



# Brownfields 2005 Grant Fact Sheet

## Eaton County, MI

### EPA Brownfields Program

EPA's Brownfields Program empowers states, communities, and other stakeholders in economic development to work together to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield site is real property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant. On January 11, 2002, President George W. Bush signed into law the Small Business Liability Relief and Brownfields Revitalization Act. Under the Brownfields Law, EPA provides financial assistance to eligible applicants through four competitive grant programs: assessment grants, revolving loan fund grants, cleanup grants, and job training grants. Additionally, funding support is provided to state and tribal response programs through a separate mechanism.

### Community Description

Eaton County was selected to receive two brownfields assessment grants. Eaton County, in lower central Michigan, has a population of 103,655. Manufacturing has always been a primary source of employment in this rural area, but over the last 30 years, Eaton County has lost a number of firms and jobs to the declining economy. This has resulted in increased unemployment and a legacy of abandoned and/or contaminated business sites. Recent layoffs by an automobile manufacturer and the state government, the two largest employers in the area, have had devastating effects on employment levels. Eighteen of the county's communities have per capita incomes below the state average. The county is also experiencing a steady increase in population, an indication of urban sprawl.



### Assessment Grants

New  
2005

\$200,000 for hazardous substances  
\$200,000 for petroleum

EPA has selected Eaton County for two brownfields assessment grants. Hazardous substances grant funds will be used to conduct Phase I and II environmental site assessments, baseline environmental assessments, brownfields redevelopment plans, and community outreach activities in this generally rural county. Petroleum funds will be used to perform the same tasks at sites with potential petroleum contamination.

### Contacts

For further information, including specific grant contacts, additional grant information, brownfields news and events, and publications and links, visit the EPA Brownfields web site at: [www.epa.gov/brownfields](http://www.epa.gov/brownfields).

EPA Region 5 Brownfields Team  
312-886-7576  
<http://www.epa.gov/R5Brownfields/>

Grant Recipient: Eaton County, MI  
517-543-7500, ext. 684

The cooperative agreement for this grant has not yet been negotiated; therefore, activities described in this fact sheet are subject to change.

From 1997 to 2002, the county lost 8,170 acres of farmland to development. Brownfields in the area include 117 leaking underground storage tanks, old auto repair facilities, and grain elevators with possible petroleum contamination. They threaten the purity of the water supply because the county relies almost entirely on groundwater for its water. The county plans to reuse old, abandoned commercial properties to create jobs and relieve the development pressure on farmland.