

Brownfields

Success Story

Revitalizing Rural Virginia

Pulaski, Virginia

Pulaski is a small town, established in 1886, nestled within the rolling hills of Virginia. Much like other settled areas at the time, Pulaski was heavily involved in industrial activity and development. Routine industrial practice from businesses, such as General Chemical Company and Virginia Wood Products, eventually took its toll on the surrounding environment.

Over time, hazardous contaminants were released into the soil and groundwater of Pulaski due to industrial exploitation of the land. Contaminants included asbestos, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), volatile organic compounds (VOCs), lead, arsenic, iron, and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs).

The steady decline of manufacturing and industrial enterprises caused these larger properties in Pulaski to become abandoned. Some structures were used for storage and others simply deteriorated. Despite the high levels of pollutants, vacant buildings, and blight from decades of decline, the Town of Pulaski decided to invest in their community and remove these barriers to growth and redevelopment. In 2009, the Town of Pulaski applied for their first Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Brownfield Assessment Grant.

Setting the Scene for Redevelopment

Working alongside of developers and consultants, members within the economic development sector of Pulaski set out to revitalize the formerly booming industrial town. With the help of consultants, the Town of Pulaski applied for and received a \$200,000 Brownfield Assessment grant in 2009, as well as a second assessment grant in 2014. These two grants allowed the town to perform thirteen Phase I Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs) and five Phase II ESAs to identify levels of known contaminants.

Assessments revealed that the majority of sites in Pulaski's redevelopment plan did not require institutional or engineering controls to provide a healthy and safe space for residents. Some of the assessed sites required thorough investigation, such as the General Chemical Company site, which required approximately \$50,000 to complete. Brownfield assessments were able to provide developers with the security to potentially purchase sites or buildings, in turn becoming economic drivers in the community.

Effective partnerships and collaborations with consultants, investors, and the community were able to propel Pulaski's plan and vision forward in the early stages of redevelopment. Federal, state, and local dollars were invested into Pulaski through the Brownfield program that helped spark the Town's transformation into the reinvigorated district that it is today.



The former Virginia Wood Products Building, which was torn down in 2015 for redevelopment

EPA Grant Recipient:
Town of Pulaski, Virginia

Grant Types:
Community-Wide Assessment

Former Uses:
Industrial, Manufacturing, and Commercial

Current Uses:
Recreational and Commercial



The Jefferson Yards Hill Plant on Valley Street was once a booming textile industry but has not been used in recent years.



A room at the Jackson Park Inn. The inn currently offers 32 rooms for overnight stay.

“An important by-product of the Town’s successful reuse of brownfields has been to make members of the community feel better about the Town and themselves. There is an increase in community pride – an important success in itself.”

*John White,
Economic Development Director,
Pulaski, Virginia*

For more information:

Visit the EPA Brownfields website at www.epa.gov/brownfields or contact Felicia Fred at 215-814-5524 or fred.felicia@epa.gov.

Current Revitalization

Numerous properties were assessed and declared ready for development as a result of utilizing Brownfield money. For example, the former Dunnivant Warehouse Building was redeveloped into the Jackson Park Inn and Conference Center. The Inn is a boutique hotel containing meeting spaces, a restaurant, and a bar. Additionally, the Jackson Park Inn has provided jobs for over 40 full time employees and provides a hub of activity for local baseball players. This initial investment into revitalization has spurred additional development for housing and other amenities in the area.

Another successful redevelopment example is the former Jefferson Yarns Hill Plant that transformed from a former textile plant to become a food-grade warehouse currently occupied by Phoenix Packaging. The redevelopment of a declining industrial space into a thriving business has provided Pulaski with employment opportunities and a more stable economic base. Pulaski is no longer the downtrodden community that it once was, but now a vibrant area bustling with redevelopment opportunities.

“The Town of Pulaski is on the rise with the revitalization of its beautiful and historic downtown district and the masterful redevelopment of key industrial and commercial properties. These efforts are proving effective in recapturing the original charm and appeal of this Southwestern Virginia gem.”

— Jonathan D. Sweet,
Pulaski County Administrator

An Eye Toward Expansion

A domino effect is happening in Pulaski. The Jackson Park Inn is attracting more tourists and developers are now taking notice of the area and the opportunities that lie there. These redeveloped properties have become a cornerstone for the economy in Pulaski. The revitalization of vacant and contaminated properties has provided Pulaski with the opportunity to increase its tax base, provide jobs, and offer recreational amenities to their residents.

Pulaski and the EPA continue to work hand in hand to assess and cleanup brownfield sites for potential redevelopment. The Town of Pulaski is using additional brownfield assessment funding to remain active in the redevelopment of the area. New funding, strong leadership, and an effective plan all indicate that the Town of Pulaski will continue to succeed in brownfield redevelopment.

“The Town as it existed 10 years ago is certainly not the Town we are today. The Brownfield Program has been the catalyst to move Pulaski forward.”

— Shawn M. Utt,
Pulaski Town Manager

