



Indian Colony Transforms Idle Property into a Community Benefit



Soil remediation underway.

© Reno-Sparks Indian Colony: Kleinfelder

Reno, Nevada

The Reno-Sparks Indian Colony (RSIC) is a federally recognized Indian Tribe composed of more than 1,000 members throughout its 2,000 acres of Tribal land in and within proximity to Reno, Nevada. The Colony seeks to both preserve its culture and expand its economic development in an ever demanding world. In order to meet this need, it has developed more than 80 acres in Reno and Washoe County that it now leases to commercial tenants and on which the Colony's Economic Development Department constructed a \$20 million Tribal Health Center, which services more than 9,000 Native Americans in the Washoe County area.

Looking to increase its revenue base and improve the quality of life in the neighborhood, the RSIC began assembling a dozen under-utilized industrial parcels in 1992 with the goal of creating more compatible land uses and economic development by leasing the combined property to a big-box retailer. Most of the previous landowners were not willing to sell at the same time. While most of the parcels were acquired between 1994 and 1995, the final parcels were not acquired until 2000. Taking ownership of these parcels allowed the RSIC to clean up its surrounding neighborhood by removing the associated industrial blight. In order to address contamination on the 22-acre property, the Colony applied for a loan through the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection (NDEP). In November 2007, the NDEP loaned \$950,000 to the RSIC to assist with cleanup costs at the property. This loan was made possible through a \$2,000,000 EPA Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) grant awarded to the NDEP in 2001. This is the first Brownfields loan made to an Indian community in the western states and the first loan made in the State of Nevada.

Located in Reno, Nevada, the property is bordered by an interstate highway, the Truckee River, and the largest casino-resort in northern Nevada. Phase I environmental site assessments highlighted the property's former uses including an automotive repair shop, plant nursery and other industrial facilities. While not all of the individual Phase I assessments expressed concern with any recognized environmental conditions, the Phase I for a former radiator repair property indicated further investigation was needed. A Phase II assessment revealed pesticide, total petroleum hydrocarbons (TPH), metals, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), lead, and nitrogen compounds present in the soil. The RSIC used funds loaned from the

JUST THE FACTS:

- The Reno-Sparks Indian Colony partnered with local, state, and federal governments to complete the remediation of this property for redevelopment.
- Part of the property cleanup was funded by a \$950,000 loan from the Nevada Division of Environment Protection's EPA Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund grant.
- The property will be redeveloped as a Wal-Mart Super Center; a portion of tax revenues from the retailer will be granted to the Nevada Department of Corrections and the Washoe County School District.

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NDEP's EPA Brownfields RLF grant to address the petroleum and lead issues, completing the final phase of cleanup. Left behind from the former radiator repair shop, approximately 1,000 tons of lead-contaminated soil were removed. Since soil TPH levels were low or non-existent on another area of the site, the majority of the property that would be redeveloped as the parking lot was not remediated. Where soil would be disturbed for construction of the building or underground utilities, the contaminated soil was removed. This allowed the RSIC to pursue a risk-based closure through the NDEP. EPA Region 9's Underground Storage Tank Program assisted the RSIC in addressing the site's petroleum contamination. At a cost of \$1.2 million to complete the remediation of the site, EPA, NDEP and Washoe County District Health Department issued No Further Action/Closure letters in October 2007. A final Report of Completion was prepared by Kleinfelder cleanup contractors in November 2007.



Tribal Chairman Arlan Melendez, Governor Jim Gibbons, and Kleinfelder cleanup contractors celebrate new partnerships.

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Visit the EPA Brownfields Web site at:
www.epa.gov/brownfields/

The property will be redeveloped into Three Nations Plaza, the future home of a Wal-Mart Super Center. It is expected to generate much needed jobs and revenue for the community. The project will produce about \$5-6 million in tax revenues a year, which will be used to repay the bonds for the new Tribal Health Center, fund a new restitution center and enhance essential government services such as public safety, education, human services, and community development. The RSIC will also use revenue from this project to help finance the newly constructed 65,000-square-foot Tribal Health Center, which serves more than 9,000 urban Native Americans living in the region.

As part of the revenue sharing agreement with the State of Nevada, a portion of the tax revenues will be used to support the local school district, where many members of the RSIC receive their education, and construct a new State Restitution Center. The current restitution center, which serves as a prison transition center for low-risk, non-violent criminals is located adjacent to the new Wal-Mart site.

The RSIC will use the tax revenues to build a new \$8 million Northern Nevada Restitution Center for the Department of Corrections on the RSIC land near the current site. The new restitution center is expected to be completed by 2011 and will be the first center in the state to provide transitional services to women. The old restitution center will be redeveloped as a commercial and retail center for the RSIC members and citizens of Reno. Additionally, the Wal-Mart revenues will be used to support essential government services provided by the RSIC as well as assist with several other redevelopment projects planned by the RSIC.

On August 21, 2008, the NDEP and the RSIC held an event to celebrate the cleanup of this property and the partnership formed among NDEP, EPA, and local partners. Among the attendees were Tribal Chairman Arlan Melendez and Governor Jim Gibbons.

Wal-Mart, Washoe County, and the RSIC are working to construct a levy and flood wall on adjacent properties, which will be the first regional flood control project built along the Truckee River totaling \$3.6 million. These flood projects will start in January 2009, and Wal-Mart will break ground on its new building in the proceeding 90 days.