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Region 8 Western Brownfields Wire – Spring 2020

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Message from the EPA Brownfields Team

We hope you, your families and loved ones are well and taking care. During this unprecedented time, we've all been experiencing change and uncertainty. To alleviate some of that uncertainty, we want you to know that your EPA Brownfields team are all working virtually and available to address any of your concerns.

EPA's Grants Office has a webpage that answers [frequently asked questions on grants issues in response to Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#). As always, feel free to reach out to your project officer with any questions or concerns. We are planning check-in calls for our current grant partners. Stay tuned for more information and individual invitations.

Some of you have been notified that you have a new project officer for your EPA grant(s). Our office is fortunate to support hundreds of partners across EPA Region 8, and periodic adjustments are necessary to ensure effective and consistent service. Please know that we make such changes in a thoughtful manner and with every attempt to minimize disruptions, and be assured that we will be available to discuss any concerns you may have with the upcoming changes.

This WBWire contains some exciting grant award news, new funding and training opportunities, as well as two stories out of Montana and Colorado that we hope you will find uplifting.

Firstly, EPA announced over \$65 million dollars will be awarded nationwide to 151 communities for brownfields assessment, cleanup, and revolving loan fund grants. We've highlighted the Region 8 recipients below and look forward to working with several new communities as well as continuing brownfields work with past recipients.

Secondly, there are several opportunities coming soon.

On May 29th, the Region 8 brownfields team will be hosting a "getting started with Brownfields revitalization" webinar. Additionally, a webinar on brownfields redevelopment resources will be held on May 13th, a brownfields grant writing webinar series will start on May 21st and applications to apply for funding focusing on COVID-19 impacts to underserved communities and vulnerable populations will be due on June 30th. More information on these opportunities is provided below.

In Butte, Montana, the strategic use of brownfields funds is helping bring new life into their downtown. In Colorado, brownfields funds at the Fort Lyon Facility in Bent County are allowing for the assessment, cleanup, and reuse of portions of this historic campus, and a newly awarded Environmental Workforce Development & Job Training grant will provide hands on job training for the facility's Supportive Residential Community and surrounding area residents. You can read more about both of these inspiring stories below.



Figure 1: A new coworker while working from home

Region 8 Communities to Receive \$4.1 Million in Brownfields Assessment, Cleanup, and Revolving Loan Fund Grants

Today, EPA announced over \$65 million will be awarded nationwide to 151 communities through EPA's Brownfields Assessment, Cleanup and Revolving Loan Fund grant competition. In Region 8, a total of \$4.1 million will be awarded to 10 entities for Brownfields assessment and cleanup. For more information, read [EPA's press release](#) and [grant awardee information](#). Listed below, are the new Region 8 awardees:

- The City of Aberdeen, South Dakota will receive a \$300,000 community-wide assessment grant to conduct assessments in the Historic Downtown District and Moccasin Creek Corridor. Read [EPA's news release](#).
- The City of Pueblo, Colorado will receive a \$300,000 community-wide assessment grant to conduct assessments in the downtown and riverfront area. Read [EPA's news release](#).
- A \$300,000 community-wide assessment grant will help the Blackfoot Tribe assess vacant and underutilized buildings in Browning, Montana. Read [EPA's news release](#).
- The Fort Peck Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes will use a \$300,000 assessment grant to assess 20 abandoned homes on their reservation. Read [EPA's news release](#).
- The Northern Cheyenne Tribe will use a \$364,500 cleanup grant to cleanup six sites that were assessed under a community-wide assessment grant in Lama Deer, Montana. Read [EPA's news release](#).
- A \$310,000 cleanup grant will help the Spirit Lake Tribe address multiple sites. Read [EPA's news release](#).
- The Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians will use a \$500,000 cleanup grant to address seven multi-unit homes in the L'BelCour area in Belcourt, North Dakota. [Read EPA's news release](#).
- A \$300,000 assessment grant will help Bear Paw Development Corporation assess sites in Liberty, Hill, Blaine, Phillips, and Chouteau Counties in Montana, as well as on the Rocky Boy's Indian Reservation. Read [EPA's news release](#).
- Great Falls Development Authority will use a \$300,000 community-wide assessment grant to assess sites throughout Cascade County, Montana including the Great Falls North Central Neighborhood, a designated Opportunity Zone. Read [EPA's news release](#).
- Missoula, Montana will receive \$1.1 million dollars for cleanup, including a \$800,000 Revolving Loan Fund grant to target cleanup at sites in the Bitterroot Spur Corridor and Westside area of the City as well as a \$326,725 cleanup grant for the Montana Rail Link Park. Read [EPA's news release](#).



Figure 2: One of the original L'BelCour Housing Structures.

Funding and Training Opportunities

- New to Brownfields or have questions about currently available assistance? Please join EPA Region 8 on May 29, from 1:30-3pm (MDT) for an interactive webinar to kickstart planning conversations and put you on the road to revitalization! RSVP for the “Getting Started with Brownfields Revitalization” webinar to Stephanie Shen at shen.stephanie@epa.gov.
- Preparing for the Cascade of Federal Funding: Catch the Wave webinar will be on May 13 from 12:00 – 1:00 pm (MDT). Now is the time to think deeply about how to position brownfields for cleanup and buildup to health fields, transit oriented development, housing and other reuses that foster economic vibrancy and environmental resilience. This session spotlights federal grants, loans and technical assistance to support brownfield activities throughout all stages of the redevelopment process. We will hear how EPA is working to expand the brownfields redevelopment sandbox by coordinating with other federal agencies. We will also learn what’s new with Opportunity Zones and how to layer funding with other federal agencies and programs including EDA, HUD, USDA, USDOT, Community Development Block Grants, and Clean Water Funds. [Register](#) for the webinar.
- EPA is accepting applications under the [State Environmental Justice Cooperative Agreement Program](#) and anticipates awarding \$1 million to states, local governments, tribes and U.S. territories to work collaboratively with environmental justice communities to understand, promote and integrate approaches to provide meaningful and measurable improvements to public health and the environment. For this competition, EPA will give special consideration to applications that focus on public education, training, emergency planning and/or investigations on the impacts of COVID-19 on the underserved communities and vulnerable populations. Proposals are due by June 30, 2020.
- [Kansas State University Technical Assistance to Brownfields Communities](#) (KSU TAB) is still servicing communities while working under Coronavirus preventative measures, and all assistance is provided free of charge. Maggie Egberts, maggiejessie@ksu.edu, is the contact for Region 8 communities. Additionally, brownfields technical assistance is available to all federally recognized tribes; more information can be found at [Tribal TAB](#). Finally, KSU TAB will be hosting a [brownfields grant writing training series](#) starting May 21 and going through September. View the full list of KSU TAB [webinars](#) and [online trainings](#).

Brownfields in Butte, Montana

It may be a surprise to hear the words “brownfields” and “Butte, Montana” in the same sentence, seeing as the geographically massive Silver Bow Creek/Butte Superfund Site is located in and around Butte. However, EPA and Montana DEQ have been working with local champions to address brownfields located in Butte that are unrelated to the Superfund site.

One of these brownfields is the Park & Arizona property. EPA conducted a Targeted Brownfields Assessment (TBA) to identify underground storage tanks and sample soil at this former gas station. The assessment concluded that there were no tanks on the property and provided the necessary information Montana DEQ needed to determine that the property is ready for reuse. The site is slated to house the Praxis Center for Innovative Learning, which will be the nation's first dedicated healthcare simulation training center focused specifically on the needs of rural healthcare practitioners. As planned, a soon-to-be constructed 60,000 square foot facility will employ 70+ full time workers and will train between 4,000 and 5,000 healthcare practitioners annually. EPA's assessment of the property provided additional assurance for investors in this complex, \$36,500,000 project that includes qualified opportunity zone investors, private equity capital, and will tap into New Markets Tax Credits. Construction is set to begin later in 2020. Watch a quick news clip about the project on [NBC Montana](#).

A block of former auto repair shops sits adjacent to the future Praxis Center and is referred to as "auto row." Recognizing the opportunity to capitalize on the Praxis Redevelopment, grants and technical assistance from EPA are being used to assess and clean up petroleum contamination along auto row and to create a redevelopment vision for this historic area. The plan is for this vision to feed into a prospectus that will attract developers to invest in an entertainment district that directly links to the Praxis Center and that can serve as a new town square in Uptown Butte.



EPA Performed a Targeted Brownfield Assessment to determine the location of underground storage tanks at the "Park & Arizona" property in February, 2018



An architect's rendering of the Praxis Center, planned for the southwest corner of Park and Arizona streets in Uptown Butte.

Brownfields Assistance Helping Fort Lyon Recover

Walking onto Fort Lyon feels a little like walking onto a college campus with large brick buildings surrounding a quad. Located in Bent County, Colorado, Fort Lyon is a 512-acre property that includes approximately 109 buildings and a long history. Fort Lyon was established as a U.S. Army Fort in the 1800s and has since been used by the U.S. Navy as a tuberculosis sanatorium, a Veterans Affairs (VA) Hospital, and a state correctional facility. Of the 109 buildings on the campus, only 35% are currently able to be used due to the potential presence of hazardous building materials and the need for brownfields assessment and cleanup.

The campus is currently owned by Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA), with Bent County managing the property. DOLA and Bent County are working together to use the property to serve the community and fill an economic gap that was created when the hospital and correctional facilities left. Since 2013, the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless has managed the [Fort Lyon Supportive Residential Community](#), which utilizes several buildings on the campus to provide recovery oriented transitional housing to individuals experiencing homelessness. Interest by the community in re-purposing the facility to meet the needs of individuals across the state, as well as use the site to meet a variety of community needs, led Bent County to contact EPA in 2015 about the Targeted Brownfields Assessment Program (TBA), as there were numerous suspected contaminants on the property. Since then, EPA has conducted TBAs at 34 of the 109 buildings on the campus, as well as a vacant parcel. These assessments have identified asbestos, lead based paint and other building material contaminants in some of the buildings slated for renovation. In 2016 and 2017 DOLA received EPA cleanup grants totaling close to \$400,000 to address eight buildings prior to renovation.

More recently, [DOLA received an EPA Environmental Workforce and Job Training grant](#) to increase job training opportunities for both the Fort Lyon residential community residents, as well as members of the general public in the surrounding tri-county area. This will complement the existing Fort Lyon Supportive Residential Community program, which combines housing with peer support and educational, vocational and employment services. The EPA-funded training program is designed to develop various environmental skills and certifications, including asbestos handling, wastewater management, and hazardous waste transportation for up to 70 participants who will look to secure full-time environmental employment. The training program will use the campus itself as a classroom by providing hands-on instruction in currently unoccupied buildings, as well as at the campus's onsite wastewater treatment facility.



Figure 5: Fort Lyon Campus



Figure 6: A sampled home on officer's row Fort Lyon

Contact Us

For more information about U.S. EPA Region 8's Brownfields Program, please visit: <https://www.epa.gov/brownfields/brownfields-and-land-revitalization-region-8>, [Region 8 Brownfields contacts](#) or contact Stephanie Shen with the EPA Brownfields Team at shen.stephanie@epa.gov.

