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Environmental
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Solid Waste
and Emergency
Response (5105)

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April 2001
www.epa.gov/brownfields/



Brownfields Supplemental Assistance

Rio Grande Council of Governments, TX/NM

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, and safely clean up brownfields to promote their sustainable reuse. Brownfields are abandoned, idled, or under-used industrial and commercial facilities where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by real or perceived environmental contamination. EPA is funding: assessment demonstration pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years, with additional funding provided for greenspace) to test assessment models and facilitate coordinated assessment and cleanup efforts at the federal, state, tribal, and local levels; and 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 program (each funded up to \$1,000,000 over five years) to provide financial assistance 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 has selected the Rio Grande Council of Governments to receive supplemental assistance for its Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilot. The Council covers six counties in western Texas and southern New Mexico, including the City of El Paso. The Pilot targets two of those counties: El Paso County, Texas; and Doña Ana County, New Mexico. The areas in these counties where brownfields are concentrated have high (over 75 percent) minority populations, low incomes, and high unemployment rates. Selection of sites for redevelopment is driven by a combination of environmental justice concerns, economic development potential, and community support.

The supplemental assistance will be used to target three sites in El Paso: a three-acre former Southern Pacific freight terminal, the closed 144-acre Zaragosa landfill, and a 10-acre site in central El Paso. The freight terminal is a protected and highly visible historic structure within El Paso's federal Empowerment Zone. The freight terminal is slated for mixed-use redevelopment, including commercial and governmental functions, and currently is for sale.

PILOT SNAPSHOT



*Rio Grande Council of Governments,
Texas/New Mexico*

Date of Announcement:
April 2001

Amount: \$150,000

Profile: The Pilot targets three brownfields in distressed El Paso neighborhoods: the former Southern Pacific Freight Terminal, the Zaragosa Landfill, and a site in central El Paso.

Contacts:

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Governments
(915) 533-0998

Regional Brownfields Team
U.S. EPA - Region 6
(214) 665-6736

Visit the EPA Region 6 Brownfields web site at:
<http://www.epa.gov/earth1r6/6sf/bfpages/sfbfhome.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/>

Two parties are interested in redeveloping the site. The Zaragosa landfill originally was located in a remote desert location but is now bordered on three sides by new residential development. The landfill owners are willing to donate 100 acres of the site for redevelopment. The 10-acre site in central El Paso has a history of heavy industrial use, including railroad refueling, metals recycling, and rustproofing. Either the landfill or the 10-acre site will be selected for redevelopment as an animal shelter.

OBJECTIVES AND PLANNED ACTIVITIES

Supplemental assistance will be used to conduct Phase I and Phase II assessments at the three identified properties and prepare redevelopment plans at two of the three properties. Supplemental assistance also will be used to conduct site-specific community involvement. These efforts will build on community support and capacity developed during the original Pilot project.

Activities planned as part of this Pilot include:

- Conducting public involvement and outreach, including holding neighborhood meetings;
- Conducting Phase I and Phase II assessments at the former Southern Pacific freight terminal, the Zaragosa landfill, and the 10-acre site in central El Paso; and
- Preparing redevelopment plans for two sites (the freight terminal and the site selected for the animal shelter).

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