Library Warns of Lead Danger in Toys Given to Bend Children

by Bend Weekly News Sources

The Deschutes Public Library is alerting parents about the potential hazard of a bendable toy that has been given to children as a reading incentive during the summer reading program, â€œPaws, Claws, Scales and Tales.â€•

The dog and the cat bendables were purchased from Highsmith, the company that supplies materials to the 34 libraries nation-wide that belong to the collaborative summer reading program. The alert began in Indiana, where State health officials issued a consumer health alert on August 4 for bendable animal toys that were given away at libraries around the state. Heather McNeil, Youth Services Coordinator for Deschutes Public Libraries, became aware of the alert Monday.

The toys were found to have 0.4 and 0.24 percent of lead. The maximum safety limit is currently 0.06 percent. They toys are roughly 3.75 inches in length, and are easily bent into different poses.

â€œIf parents find one of these toys they should return them to the library for safe disposal,â€• stated McNeil. â€œIf parents have specific questions about lead poisoning they should contact the Oregon State Lead Line at 800-368-5060.â€• In addition they can visit the Oregon Department of Human Services web site on lead poisoning at http://oregon.gov/DHS/ph/lead.

McNeil stated that several of the branches have given away the toys as door prizes at special programs. In addition, the bendables were given away during the Childrenâ€™s Fair on July 22 at Drake Park in Bend.

Prolonged exposure to lead can cause serious and irreversible health effects, including damage to the brain, nervous system, and kidneys. It may also cause hearing, behavior and learning problems in young children.