Case Study of Cumberland Valley Area Development District

Keys to Success

- Project Description
- Economic Value
- Challenges & Advice
- Benefits
- Stewardship Meaning

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Cleaning up brownfields and putting them into productive reuse is exciting. Before that can happen, these properties need to have assessments done to determine what if any contaminants are present at the site. In 2009 and 2011, the Cumberland Valley Area Development District (CVADD) received a $200,000 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Brownfields Assessment Grant to conduct Phase I and Phase II assessments on potential brownfield sites throughout the CVADD region. The region is comprised of eight counties––Bell, Clay, Harlan, Jackson, Knox, Laurel, Rockcastle and Whitley––and 17 cities––Middlesboro, Pineville, Manchester, Benham, Cumberland, Evarts, Harlan, Loyall, Lynch, McKee, Barbourville, London, Brodhead, Livingston, Mount Vernon, Corbin and Williamsburg. The CVADD hired AMEC Environment & Infrastructure, Inc.'s Bob Perkins as the environmental consultant.

> **"We devised a good process to decide which properties had the most redevelopment potential and assessed those properties."**

In the beginning, a CVADD Regional Brownfields Committee was formed, consisting of mayors, judges, emergency managers, health department personnel, city building inspectors and interested citizens.

"Bob Perkins created an inventory of potential sites throughout our region, and we began to conduct 'kick-off' meetings throughout the ADD area," explains Whitney Chesnut, Public Administration Specialist for CVADD. "We had a great turnout and people seemed enthusiastic about the possibility of turning underutilized sites into green space or something that would create jobs."

During the monthly meetings, individuals would conduct presentations before the committee describing their site of interest. Once the presentation was finished, the Brownfields Committee members would rate and rank the site by completing a score sheet to determine which sites would receive a Phase I and/or Phase II Environmental Assessment.

Perkins and Chesnut would tally the scores and then present the results to the group. At that time, the committee would vote for the site with the highest scores to receive the Phase I and/or Phase II Assessments. By doing this, the sites with the most potential for redevelopment or having the most impact on human health or the environment would be chosen.

Overall, the CVADD region was extremely pleased with the outcome of the assessment grant, and as a result, two of the communities received $200,000 EPA cleanup grants. The City of Benham, located in Harlan County, Kentucky, received $200,000 in EPA Cleanup funds. The city plans to utilize the EPA funds for the cleanup of the former Benham Medical Clinic. Jackson County Ministries, received $200,000 for cleanup of Lincoln Hall, which was part of the Annville Institute and will be used as a cultural arts center. These funds will be used to clean and put two properties into productive reuse, boosting tax rolls, providing jobs and an economic boost to each community.

Former clinic in Benham

"Reach out to the Kentucky Brownfield Redevelopment Program coordinators and your EPA project manager by inviting them to your local brownfield meetings," says Chesnut. "By having them present, the Regional Brownfields Committee members have been able to receive vital information about this program. Our region has accomplished so much with the assistance of our consultant and these great folks in just a few short years! We look forward to continuing our efforts to revitalize the CVADD communities through EPA Brownfields funds."

Allowing the CVADD Regional Brownfields Committee to rate, score and vote on the sites chosen to receive the Phase I and Phase II Assessments gives the CVADD region a voice in determining where and how the EPA grant monies are utilized. Everyone feels the method is clear and fair.

Lincoln Hall on the historic campus of the Annville Institute

Not all sites that receive a Phase I and Phase II end up applying for cleanup funds, but this process helps the communities determine what additional sites may need to be considered during the next round of funding.

"We devised a good process to decide which properties had the most redevelopment potential and did assessments on those properties," Chesnut says, "resulting in two cleanups and demonstrating the effectiveness of an assessment grant. We have had a huge success with this method."

Helpful Hint: **Cleaning up a brownfield can give an exciting new purpose to a property and community. Start with an assessment to determine what needs to be done.**