hosted by the Omaha Mayor's office meets twice a year
- Lead Poison Prevention Group discontinued

CLEANUP PROGRESS

- As of December 2015, the EPA lead portion of the remedial action was complete.
- The City of Omaha was awarded a Cooperative Agreement in May 2015 to continue efforts to obtain access to remaining properties to collect soil samples, test Lead-based paint, remediate eligible properties, stabilize LBP at eligible properties.
- 42,047Residential Properties have been sampled
  - 13,090 Residential yards have been excavated and restored to address lead concentrations above 400 ppm
  - 12,057 Lead-based Paint Assessments have been performed
  - 6249 Lead-based Paint Stabilizations have been performed

DOUGLAS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT
CHILDHOOD LEAD POISONING PREVENTION PROGRAM

- 1992-1998: 27% - 42% (by zip code) of tested children living in the OLS had an EBL
- Rate of EBL children near OLS steadily decreasing since 1997
- Latest data (2015) shows 146 of 17,233 children tested exhibit EBL > 9.5 ug.dl

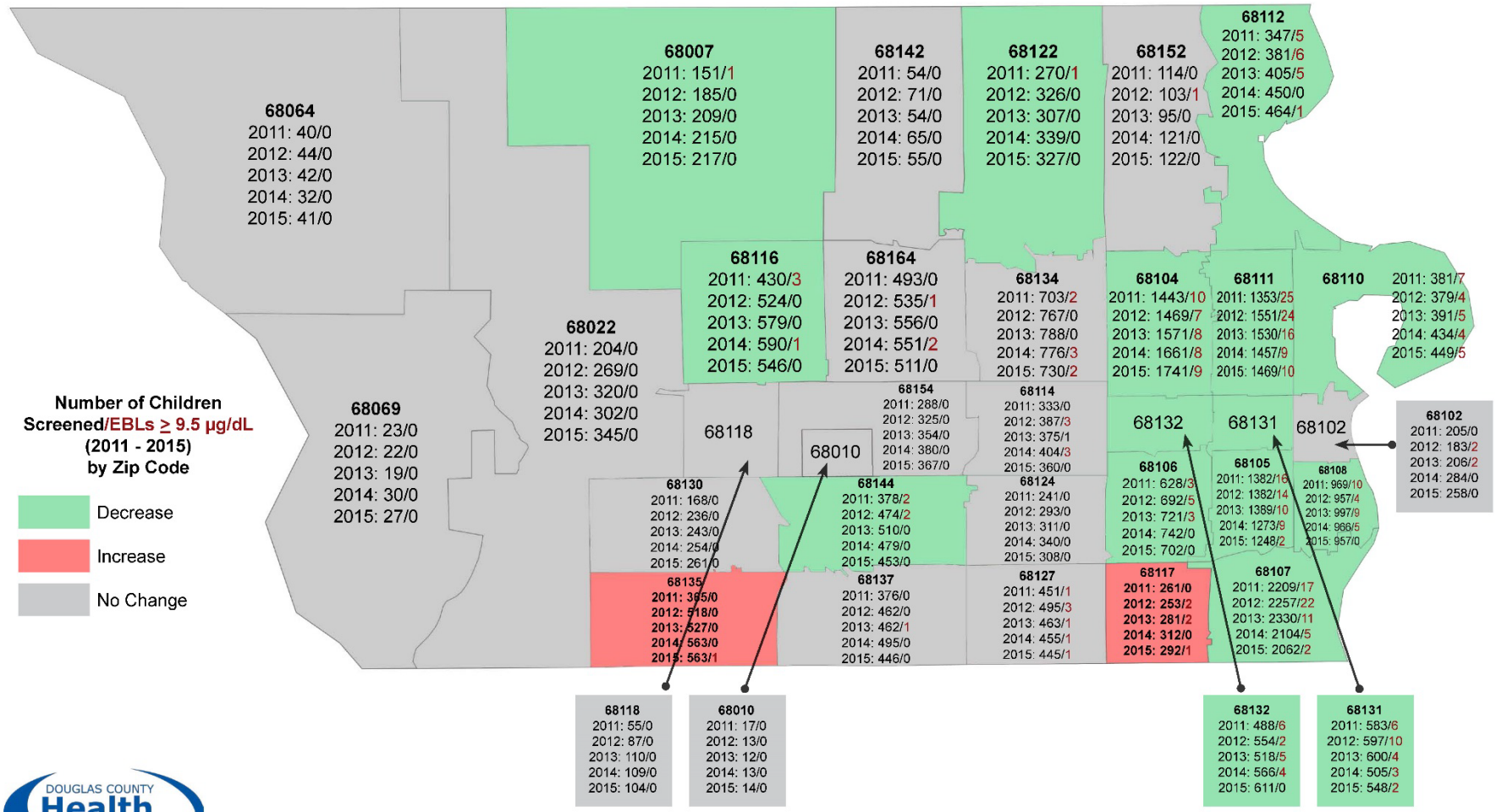


SMELTER SHUTDOWN 1997
EPA SOIL ACTIONS BEGIN 199

Douglas County, Nebraska
Blood Lead Monitoring Results for 2011-2015

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

This map portrays data of a sensitive nature. It may not be distributed to non-agency personnel.
The increase, decrease, and no change outcome is based on the comparison of 2011 and 2015 EBLs (≥ 9.5µg/dL).



DOUGLAS COUNTY Health Department