
Man dies from mercury poisoning after trying to extract gold

Contributed by Adrian
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Sometimes it is crazy what people will do for gold. I found this on digg and here is the original article.

Man dies from mercury poisoning after trying to extract gold

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A man who was poisoned March 19 while trying to use mercury to extract gold from computer parts has died and the home is so contaminated that it cannot be lived in, an emergency official said.

Tony Winnett, 55, died Saturday at a Tulsa hospital. Durant/Bryan County Emergency Management Director James Dalton said the Environmental Protection Agency finished its investigation over the weekend and ruled the home is not liveable.

The home is located on Winnett Road southeast of Colbert. Winnett and Melissa Lake drove themselves to the hospital after inhaling mercury vapors, according to authorities.

Lake was treated at the Medical Center of Southeastern Oklahoma and later released, but Winnett was flown to the Tulsa hospital. According to Dalton, Lake has suffered respiratory problems that are still lingering, but officials believe she will be okay.

Mercury has a chemical reaction with gold and causes it to separate, according to Dalton. Authorities believe the couple heated the mercury and accidentally inhaled it.

The home was immediately cordoned off after the incident. Dalton said he did not know how much mercury was inside the home, but the residence would have to be gutted before it could ever be used again.

“We’re going to be in touch with the health department and the district attorney’s office on what type of action we have to take to abate it,” Dalton said.

A funeral service for Winnett will be at 2 p.m. Wednesday at Church of Christ in Colbert.