

Brownfields

Success Story

Piecing Together the Former Shenango Pottery Facility

New Castle, Pennsylvania

An EPA Brownfields Site Assessment grant awarded to the County of Lawrence, Pennsylvania has helped the City of New Castle enter the remediation stage at 34-acre hazardous waste site that has plagued the community for decades.

Opened in 1902, Shenango Pottery became renowned for its production of high-end china such as Haviland and Castleton. At one time, the Pottery employed over 3,250 people. In late December 1991, the plant closed, dealing a huge blow to the economy and morale of New Castle. The city was already suffering from high unemployment due to numerous shutdowns in the previous decade including Johnson Bronze, Pentex Foundry, Rockwell International's Spring Plant, and Mesta Machine.

The Pottery plant was purchased by a Canadian firm shortly after it shut down, and no investment occurred. Many attempts by the City of New Castle and other Lawrence County agencies to purchase the property were unsuccessful. A major fire engulfed the plant on the evening of June 28, 2011. Billowing plumes of black smoke could be seen for many miles and a large portion of the plant was destroyed. Another fire on May 25, 2012, did further damage. Both fires were determined to be the result of arson.

The issue of toxic contamination always clouded the property's future. Soil sampling investigations in the past on portions of the site indicated high levels of heavy metal concentrations of lead, arsenic and cadmium. Because of the site's location in a heavily populated area of the city and within 600 feet of public and residential housing, it became a community priority for further Phase II Environmental analysis to determine the areas of concern and extent of contamination.



The former Shenango Pottery Facility has been closed for nearly 30 years, but the City of New Castle is finally gaining momentum toward redevelopment of the site.

EPA Grant Recipient:

Lawrence County Economic Development Corporation

Grant Type

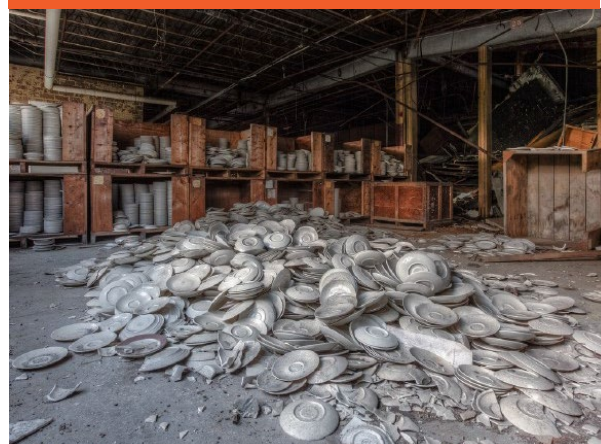
Community-wide Assessment

Former Uses

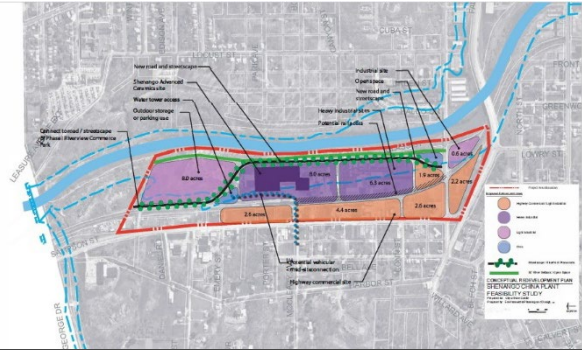
Shenango Pottery Facility

Current/Future Uses

Mixed Industrial/Commercial and Open Space



Waste materials such as scrap china are contributing to high levels of heavy metals in the soil around the site, including lead, arsenic, and cadmium.



With the doors to remediation now open, the City of New Castle has begun conceptualizing the types of redevelopment that could occur at the site.

“Lawrence County has had great experiences working with EPA’s Brownfields Assessment Program. Without this program, the site assessment work of the former Shenango China facility in the City of New Castle would not have taken place. Now, we are one giant step closer to realizing the redevelopment of this property that has long plagued our community.”

- Linda D. Nitch
Executive Director
Lawrence County Economic
Development Corporation

For more information:

Visit the EPA Brownfields website at www.epa.gov/brownfields or contact:

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EPA
May 2021

Investigation

Since 1991, several environmental investigations were undertaken that resulted in some remediation outside of the building footprint. Notably, a scrap china stockpile contaminated with lead was encapsulated at the rear of the property. The County of Lawrence was finally able to begin assessment of the site in 2018 utilizing funds from a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Brownfields Assessment Grant. With the assistance of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), the Lawrence County Economic Development Corporation was able to obtain access to the property in 2020 for the purpose of further environmental investigation.

Redevelopment

As a result of receiving the EPA funding, The County was able to perform Phase II Environmental Assessments including groundwater and soil monitoring, Shenango River surface water analysis, preparation of a Baseline Remedial Investigation Report and Solid Waste Inventory Report, and identification of universal waste and china waste inside of the site buildings. From this information, a clean-up plan was created which led to the City of New Castle filing a Notice of Intent to Remediate.

Because of the EPA funding, the City of New Castle is ready to move forward with the process of site control and remediation of one of the community’s oldest and largest hazardous waste sites. The City is currently undertaking feasibility studies and conceptual redevelopment plans with the hopes of restoring the site to an industrial and commercial center that can become a major economic driver once again.