For EPA's Brownfields Program, "Green" Refers to More than the Environment

EPA's Brownfields Program is designed to empower states, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant. EPA's Brownfields Program provides financial and technical assistance for brownfield revitalization, including grants for environmental assessment, cleanup, and job training.

Restoring Local Economies Along with the Brownfields That Had Hindered Them

Brownfields across the country are being redeveloped into productive properties, providing their surrounding, often disadvantaged communities with economic stability and renewed pride. This site-by-site urban renewal is due in large part to the EPA Brownfields Program's Pilots and grants, which provide assistance and generate the leveraged funding needed to initiate and complete cleanup and redevelopment efforts.

Transforming abandoned and underused properties into productive contributors to the local economy causes a chain reaction of positive events. Often, brownfields redevelopment projects act as a catalyst for large-scale community revitalization efforts. Ridding neighborhoods of abandoned and blighted properties can reduce crime and bolster community pride, and create new opportunities for commerce, employment, and property tax revenue.

Sparking Area-wide Revitalization

In Springfield, Missouri's industrial corridor, where factories and used-car dealerships once stood blocks away from the city center, there is now a 12-acre public park, an exposition center, an ice-skating arena, and an arts center, with additional projects underway throughout the corridor.

In an effort to address Springfield's vacant industrial corridor, community members and the City Council set out to draft "Vision 20/20: Creating the Future," a plan committed to the city's revitalization. During focus group and town meetings about this project, community members expressed a desire for a new community park. The project found its footing in 1999 when EPA announced Springfield as a Brownfields Assessment Pilot recipient. By funding environmental assessments on some of the 28 properties acquired for the first phase of the Jordan Valley Park redevelopment project, the Springfield Pilot facilitated the redevelopment of this area, which served as the starting point for revitalization of the

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Opening-day festivities at the Jordan Valley Park in Springfield, Missouri.

JUST THE FACTS:

- Ridding neighborhoods of abandoned and blighted properties can reduce crime and bolster community pride, and create new opportunities for commerce, employment, and property tax revenue.
- Omaha, Nebraska's EPA Brownfields Pilot, in partnership with Omaha's "Back to the River" initiative, has leveraged more than $140 million to transform the city's riverfront into a sustainable and thriving area.
- The City of Lewiston, Maine, leveraged nearly $40 million to clean up and redevelop a former mill site into a new business park that created 1,200 jobs for local residents.

entire corridor. In May 2002, the city celebrated the grand opening of the first part of the Jordan Valley Park, including a civic park, amphitheater, and arts center. That fall, the city opened the Jordan Valley Ice Park, a two-rink skating arena. And September 2003 saw the opening of the park's "economic engine," as it is known to those involved with the project: a new, $12 million exposition center. The tremendous success of the Jordan Valley Park has bolstered the community's economy and pride. Benjamin Alexander, Project Manager for the park, said, "[The City of Springfield] had a vision and a plan for the Park, but I don't think we would have been as successful, as quickly, without [EPA's] Brownfields Program."

Omaha, Nebraska's waterfront is being brought back to life through the redevelopment of three brownfields. Having leveraged more than $140 million toward restoration of the riverfront, the Omaha Brownfields Assessment Pilot, in partnership with Omaha's "Back to the River" initiative, is facilitating the transformation of Omaha's waterfront into a sustainable and thriving area. The National Park service recently completed a new office facility on one site. Another property has been redeveloped into the Gallup Corporation's headquarters and corporate campus, creating nearly 750 jobs. Through the waterfront revitalization project, Nebraska Senator Bob Kerrey envisioned a timeless symbol for downtown Omaha, stating, "We ought to be thinking about having something that lasts forever." As part of the area's transformation, a $23 million pedestrian bridge will be constructed over the Missouri River using contributions from federal, state, and local partners. Sixty-four miles of recreational trails will also be constructed throughout the area. Funded by a 1998 federal transportation bill that authorized $4.8 million for the project, these trails will provide an alternative for commuter traffic, a path to recreational greenspace, and improved accessability to the water.

Creating Employment Opportunities

In Lewiston, Maine, redevelopment of a former mill site is transforming a vital section of the city's neglected downtown into a multi-use business park where history is preserved, investment is stimulated, and jobs are created. Once the largest employer in the state, the mill's closing caused the area's unemployment to spike to nearly 50 percent. An EPA Brownfields Assessment Pilot awarded to Lewiston facilitated the property's redevelopment by funding assessments that identified areas of contamination that needed to be addressed. EPA subsequently provided Lewiston with additional funding to assess nearby properties and awarded the city a Brownfields Cleanup Revolving Loan Fund (BCRLF) Pilot. The city itself leveraged nearly $40 million to clean up and redevelop the historic mill site. One existing structure was renovated for office and light industrial space, while another portion of the site was redeveloped into a small park that offers outdoor gathering space in the center of the complex. The new business park has already created 1,200 jobs for local residents. Additional redevelopment at the site is planned, including an area for arts and entertainment venues along the adjacent canal, a pedestrian walkway to the nearby river and park, and a convention center.



A renovated mill site in Lewiston, Maine.

In Houston, Texas, nearly 500 new jobs resulted from a project that began with environmental assessments enabled by EPA's Brownfields Assessment Pilot and Showcase Community awards. With the Pilot's help, a former 450-acre municipal landfill became two state-of-the-art, 18-hole golf courses, creating 60 new jobs. The transformation of a 38-acre cluster of brownfields into a 42,000-seat baseball stadium and areas for cafes, retail shops, and a theater created nearly 230 more jobs. Additionally, the redevelopment of a city brownfield into a new performing arts complex created nearly 200 more jobs. The cleanup and redevelopment efforts initiated by Pilot assessments have stimulated a large-scale revitalization of downtown Houston.

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Increasing Tax Revenues

In Minneapolis, Minnesota, two adjacent brownfields were transformed into a mixed-use gold mine. The project began with EPA's award of a $500,000 BCRLF Pilot grant to Hennepin County, followed by two $500,000 supplemental funding grants, for a total of $1.5 million. The Hennepin County BCRLF Pilot authorized two loans, totaling $875,000, for cleanup of an area located in downtown Minneapolis along the Mississippi River. The contaminated area had once been home to a car dealership and an associated automotive services facility, various commercial and residential facilities, a stone quarry, various manufacturing operations, a taxi garage, and a trucking facility. With community support and the Pilot's innovative use of a l escalation clause to cover unexpected costs in its loan agreement, the area i now home to the Village at St. Anthony Falls. This residential and commercial complex consists of 177 housing units, including 48 town homes, 12 three-story brownstones, 84 loft-style condominiums, and 30 affordable apartments, as well as 1,500 square feet of retail and 3,000 square feet of office space. It is expected that operation of the complex will return the redevelopment investment of more than $92 million, increase the city's tax base by $2.6 million, and create as many as 150 permanent jobs. The BCRLF Pilot executed a third loan for $450,000 for cleanup of an industrial property just south of the Village of St. Anthony Falls that will also be redeveloped into residential community, a reuse for which the community has indicated a preference.



A brownfield in Hennepin County, Minnesota, prior to its redevelopment into a residential and commercial complex.

Since 1996, the Emeryville, California Brownfields Assessment Pilot has leveraged hundreds of millions of dollars in public and private investment in brownfields cleanup and redevelopment. Thus far, the redevelopment of brownfield properties formerly used for heavy industrial purposes into office buildings and retail stores has resulted in $3 million in property tax revenue and $1.5 million in sales tax every year. The Brownfields Pilot established strong working relationships among the city's regulatory agencies, which facilitated a plan between the city and Catellus Development Corporation to redevelop an abandoned former railyard site. Catellus constructed more than 200 units of mixed-income housing on the site; this new development also includes an 1,800-square-foot community room and 7,500 square feet of retail space, and has won several awards for its design. Approximately 100 construction workers were hired to build these housing units, which are now fully occupied. Chiron Corporation, the second-largest biotechnology firm in the country, built its new headquarters on one of Emeryville's brownfields. Chiron plans to construct 12 additional buildings in the area, totaling 2.2 million square feet and employing as many as 4,200 people in the next 20 years. Overall, construction of retail, hotel, and office complexes on Emeryville's former industrial sites is expected to create as many as 10,600 jobs and nearly four million square feet of new facilities within the next five years, and provide an additional $6.4 million in annual property tax revenues. The project has already leveraged $644 million in private investment and $6.3 million in public sector funding.

Stimulating Local Economies by Returning Value to Brownfields

These are just a few examples of how brownfields cleanup and redevelopment has, with the assistance of the EPA Brownfields Program, helped to boost local economies and improve communities around the nation. Collectively, EPA's Brownfields Pilots and grants have leveraged more than $5 billion from an initial investment of less than $700 million. For the most part, this $5 billion is going into disadvantaged, minority communities that are often overlooked or avoided by developers. In addition, Pilots and grants have trained more than 1,700 community members living around brownfields in environmental assessment and cleanup technologies, so they can benefit from the approximately 25,000 cleanup and redevelopment jobs leveraged by the Brownfields Program. Through brownfields redevelopment, these communities are now showing millions of dollars in increased tax revenue, which is invested back into the communities by way of infrastructure improvements. Brownfields redevelopment has proven to be key to revitalizing communities, through lasting changes that provide sustainable economic growth.

To find out how EPA's Brownfields Program tools can work for you, visit EPA's Brownfields web site at http://www.epa.gov/brownfields or call 202-566-2777.