

# West Virginia Brownfields Assistance Center



Winter 2014 News Brief

*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)*

## Brownfields Site Checkup – Where Are They Now?

Anyone that has worked in the redevelopment of brownfield properties knows it's a time-consuming process, often where little progress is seen in spite of the efforts. This News Brief edition provides a "checkup" on a few of the brownfield properties and their current status. As you will see, though it's often a slow process, results are being seen.

Our first checkup is the former Urlings General Store Building, located at 300 Hall Street in Wayne, WV. This building was built around 1920, originally as a supply garage for an oil and gas company, later becoming a car dealership. For numerous years, the first floor of the building was home to Urlings General Store, a locally-owned business known for "a little bit of everything". The second floor was used for apartment housing. When the building was purchased by the Housing Authority of Wayne County, the building had sat vacant for an extended time.

In 2012, the building was checked for asbestos and other environmental impacts, using EPA brownfield assessment funding provided through the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection's Division of Land Restoration. Only a minimal amount of asbestos containing materials were found, paving the way for the Housing Authority to begin building rehabilitation. The Coalfield Development Corporation, a private non-profit within the Housing Authority, is serving as building developer and general contractor. Plans for the structure include construction of office

space for the Housing Authority and Coalfield Development Corporation on the first floor, and five affordable multi-family rental units using energy efficient and "green" design components, on the second floor. Brandon Denison, Executive Director of the Coalfield Development Corporation, said "the project will renovate a blighted building located downtown and directly across from the County courthouse, serving as a catalyst for community revitalization and increasing affordable housing availability while creating much-needed office space. Using our Quality Jobs Initiative that trains unemployed for new careers, this project is an on-the-job training opportunity for those unemployed to gain new skills and experience."

Construction is on-going, scheduled to be completed in April of 2014. Funding from this project came from Federal Home Loan Bank of Pittsburgh, WV Affordable Housing Trust Fund, Cabell-Huntington-Wayne HOME Consortium, and Enterprise Community Partners.



*Left Photo: Exterior of Building prior to Start of Rehabilitation Activities;  
Right Photos: Interior Structural Support Work Performed on the First Floor*



*For more Site "Checkups", turn the page*

## **Brownfield Site Checkup: Former Clay DOH Garage**

The Clay County Business and Development Authority (BDA) has been hard at work converting the former WV Division of Highways (DOH) Maintenance Facility building, in the town of Clay, to a much-needed community center. This project got rolling in early 2011, when the BDA contacted the WV Brownfields Assistance Center for guidance on property redevelopment. The DOH had previously removed underground storage tanks from the site, but residual petroleum contamination in the subsurface soil and groundwater remained. After interaction between all parties involved, the DOH made the decision to remove remaining petroleum contaminants and donate the property to the BDA for redevelopment.



*Completion of Petroleum Impacted Soil removal at DOH Garage (May 2011)*

After remedial activities were concluded in the summer of 2011, the BDA was able to take ownership of the property. Multiple redevelopment phases are either completed or underway. The building, located in a mostly residential area along the Elk River, had not been used for several years, so major renovations were needed to make this facility a community asset. New office space for the BDC has been completed, at a cost of \$15,000 for materials, including a new heating and cooling system. To reduce costs, labor for the office renovation was donated by inmates from Mt. Olive Correctional Complex. Bill Dunn, President of the BDC, said “we had inmates with electrical and carpentry experience do the majority of the work at no cost to us. All we had to do was provide them lunch each day”.



*Exterior of “New” BDA Offices and Community Center*

A second development at this facility was installation of a river access point on the Elk river for canoes and kayaks. President Dunn stated “The Elk River is quite scenic, and providing recreational opportunities that utilizes this resource is definitely a good investment”. The BDC again used labor from Mt. Olive Correctional Complex inmates to reduce costs. Inmates cleaned the river bank of brush and debris to prepare the location for a canoe/kayak launch site.

While the facility still has more renovation work in the former garage area to be completed, the building now sees a lot of local community traffic. Community flea markets are held here about every 3 months, and local community groups use the facility on a regular basis. Quite a change from a closed maintenance garage from a few years ago.



*Interior View of BDA Community Center*

What’s next for the BDC?

President Dunn indicated they’ve now turned their attention to installing a new floor in the former garage area of the building. While the space is currently usable, they intend to install a new floor so the building can accommodate additional activities and community functions in the future. The BDC isn’t stopping here. They’re also working in conjunction with the Buffalo Creek Watershed on a future biking and walking trail. Utilizing a closed railroad track, this trail will stretch from Clay to the community of Widen, a 20-mile trek along Buffalo Creek and the Elk River.

President Dunn of the BDC invites you to come for a visit, and hear more about their on-going developments. The Elk River Festival is slated for June 6th, and includes “The Elk Challenge”, a marathon consisting of three phases: a 3-mile run, a 5-mile kayak, and a 16 mile bicycle race.



*Clay County BDA President Bill Dunn in Their Renovated Office Space*

## **Brownfield Site Checkup: Former Logan High School**

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We had to do  
something, before  
somebody got hurt”  
Reggie Jones,  
Executive Director,  
PRIDE Community  
Services*

Reggie Jones, Executive Director of the Progressive Rejuvenation Improvement and Development Enterprise (PRIDE), located in Logan, WV, first contacted the WV Brownfields Assistance Center (BAC) in May of 2011. His problem? A very large, very dilapidated former school building, built in the 1920's, sitting next door to his organization. PRIDE, operating in Logan County since the 1950's, actually owned the former Logan High School building and property, and had future plans to raze the structure for expansion of their various programs and services. The BAC assisted PRIDE in getting the building checked for asbestos and environmental hazards, utilizing West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection's EPA Brownfields Hazardous Assessment grant funding. Assessment activities occurred in February 2012. PRIDE then submitted an EPA Brownfields Cleanup Grant application later that year for removal of hazardous materials within the structure.

At this point, things began unraveling. First, the EPA Brownfields cleanup application was not funded. Second, the building began deteriorating at a rapid pace. Bricks began falling from the structure, some onto the Head Start playground next door, some into the street. Reggie said “We had to do something, before somebody got hurt”. While Reggie and the BAC had been in discussions with multiple local, State and Federal agencies, obtaining the necessary funding was now a critical issue. It was likely that the building, with part of the roof now collapsed, wouldn't survive another winter without major damages to anything nearby.



*Demolition Underway on the Former Logan High School Building*

PRIDE began pooling funds from their various internal programs, plus looked for other funding sources. A \$50,000 gift from a charitable organization (name withheld as requested by entity) was a major contribution. While looking for funds, PRIDE also released a Request for Proposals for demolition of the structure. Proposals of up to \$675,000 were received. The lowest bidder happened to be in Logan doing other demolition work, and after hearing about PRIDE and the community based services they provide, especially to children and senior citizens, lowered his bid an additional 15%, for a total cost of \$215,000.

Finally, the funding was secured, contractor on-site, and the work began. In November 2011, the big elephant in the room was finally gone. Now PRIDE is looking at how best to utilize this now-safe site. Expansion of their Head Start program is one option; another is development of a Senior Center, complete with a downstairs activity center and senior living apartments upstairs. With PRIDE providing activities and meals to over 200 seniors each day, plus a long-standing set of programs geared toward education, children and low-income family assistance, it's quite clear that their future use of this property will be an excellent reuse of a now-former brownfield.



*Former Logan High School Building on Right, Adjacent to PRIDE Community Services Building*



*With Demolition Complete, the Site is Now Ready for New Development*

## ***Brownfield Site Checkup: J.G. Bradley Campground***

The J.G. Bradley Campground, located near the mouth of Buffalo Creek and the Elk River in Clay County, was once home to the Dundon Railroad Maintenance Shop, servicing steam locomotives used on the Buffalo Creek and Gauley Railroad, part of the Elk River Coal and Lumber Company. The railroad and the Maintenance Shop were abandoned in the mid-1960's. In 2006, the Central Appalachian Empowerment Zone (CAEZ) contacted the WV Brownfields Assistance Center regarding reuse of the property for a campground. After discussion with the WV Department of Environmental Protection's Office of Environmental Remediation, funding was provided from their program for the site to be assessed for environmental impacts prior to site redevelopment.



*1956 Photo of Dundon Railroad Maintenance Shop*

Once environmental impacts were addressed, preparations began and funding was sought to transfer the site into the J.G. Bradley Campground, named for Joseph Gardner Bradley, organizer of the Elk River Coal and Lumber Company and the Buffalo Creek and Gauley Railroad in the early 1900's.

Fast forward to 2014, and the campground is open, with camping sites available with water and electrical service. A lodge has been built, with more construction scheduled to be completed later this year. Connie Lupardis, Executive Director of CAEZ, recently stated "we've had quite a time getting all of the required permits, plus other delays, but we've kept at it, and are quite proud of the results we're now seeing".



*Part of J.G. Bradley Campground Today*



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### ***2014 West Virginia Brownfields Conference Announced***

Mark your calendars for September 11th and 12th, 2014, for the West Virginia Brownfields Conference. This year's event is being held at the Big Sandy Superstore Arena and Convention Center, Huntington, WV. We're currently putting together another exciting event, with informative presentations, interactive workshops and networking opportunities. Conference details, including a Call-For-Presentation, are available on the WV Brownfields website at <http://wvbrownfields.org>. The City of Huntington welcomes you to Huntington in September. Conference assistance is being provided by the Cabell Huntington Convention & Visitors Bureau.



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