

The **OUTREACH**

Montana's Source for Brownfields Information

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A Tale of Two Revolving Loan Funds

The Environmental Protection Agency has awarded two cities in Montana \$1M in Brownfields Revolving Loan Funds (RLFs). The following stories are from the Great Falls Development Authority and the Montana Area Economic Development Corporation in Missoula. Each organization was asked to submit an article summarizing the status of their RLFs and the progress they have made on their path to success.

A Brownfields Revolving Loan Funds Program in Great Falls

*By Lea McGiboney, High Plains Financial Loan and Grant Administrator,
Great Falls Development Authority*

The Great Falls Development Authority (GFDA) was requested to help obtain assessment and cleanup grants for a 65-acre brownfields site located on 3rd Street NW between Central Avenue West and the Northwest Bypass in Great Falls by the City of Great Falls and Cascade County.

As a non-profit organization, the GFDA applied for grants from the Economic Development Administration (EDA) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). This was a large site owned by 14 individuals whose cooperation was required.

The GFDA initially applied for an EDA grant to help with the costs of preparing the application for the EPA Assessment Grant and to perform preliminary studies. The EDA approved the \$50,000 grant application in September 2002. Preliminary studies determined that the GFDA had to apply for petroleum and hazardous-materials wastes as both were present on-site but at unknown levels.

The \$400,000 EPA Assessment Grant was awarded to GFDA in October 2003. The grant's budget was \$200,000 in petroleum and \$200,000 in hazardous-materials wastes monies. After the second year of the assessment grant, with most of the assessment work completed, the GFDA received a \$1 million EPA Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) grant for cleanup of brownfields sites in Great Falls and Cascade County. This grant was not site-specific, allowing other sites in the community to benefit from the grant and allowing the grant to revolve its loan funds.

continued on page 2



Inside this Issue

A Tale of Two Revolving Loan Funds Brownfields Success Story in Great Falls	1
Cleanup and Redevelopment on Missoula Sawmill Site	2
Save the Date for Brownfields 2008	4
DEQ Offers Meth Lab Cleanup and Conference	5
New Look Online for DEQ's Site Response Section	5
Brownfields Grant Works Toward Cleanup of Meth Contamination	6
Brownfields Helps Wishes Come True	7
Brownfields Contacts	8

A Brownfields Success Story in Great Falls - *continued from page 1*

One criteria of the EPA grant is maintaining community awareness of what is being done on the site. This was accomplished by numerous outreach meetings and newsletter mailings to interested individuals. Progress on the site also was described on the GFDA website. Often, political problems occur with neighborhoods during outreach meetings. These problems vary from concerns about potential loss of a park to requests to assess and cleanup areas not approved by the grant. Diplomacy and understanding are keys to keeping a community happy.

A critical ingredient for a successful assessment and cleanup program of a brownfields site is a capable consulting firm. The GFDA was fortunate to contract a firm with extensive knowledge of the programs and reporting requirements as well as a strong relationship with the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and the EPA regional office. Another asset to the success of the program is cooperation from the city and county. Setting goals at the onset with everyone agreeing on their roles alleviates political quagmires.

The GFDA did not have a staff person solely dedicated to the grant programs and that was later determined to be an avoidable, additional stress for the company. The GFDA suggests that hiring a grants manager will pay off for anyone seeking an assessment or RLF grant. The person in the position should have extensive knowledge of creating reports, managing projects and should be personable. The position also requires a person who can cope with some late-night outreach meetings.

Having a grants manager also creates a comfort level with state and federal agencies as well as with a consultant.

Networking with other cities and counties that have successfully applied for, received and completed the necessary assessment, cleanup and redevelopment work is a great tool. The sharing of ideas can be beneficial for everyone. Going to brownfields conferences is one of the best ways to network and locate potential developers. The GFDA staff attended two conferences and would have attended more.

The GFDA's next steps will be to locate developers to cleanup and develop the site and to locate other sites that may be eligible for the RLF monies. Be cautious of potential developers! Research their background thoroughly to ensure the developers are legitimate. The GFDA was fortunate to avoid a disastrous situation with someone falsely claiming to be a developer. Research determined the claim was untrue.

The GFDA also is assisting certain property owners to relocate, thus enabling the site to be more readily developed. Overall, the brownfields experience has been rewarding and the GFDA is proud to be a part of cleaning up a blighted area for future development and creating jobs for our community.

For more information, call 406-454-1934 or visit the website: www.gfdevelopment.org. ■

Cleanup and Redevelopment on Missoula Sawmill Site

By Dick King, President and CEO

Missoula Area Economic Development Corporation

The city of Missoula submitted a competitive grant application for a brownfields revolving loan fund to the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in 2002. The Montana Area Economic Development Corporation (MAEDC), on behalf of the city, approved a \$1 million loan to the Millsite Revitalization Project in 2006. The loan paid for cleanup of the site, once a large lumber mill operation.

Dick King, MAEDC's president and CEO, stated "this loan reflects a tremendous commitment on the part of the borrower to redevelop 45 acres of vacant industrial property located in the heart of our city." The city gave administrative responsibility for the loan to MAEDC which operates an economic development program.

The borrower submitted a Voluntary Cleanup Plan to the Montana Department of Environmental Quality which will oversee the work. Ed Wetherbee, spokesman for the borrower, stated that the loan was "absolutely crucial to our project, which will include substantial public benefit, such as new park land and connection of the bike and walking trail on the south bank of the river."

In addition to the EPA, the DEQ and the city, a key partner in the effort is the Missoula Redevelopment Agency. Ellen Buchanan, the MRA director, said, "Cleanup and redevelopment of this site is absolutely vital to the future of our community and our commitment to the project clearly reflects that determination."

continued on page 3

Cleanup and Redevelopment on Missoula Sawmill Site - continued from page 2

The MRA recently issued \$3.6 million in tax increment bonds to assist with acquisition of the site. Eric Hanson, MAEDC's loan program manager, explained, "Our loan is structured to allow redevelopment to occur as soon as possible and the fact that MRA is a co-borrower is further evidence of the project's significance."

Cindy Wulfekuhle, grants manager for the Missoula Office of Planning and Grants, responsible for the city's compliance with EPA and DEQ regulations, said, "Getting this loan approved was a long and arduous process but one that will clearly bear fruit in the future."

The next step for the project involves the Voluntary Cleanup Plan and the state DEQ.

To expedite the cleanup, MAEDC's board of directors recently approved an amendment to the loan agreement that will allow the city's environmental expert to approve interim cleanup work before DEQ approval of the final VCP. The project faces a critical time-crunch. The cleanup must be completed and a "no-further-action" letter issued to allow MRP to purchase the property by December 2007. Actual cleanup work began in March and significant progress has been made to date.

For more information, call 406-454-1934 or visit the website: www.maedc.org. ■



The Missoula Sawmill site was once home to a large lumber mill operated by Champion International and other companies. The mill closed in 1993, resulting in the loss of about 1,000 jobs. The site is now a prime example of the dividends that can result from the restoration economy. When the cleanup of the 45-acre site is complete, the property in the heart of Missoula will be ready for redevelopment. The estimated value of the residential and commercial development is \$120 million. In addition, the City will receive park land and the Riverfront Trail will be connected.

SAVE *the* DATE
for **BROWNFIELDS 2008**

National Brownfields Conference

May 5 –7, 2008

Detroit's Cobo Center

Detroit, Michigan

<http://www.brownfields2008.org/en/index.aspx>

In addition to top-notch plenaries and educational sessions, the conference offers ways to reach a national audience of brownfields professionals through marketing and advertising, the Brownfields Transaction Forum, social events, networking opportunities, and more.



Western Regional Brownfields Conference

October 3 – 5, 2007

Portland, Oregon

The Western Regional Brownfields Conference is for recipients of brownfields grants. This 3-day conference will be held
October 3–5, 2007 • Portland, Oregon.

DEQ Offers Meth Lab Cleanup and Conference

Do you know of a possible brownfields meth lab?

The Montana Department of Environmental Quality's Meth Lab Cleanup Program (MCP) offers a limited number of targeted brownfields assessments and cleanups of meth-contaminated properties. The program seeks information on potential meth-contaminated brownfield sites throughout Montana. Call, write, or e-mail any ideas, suggestions or possible sites to:

Deb Grimm
Methamphetamine Cleanup Program
Phone: 444-5286 • e-mail: dgrimm@mt.gov

Visit the MCP Website: www.deq.mt.gov/meth

The MCP is using brownfields grant money to develop informational pamphlets for owners of meth-contaminated properties. The pamphlet will:

- explain the new meth lab cleanup statute;
- provide guidance in hiring a cleanup contractor;
- detail the steps needed to obtain a Certificate of Fitness;
- list frequently asked questions.

Meth Lab Cleanup Conference

This fall the MCP will host a statewide conference for contractors, regulatory agencies, tribes, and the public. Additional information will be on the brownfields list serve this summer. ■

New Look Online for DEQ's Site Response Section

The Montana Department of Environmental Quality's Site Response Section has updated the section's website: <http://www.deq.mt.gov/StateSuperfund/Index.asp>

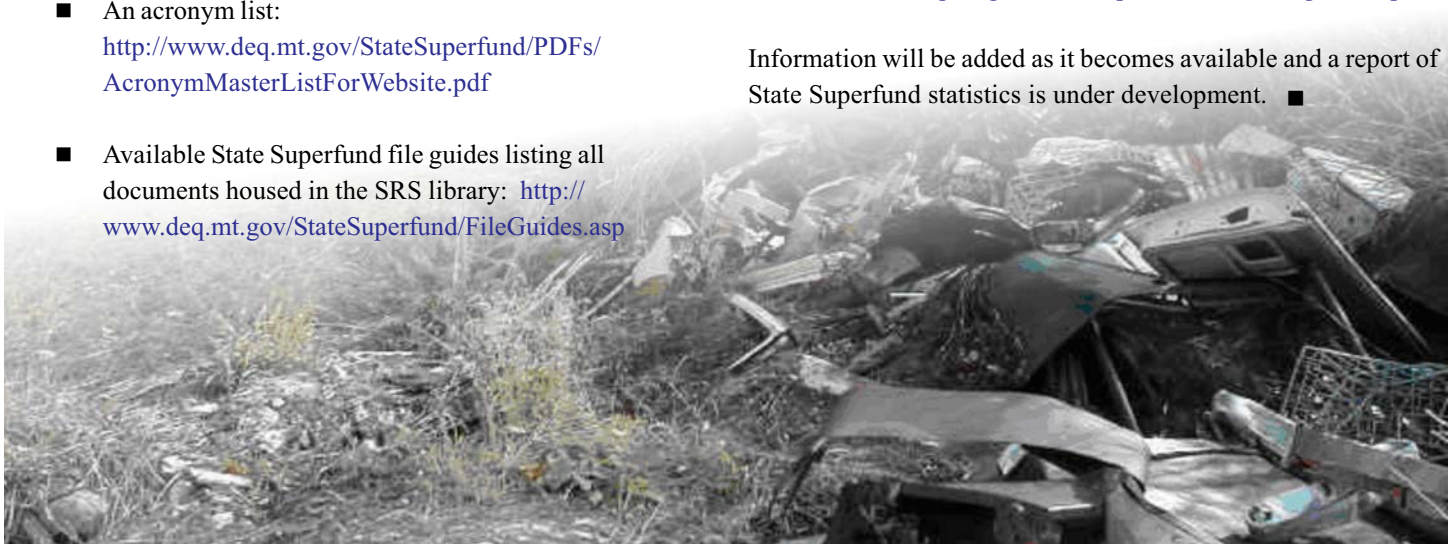
Program web pages have a more consistent look with updated information.

The pages include:

- An acronym list: <http://www.deq.mt.gov/StateSuperfund/PDFs/AcronymMasterListForWebsite.pdf>
- Available State Superfund file guides listing all documents housed in the SRS library: <http://www.deq.mt.gov/StateSuperfund/FileGuides.asp>

- Dioxin/furan TEFs (toxicity equivalency factors) calculation worksheets: <http://www.deq.mt.gov/StateSuperfund/TEQs.asp>
- Frequently asked questions: <http://www.deq.mt.gov/StateSuperfund/FrequentlyAskedQuestions.asp>
- Burlington Northern Livingston Shop Complex: <http://www.deq.mt.gov/StateSuperfund/BNLivingston.asp>

Information will be added as it becomes available and a report of State Superfund statistics is under development. ■



Brownfields Grant Works Toward Cleanup of Meth Contamination

By Laura Erikson, Grants Coordinator

Administrative and Financial Services Department, Lewis and Clark County

Lewis and Clark County was awarded a Community-wide Hazardous Substance Assessment grant in the fall of 2006. The assessment area includes the city of Helena and the Helena Valley and has the following components: community outreach, site inventory and ranking, Phase I and Phase II environmental site assessments and cleanup strategies for at least one site.

Methamphetamine labs that were discovered in our community are a targeted component of the site inventory that will be conducted by Tetra Tech, an environmental consulting firm hired by the county. While methamphetamine production has decreased in the past few years, there are still eight properties in Lewis and Clark County that remain listed on the DEQ meth-contaminated property list (www.deq.state.mt.us/Meth/MethPropertyList.pdf).



Often meth labs are located in rented buildings, apartments or houses, and, following the discovery, the landlord is left with a contaminated property. The stigma of contamination makes the former lab sites undesirable for reuse and subsequently these sites have a negative impact on community aesthetics. Brownfield assessment grant funds can be used to begin the process of helping these property owners revitalize their property and remove serious contaminants from our community.

Lewis and Clark County is experiencing a decline in available affordable housing and having meth-contaminated properties removed from the rental pool only worsens the situation. If landlords are afraid to rent to low- or moderate-income individuals because they fear being left with a mess and no way out, they will be more inclined to sell the properties, removing them from the already limited available rentals. With the opportunity to evaluate the sites under the brownfields program, these same landlords may find that the cost of cleanup is minor. ■



Brownfields Helps Wishes Come True

By *Melissa Hartman, Director, Miles City Housing Authority*

Formed in 1978, the Miles City Housing Authority (MCHA) works to provide safe, decent, and affordable housing for families in Miles City. Five years ago MCHA had a dream of refurbishing the Old Holy Rosary Hospital and creating affordable housing for the community. In 2004, MCHA requested that DEQ use brownfields funds to conduct Phase I and Phase II assessments at the former hospital. The purpose of the assessments was to identify environmental conditions at the property and to determine cleanup alternatives and costs. In 2006, EPA awarded MCHA a Brownfields Clean-up Grant to mitigate contamination.

Rehabilitation of old hospital buildings in the middle of Miles City, originally constructed between 1910 and 1930, has been underway since November 2006.

The project by the Miles City Housing Authority was first envisioned more than five years ago. The work, to be completed

by September 15, 2007, will allow tenants to immediately move in to 21 apartments of the facility renamed The Cornerstone.

Rehabilitation work included removal of asbestos-containing material and large boards and pipe followed by demolition of a tunnel and a three-story sun porch. Apartments in the buildings were shaped up and new windows installed.

A neighboring six-story building constructed in 1950 is scheduled for demolition and clearance by early December 2007. This site will become open space for a play area, garden plots, and off-street parking for tenants of The Cornerstone.

For more information, call 406-234-3433 or visit the web site: <http://mcchamber.com/cityhall/housing.htm>. ■



“Old Holy Rosary during restoration” – Photo by Chris Toalson, 2007

Thanks To Chris Toalson

*Chris is a photography student at Montana State University.
More information on Chris and his images are online at www.brownfieldsphotography.com
and www.christoalsonphotography.com.*

Brownfields Contacts

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Methamphetamine Cleanup Program

Hazardous Waste Generators

Becky Holmes (406) 444-2876
Hazardous Waste Section



Mayor's Landing at Livingston after cleanup.