



Clearwater's Revitalization Spectrum: From High-tech Industry to Community Health Clinic

CLEARWATER, FL

The City of Clearwater, Florida, is beginning a growth spurt that promises to create hundreds of jobs, increase the city's tax base, and enhance its neglected neighborhoods while cleaning up its brownfields and improving the environment. In September 1996, EPA awarded the city a \$100,000 Brownfields Assessment Pilot grant, and an additional \$100,000 in September 1998. From this, the city has leveraged more than \$9 million in additional federal, state, and local funding. Now, the high-tech revolution has come to Clearwater; an international software company that located its new headquarters on a former brownfield has brought more than 500 new jobs to Clearwater so far, with 500 more to come. This \$50 million development is the biggest project happening in Clearwater right now, but it's not the only one that will benefit local residents. Among Clearwater's many brownfields restoration projects is a new health clinic being built to serve the residents of North Greenwood, the largest minority community in the city.

The Clearwater Brownfields Assessment Pilot area contains approximately 220 potentially contaminated commercial, in-

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JUST THE FACTS:

- From a \$200,000 EPA Brownfields Pilot grant, Clearwater has leveraged more than \$9 million in federal, state, and local funding.
- An international software company that located its new headquarters on a former brownfield has brought more than 500 new jobs to Clearwater, with 500 more to come.
- Among Clearwater's many brownfields restoration projects is a new health clinic being built to serve the residents of North Greenwood, the largest minority community in the city.

Clearwater's Brownfields Pilot funded assessments on a 14-acre site once occupied by a department store's automotive service center. Based on assessment results, the city spent \$500,000 for cleanup, which consisted of excavation and removal of petroleum-contaminated soil. The site was purchased by Information Management Resources for \$1.5 million as the site of its new headquarters.

EPA's Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower states, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that has actual or perceived contamination and an active potential for redevelopment or reuse. EPA is funding: assessment demonstration pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years), to assess brownfields sites and to test cleanup and redevelopment models; job training pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years), to provide training for residents of communities affected by brownfields to facilitate cleanup of brownfields sites and prepare trainees for future employment in the environmental field; and, cleanup revolving loan fund programs (each funded up to \$500,000 over five years) to capitalize loan funds to make loans for the environmental cleanup of brownfields. These pilot programs are intended to provide EPA, states, tribes, municipalities, and communities with useful information and strategies as they continue to seek new methods to promote a unified approach to site assessment, environmental cleanup, and redevelopment.

dustrial, and residential sites located on more than 1,800 acres, part of which includes former wetlands that were filled in more than 40 years ago for urban development. Encompassing a State Enterprise Zone, the Pilot area is also the first state-certified brownfields area in Florida.

One of Clearwater's most successful brownfields restoration efforts involves the 14-acre site of a former auto service center that is now home to Information Management Resources' (IMR) Global Center headquarters. The brownfields property was once occupied by a department store's automotive service center. The department store removed underground oil, diesel, and gasoline storage tanks several years ago, but unknown levels of contamination remained. The Pilot funded environmental assessments, a storm water retention area, and right-of-way improvements required for the project, and the city spent \$500,000 for cleanup, which consisted of excavation and removal of petroleum-contaminated soil. IMR paid \$1.5 million for the property, and the city offered substantial economic incentives. It is a good investment for both parties.

The Governor's Office of Tourism, Trade and Economic Development approved IMR for the state's Qualified Target Industry (QTI) program to receive approximately \$2 million in tax refunds for creating more than 550 new jobs. Florida's Brownfields Bonus program will add an additional \$1.4 million to that refund. This project has resulted in more than \$51 million in capital investment and is the largest business deal in the city's history. Redevelopment plans call for the construction of six buildings with a total of 310,000 square feet of office space. The first building was completed in July 1999 and opened with 175 employees. A second building opened in early 2000, and there are now more than 500 employees working on-site. When all six buildings are finished and in operation, 1,000 people will be employed with an average salary of \$40,000. This average salary is expected to substantially increase the average salary in Pinellas County, and IMR's presence will attract other big businesses to the area. More than 1,500 additional new jobs in the county are projected to be generated.

On a smaller scale, the residents of North Greenwood, one of Clearwater's poorest neighborhoods, will also enjoy the benefits of brownfields redevelopment. On March 18, 2000, ground was broken for the Greenwood Community Health Resource Center. As part of the city's environmental justice plan, representatives of North Greenwood participated in redevelopment planning and voted unanimously for the city to lease the property to the nonprofit clinic. The Health Resource Center, which is staffed by professionals who volunteer their time, was founded by Willa Carson, a 72-year-old retired nurse who had previously been operating the clinic out of two refurbished apartments. The new home for the clinic is being constructed on the site of a former gas station using a \$300,000 state appropriation. The Pilot conducted environmental assessments at the property, and a \$200,000 state allocation funded removal of underground storage tanks and soil cleanup. Once construction is complete, North Greenwood will have a new health facility offering

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Visit the EPA Brownfields Web site at:
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immunizations, physicals, tests and screenings, flu shots, and counseling to residents of the neighborhood.

Many other brownfields in Clearwater are being returned to use. For example, the Pilot has completed environmental assessments on a site to be developed by a small, woman-owned company that will hire at least 50 percent of its new employees from the surrounding community. Land and groundwater assessments have also been completed on the site of a former auto dealership that will be redeveloped into a 100-unit townhouse community overlooking the town pond.

EPA has continued its commitment to Clearwater's brownfields restoration efforts by awarding the city a \$100,000 supplemental assistance grant that includes \$50,000 for greenspace restoration of Stevenson Creek, which runs through the heart of North Greenwood. EPA has also awarded the city a \$500,000 Brownfields Cleanup Revolving Loan Fund (BCRLF) grant, which will be used to clean up sites targeted under the Brownfields Assessment Pilot. The Pilot anticipates making its first BCRLF loan by Fall 2001 for the cleanup of a pesticide-contaminated property to be redeveloped into computer-based businesses. In addition, EPA is assisting with a \$141,000 Job Training and Development Demonstration Pilot that will train unemployed and underemployed residents in the North and South Greenwood neighborhoods for environmental jobs, including the assessment and cleanup of Clearwater's brownfields. For more information about the Clearwater Brownfields Pilot, contact Miles Ballogg, Brownfields Coordinator, Clearwater Economic Development Team, at (727) 562-4023.

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