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West Virginia Brownfields Assistance Center at Marshall University

January–June 2009 Newsletter

The West Virginia Brownfield Assistance Center at Marshall University is a state-mandated program within Marshall University's Center for Environmental, Geotechnical and Applied Sciences (CEGAS), serving the southern 22 counties of West Virginia

EPA Region III To Perform Targeted Brownfield Assessment for Town of Ansted

The town of Ansted, located in Fayette County, has been awarded an EPA Targeted Brownfield Assessment (TBA) grant for the former Ansted High School building and property. The purpose of the TBA will be to determine if environmental impacts are present on the property, and if present, the types and amounts of impacts. This information will be used to determine if the City will proceed in purchasing the property, now under private ownership, for redevelopment.

Ansted has been looking at the property, vacant since the 1970's, as a prime location for filling three important needs in this small town. First, the town is in need of locating their various city offices, currently scattered throughout the town, into one central location. Second, the town has no community or recreational center, and the former high school building, with its center-of-town location, is well situated to meet this need. Finally, the need exists in Ansted for a small business center, a place where small businesses can locate, sharing operations and minimizing associated costs. A few small businesses have approached Ansted leaders requesting information on where they might locate within the town. Unfortunately, few places are currently available, and Ansted sees the former high school building and associated property as the best location to make available for small business use.

The town will be continuing negotiations with the current landowner on purchasing the property. Once TBA work is complete, the town will be able to ascertain the costs of remediating environmental impacts on the property, if any exist. This critical information will assist the town in evaluating an appropriate strategy for purchasing the property, taking into consideration costs for clean-up of environmental impacts, if necessary.

The West Virginia Brownfields Assistance Center (BAC) at Marshall University assisted Mayor Pete Hobbs and the Ansted community in development of a TBA application. The BAC will be working with Ansted, EPA Region III and their environmental contractor as the project gets underway, expected to start later this summer. These efforts are critical steps toward bringing new life to the former Ansted High School property.



View of vacant Ansted High School Building. Redevelopment plans by the Town of Ansted include town offices, community center, and a small business center complex

West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection Obtains EPA Hazardous Assessment Brownfield Grant for Property Evaluations

In May of 2009, the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection's Division of Land Restoration (DLR) was awarded a \$200,000 EPA brownfield grant for assessing properties that have significant potential for fast-paced redevelopment. Funding will be available on October 1st, 2009, with a 3-year project timeframe. Along with this announcement from EPA, three other communities in WV (Brooke-Hancock Counties, Preston County, and the City of Moundsville) are receiving a total of \$1,000,000 in funding.

Funds awarded to the DLR will be used for assessing sites with known or potential hazardous substances. Petroleum sites, like former gas station properties, are excluded from this project. The funds can be used on any site in WV under certain conditions, where economic

redevelopment is highly likely to occur.

One area of interest will be in Ritchie County, located in central West Virginia. Data from this county, including unemployment rates, income levels, and number of abandoned industrial properties, was used in the EPA brownfield application to show the need for environmental assessment of potentially impaired properties. As sites are identified that have both potential for environmental impairment and high potential for redevelopment, the DLR will use their internal resources, combined with hiring of experienced environmental assessment entities, to determine if contaminants are located on a specific site, types and quantities of contaminants, and contaminant clean-up requirements that meet future intended site use.

The West Virginia Brownfield Assistance Center (BAC) at Marshall University took the lead role in preparing the EPA brownfield application. The BAC has been involved with preparing a number of successful EPA brownfield applications since its inception in 2005, and worked with support from its counterpart at West Virginia University. BAC personnel gathered applicable data required for the EPA application, and compiled the application for DLR's review and submittal. Several weeks of work went in to this application, as EPA guidelines changed significantly from previous years, requiring extra attention to details and meeting application requirements. The BAC has agreed to partner with the DLR on this project to maximize efforts and assist in bringing worthy sites to DLR's attention for review and consideration.

"WVDEP plans to use EPA brownfield funds to assess former industrial properties around the state that have significant potential for fast-paced redevelopment"

WV Brownfields Assistance Center Activities—update

As interest in redevelopment of brownfield properties continues to expand across the state, the West Virginia Brownfields Assistance Center at Marshall University is working hard to keep up with the demand. Small communities, larger towns, and county-based economic developers continue to gain understanding of how to address potentially contaminated properties, redeveloping and/or revitalizing sites into productive use, whether to meet housing needs, provide new recreational opportunities, or for industrial / commercial use. We continue to be involved with a number of conferences and workshops, and continue outreach and education to the region. Some recent events and outreach activities include:

- Monthly participation in the West Virginia State Chamber's Environmental Committee Meetings
- Conducted two sessions at the West Virginia State Trails Conference (March 19th-20th, Oak Hill, WV)
- Targeted brownfield assessment applications, compiled and submitted for 2 communities (Ansted, Mount Hope); both have been approved by EPA for funding
- Continued support for the City of Huntington and Town of Ronceverte community-wide brownfield assessment projects
- Continued participation in Wyoming County, EDA brownfield assessment project and Groundwork Trust Initiative
- Brownfield outreach and education to various entities in the state, including the West Virginia Development Office, West Virginia Public Port Authority, and West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection's Division of Land Restoration.

Town of Addison Continues Moving Forward on Former Railroad Depot Property Redevelopment

The West Virginia Brownfields Assistance Center at Marshall University continues to assist communities in returning abandoned and vacant properties in the state to productive use, one site at a time.

The Town of Addison, referred by most as Webster Springs, is located in the rugged, hilly terrain of Webster County, in central West Virginia. The area is well known for its past coal and timber industry. On the banks of the fast-flowing Elk River that transverse the town is a former railroad depot, built in the 1920's, long since closed and abandoned. The site has sat idle for years, but Addison and county leaders are working towards redeveloping the site.

The property, recently purchased by Addison, is near Bakers Island, an outdoor recreational park, home to the Woodchoppers Festival, seen on ESPN and ABC sports television in recent years. Plans are in the works for updating and improving Bakers Island, and

the former depot property is a critical component of these planned improvements.

The West Virginia Brownfields Assistance Center at Marshall University has been working with the Land Restoration Division (DLR) of the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection. DLR, using state allocated brownfields funding, completed an environmental assessment of the property in late 2008, which concluded that low levels of contaminants are present, from past site usage activities.

Addison is currently evaluating the report to determine its next steps, which will include submitting an EPA targeted brownfield assessment application, and possibly an EPA brownfields clean-up grant.



Efforts are on-going to renovate the abandoned Addison railroad depot into a historical museum, part of the Baker's Island Woodchoppers Festival renovation plans

Mount Hope Receiving EPA Targeted Brownfield Assessment on Former Automobile Dealership Property

(Editors Note: This is a follow-up to a story in our Summer / Fall 2008 newsletter)

While the former Patteson Building in Mount Hope still sits empty, efforts continue toward its eventual re-birth. The building is currently held by the Cen-

tral Appalachian Empowerment Zone, but the National Coal Heritage Authority plans to renovate the structure into a museum and office space.

A Phase I environmental assessment was completed on the site in early 2009 to determine

if environmental impacts are present on the property that might require clean-up prior to renovation work starting. Results of the Phase I indicated the potential for petroleum impacts to be present on the site, mainly the possibility of underground storage tanks potentially

present in front of the building next to Main Street. The West Virginia Brownfields Assistance Center at Marshall University assisted the National Coal Heritage Authority in preparing a targeted brownfield application to EPA. The application has been approved for funding. EPA will hire an environmental contractor, experienced in subsurface site investigations, to determine if underground storage tanks are located on the site, and if any associated soil and/or groundwater contamination is present. Results of the investigation will be used to determine the next steps in moving the property forward toward eventual redevelopment. Stay tuned.



Rear view of former Patteson Building, to be converted to Coal Heritage Museum and office space

**West Virginia
Brownfields Assistance
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*West Virginia Brownfields Assistance
Center at Marshall University*

"Re-Energizing Communities"

Mercer Mingo Monroe Nicholas Pocahontas
Putnam Raleigh Summers Wayne
Webster Wyoming

Brownfield resources available at
www.wvbrownfields.com

2009 West Virginia State Brownfield Conference September 1st and 2nd

The 2009 West Virginia State Brownfields conference has been scheduled for September 1st and 2nd at the Waterfront Hotel and Conference Center, located in Morgantown, WV. This will be the 5th year for this conference, building on extensive success of past conferences. The theme of this year's conference is "Re-energizing Communities", with information sessions on a variety of topics, including: Brownfields tax incentives, abandoned property redevelopment, an EPA assessment grant writing workshop, and regional case studies. Information on a self-guided walking / bike tour of nearby brownfield properties, using the Monongahelia River Rail Trail, is planned for interested participants. Speakers tentatively scheduled for the event this year include WV Department of Commerce Secretary Kelley Goes, and Mary Hunt-Lieving of the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation, who will be awarding several grants to communities for environmental assessment and related activities.

Day Two of the conference will be a half-day workshop entitled "Bring Your Own Brownfield", or BYOB. A panel of experts from a variety of fields, including regulatory, banking, real estate, and community planners, will be present to evaluate selected community project redevelopment plans to provide feedback on how to strengthen projects, plus provide input on potential project hurdles and ideas and suggestions for how they might be overcome.

Conference registration and a draft agenda are available now on the West Virginia Brownfields website, located at: www.wvbrownfields.org. Conference sponsorship opportunities and exhibitor space are also available. Make plans now to attend.



Waterfront Hotel and Conference Center, located along the Monongahelia River in Morgantown, WV, will be the site for this year's WV Brownfields Conference