



Kansas City Finds New Value in the Area's Underused Properties

Kansas City, KS/MO

The efforts of the Kansas City, Kansas/Missouri Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilot have helped leverage more than \$4.5 million in cleanup and more than \$100 million in redevelopment funding to restore the city's brownfields. This type of progress led to Kansas City being awarded an EPA Brownfields Showcase Community designation in March 1998, and a Phoenix Award from the Pennsylvania Land Recycling Program in 2000. The partnerships enabled through Brownfields National Partnership and the expertise of Showcase Community staff are helping the Kansas City Brownfields Initiative (KCBI) realize its goal of restoring brownfields while implementing a permanent redevelopment program for the area.

Showcase Communities are selected by the Brownfields National Partnership to demonstrate that through cooperation, federal, state, local, and private efforts can be concentrated around brownfields to restore these sites, stimulate economic development, and revitalize communities. Showcase Communities serve as models for broad-based cooperative efforts to support locally based initiatives. Showcases receive up to \$400,000 from EPA for both environmental assessments and to support the loan of a federal employee to the Showcase for up to three years. Showcase Communities receive additional financial and technical support from the Partnership's more than 20 federal partners, depending on the community need and program eligibility.

The initial goal of brownfields restoration efforts in the Kansas City area was to revitalize the city's Central Industrial District (CID). Located at the confluence of the Missouri and Kansas Rivers, the CID was formerly a bustling center for meat packing, agricultural, stockyard, railroad, and manufacturing industries. While the CID features excellent access to major interstates, rails, rivers, and airports, a history of flooding in the area and general economic changes resulted in the loss of many businesses and the creation of numerous brownfields. The Showcase Community has since broadened brownfields redevelopment efforts to the city limits of Kansas City, Missouri and the Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas.

With the assistance of public and private partnerships enabled in part by the Showcase Community, environmental cleanup of brownfields and necessary infrastructure improvements are underway in the CID that are enticing private developers toward restoration of the area. Projects

JUST THE FACTS:

- Community involvement has been an essential part of revitalizing the area's brownfields. A Brownfields Steering Committee that includes representatives from local communities meets once a month to discuss brownfields issues.
- So far, more than 350 brownfields have been assessed for contamination, revealing that 280 of those sites did not require cleanup.
- One of the Showcase Community's most successful projects is the transformation of a 22-acre rail yard and historic railroad roundhouse into the new Westside Business Park.

The initial goal of brownfields restoration efforts in the Kansas City area was to revitalize the city's Central Industrial District, once a bustling center for agricultural and manufacturing industries. The Showcase Community has since broadened efforts to the city limits of Kansas City, Missouri and the Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas.

include a \$17 million effort to construct and modernize industrial warehouse and manufacturing facilities for the Faultless Starch/Bon Ami Company on three former brownfields; a completed \$27.5 million new world headquarters for Butler Manufacturing Company; a completed \$11.5 million new facility for George Fern & Co. on a former rail yard; and other private investments totaling more than \$100 million. Public infrastructure investments in CID roads, bridges, and sewers total more than \$50 million. And on 55 acres along the south bank of the Missouri River, an estimated \$300 million in private investment is projected to create a new riverfront park area with office buildings, hotels, town homes, restaurants, and an aquarium on the site of a former demolition debris landfill and manufactured gas plant. This park will include wetland habitat and support species preservation, to be funded in part by up to \$2 million from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). Cleanup on two-thirds of this site is now complete, enabled by a \$1.68 million EPA Solid Waste grant and \$360,000 in EPA Brownfields Cleanup Revolving Loan funds. Negotiations to clean the remaining portion of the property are currently in progress.

Running past several brownfields on both sides of the state will be the Kansas City Riverfront Heritage Trail, which is considered one of the KCBI's primary projects. When completed, this nine-mile trail will connect Riverfront Park, the River Market, and downtown Kansas City via a series of scenic bicycle and pedestrian paths. The trail borders at least nine sites targeted as brownfields by KCBI, and will enhance those sites both aesthetically and by providing transportation alternatives. Approximately \$15 million has been secured for the design and construction of the trail, which is expected to be complete in time for the 150-year celebration of the Lewis & Clark Expedition in June 2004.

One of the Showcase Community's most successful projects is the transformation of a 22-acre rail yard and historic railroad roundhouse, owned by the Hispanic Economic Development Corporation, into the new Westside Business Park. While preserving the roundhouse's structure and facade, the facility was redeveloped into high-tech, high-end office space for Output Technologies, a national leader in the printing and distribution of financial statements. More than 100,000 square feet of light industrial and warehouse space was created behind the roundhouse. This project was funded by \$14.2 million in grants from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, \$3 million in guaranteed construction loans, and a state brownfields loan of \$900,000. In addition, the Missouri Department of Economic Development contributed \$100,000 to survey local residents about job skills and interests, to develop marketing tools for the Business Park, and to establish a database of residents and employment interests. An estimated 375 jobs were created as a result of this project.

KCBI considers community involvement an essential part of revitalizing the area's brownfields. KCBI formed a Brownfields Steering Committee that includes representatives from local communities and meets once a month to discuss brownfields issues. With assistance from EPA and the Council for Urban Economic Development, KCBI also held two "Distressed Properties Forums" that each drew more than 100 stakeholders, and featured presentations on local brownfields case studies and incentives for redevelopment. KCBI also uses the area's Community Development Corporations to monitor community needs and the responses of local citizens to brownfields restoration efforts.

So far, the efforts of KCBI, EPA's Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilot, and the Showcase Community have led to more than 350 brownfields being assessed for contamination. Of these properties, 280 were determined to not require cleanup. These findings have set the stage for private investment and new development, and the partnerships and community outreach enabled by the Showcase Community have supported those efforts.

CONTACTS:

For more information on EPA's Showcase Communities, contact Tony Raia of OSWER's Office of Brownfields Cleanup and Redevelopment at (202) 566-2758

Or visit EPA's Brownfields Web site at:

<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/>