



Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilot

Columbia, MS

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5105)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

EPA's Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative 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 site, or portion thereof, that has actual or perceived contamination and an active potential for redevelopment or reuse. EPA is funding: assessment demonstration pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years), to assess brownfields sites and to test cleanup and redevelopment models; job training pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years), to provide training for residents of communities affected by brownfields to facilitate cleanup of brownfields sites and prepare trainees for future employment in the environmental field; and, cleanup revolving loan fund programs (each funded up to \$500,000 over five years) to capitalize loan funds to make loans for the environmental cleanup of brownfields. These pilot programs are intended to provide EPA, states, tribes, municipalities, and communities with useful information and strategies as they continue to seek new methods to promote a unified approach to site assessment, environmental cleanup, and redevelopment.

BACKGROUND

EPA selected the City of Columbia for a Brownfields Pilot. Columbia (population 6,815) is located in south-central Mississippi near the Louisiana border. The city has identified 14 potential brownfield properties that are barriers to the city's future growth. These underused and contaminated properties are located within the Columbia Brownfields District Area (CBDA), which includes industrial and commercial sites with unknown levels of contamination, including an abandoned scrap yard, a machine shop, and a former battery recycling business. The area is also home to a residential neighborhood known as Webb Corner. While Columbia's population consists of 31 percent minority, Webb Corner has a minority rate of 87 percent, a poverty rate of 67.7 percent, and an unemployment rate of 58 percent.

Population decline, a lack of commercially viable property, and the migration of potential workers to better jobs in a neighboring city have hindered Columbia's economic growth. To address these issues, the city formed the Columbia Brownfields District Redevelopment Partnership. The Partnership is working closely with community, financial, and business leaders; local activist and environmental

PILOT SNAPSHOT



Columbia, Mississippi

Date of Award:
September 1998

Amount: \$200,000

Profile: The Pilot targets three sites within the Columbia Brownfields District Area for assessment, cleanup, and redevelopment.

Contacts:

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Office of the Mayor
(601) 736-8201

U.S. EPA – Region 4
(404) 562-8661

Visit the EPA Region 4 Brownfields web site at:
<http://www.epa.gov/region4/waste/bf/bf.htm>

For further information, including specific Pilot contacts, additional Pilot information, brownfields news and events, and publications and links, visit the EPA Brownfields web site at:
<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/>

justice advocacy groups; and federal and state agencies to resolve some of these obstacles and promote Columbia's revitalization and redevelopment.

OBJECTIVES

The Columbia Brownfields District Redevelopment Partnership seeks to improve the economic and environmental quality of life of its citizens. The city plans to use the Pilot to help achieve this mission. The city's brownfields initiative places a great deal of importance on actively including all interested parties in the assessment, cleanup, and redevelopment process. The Pilot will facilitate this by conducting community outreach activities, including sponsoring information-sharing forums in neighborhoods adjacent to targeted sites. At these forums, community members can discuss plans for nearby sites and voice their concerns. The relationships formed throughout this process will help ensure that the Partnership reaches redevelopment decisions that are beneficial to the low-income and minority residents of Columbia, whose neighborhoods border many of the brownfields sites. The Pilot will also conduct site assessments at the three targeted properties.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

The Pilot has:

- Identified and inventoried 14 potentially contaminated sites; and
- Targeted three sites for further investigation.

The Pilot is:

- Conducting site assessments on selected sites;
- Conducting public forums and other outreach activities to encourage continued community involvement with regard to the targeted brownfields; and
- Developing financial cleanup cost estimates for the target sites.