



# Community Environmental Resource Program

Serving the St. Louis and East St. Louis Communities

Volume 1, Issue 3

June, 2001

## How Can We Redevelop the Abandoned Parts of our Community?

The Mississippi River Corridor Brownfields Showcase Initiative was launched at ceremonies held at America's Center in St. Louis on May 23<sup>rd</sup>. Mayors Debra Powell of East St. Louis and Francis Slay of St. Louis signed a joint proclamation today announcing their intention to cooperate fully in the redevelopment initiative. The large group of government officials, community agencies and interested citizens heard about the need for regional cooperation.

Brownfields are abandoned, idled or underused industrial and commercial properties where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by real or perceived contamination. The brownfields initiative looks to empower state, local governments and other stakeholders to more fully cooperate in their redevelopment efforts to clean up, redevelop, and reuse these abandoned sites.

In May 1997 a partnership involving more than 15 federal agencies was brought together in a coordinated effort to address local cleanup and redevelopment of brownfield sites. In

1998 this partnership designated 16 "Brownfields Showcase Communities." Then this past October another 12 communities including St. Louis and East St. Louis were designated as Showcase Communities. The federal agencies will offer special tech-



nical and financial assistance in an effort to demonstrate how focused and coordinated federal, state and local efforts can bring about dramatic redevelopment success.

The two showcase communities already have nearly \$750 million dollars invested in brownfields redevelopment. These include such landmarks as the Spivey building in downtown East St. Louis and the former Army Ammunition Plant in the City

of St. Louis. The recent showcase designation will give these and any other redevelopment projects the coordinated effort needed to make them a success.

By helping resurrect our abandoned inner cities, this cooperative initiative should benefit the entire metro area. It's important to find a good use for these vast abandoned areas. Otherwise, we should be prepared to see them spread throughout our communities. As part of the kickoff ceremonies, citizens were invited to take a bus tour of area brownfields. This helped drive home to many how important such redevelopment initiatives are to our neighborhoods.

A pat on the back to Kevin McGrew and all those who so professionally assisted him in making the kickoff event so successful. If we all get behind this major environmental initiative there's no reason why we can't start to see some real progress in our communities.

## What are "brownfields?"

"Brownfields" are underused or abandoned industrial or commercial properties where actual or assumed contamination makes redevelopment difficult. Examples include abandoned gas stations, old dry cleaning operations, vacant factories, office buildings, and warehouses. Contaminants on these properties include gasoline and other fuels, lead paint, asbestos, and toxic industrial solvents.



### Did You Know....

The U.S. Government estimates that over 400,000 contaminated industrial and commercial sites exist in our country. In St. Louis and East St. Louis alone the number of contaminated sites may be as high as 2,000 !!



## What Problems do brownfields cause?

- Contaminants on these sites can be very harmful to the health of you and your family. Exposure to high levels of lead and other dangerous chemicals can lead to damaged internal organs, breathing difficulties, and other physical and behavioral problems - especially among children!
- Their existence in the community reduces job prospects and tax revenue.
- They contribute to neighborhood blight and they lower property values.
- They're a major reason why people are leaving the city!



### Did You Know....

Brownfields are not just a problem in this country. In the industrial world, attempts to clean and re-use these valuable properties are going on in many countries.



## How Can I Benefit from Redevelopment?

- Redevelopment means jobs! This leads to more spending in the community which creates even more jobs
- A redeveloped site means that more taxes are flowing into local government. This means improved services to you and your neighbors.
- If taxes from these redeveloped sites start coming in, YOUR taxes will more likely remain the same or even shrink!
- People will go where the jobs are. Cities that have been losing population for so long can finally start to rebound.

## What's the Incentive for Redeveloping a Brownfield Site?

Both Missouri and Illinois offer programs to assist in redevelopment. Brownfield grant and loan programs offer tax credits for up to 100% of the cost of cleanup. The federal government through the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) agency has specific programs and resources targeting brownfield cleanup and redevelopment efforts. See the back page of this newsletter for the contact information.

## What's Been Done in the Area So Far?

As difficult as brownfield redevelopment can be, some real progress has already been made in both St. Louis and East St. Louis. On the Illinois side, we can see the recently completed Union Bank, the State Street Shopping Center, and the ongoing riverfront redevelopment.

In Missouri, we can see the results of the Chase Park Plaza redevelopment, the first phase of the St. Louis Commerce Center, and the 210 N. Tucker Building. These projects along with many other ongoing and planned brownfield redevelopment efforts are bringing new jobs, investment, and real hope to our communities


## Upcoming Event!

The **“Partnering for a Healthy Environment Conference”** will help educate the community on environmental, health, and development issues.

When: June 28<sup>th</sup> from 8:30 am to 5:30 pm  
Where: The Gateway Center, One Gateway Drive, Collinsville, Illinois  
Hosted by: E.P.A. (Region 5), Lewis and Clark Community College, Illinois Manufacturing Extension Center.

For more information, contact Noemi Emeric at the E.P.A.  
1-800-621-8431

## Did You Know....

The U.S. Senate just recently approved the “Brownfields Revitalization and Environmental Restoration Act of 2001” (S.350). This bill aims at  cleaning up abandoned and contaminated industrial sites. The new law would provide additional money for cleanup programs and liability protection for innocent parties who had no direct involvement in the original contamination. Final passage by Congress is expected this summer.

## Newsletter Update!

As reported in an earlier newsletter, the Missouri General Assembly considered a bill to require the testing of children for lead poisoning. The bill (SB266) that passed both chambers was a combination of plans sponsored by Senator Pat Dougherty and Rep. Russ Carnahan, both of St. Louis.

The new law will require all children from 6 months to 6 years old living in housing more than 50 years old to be tested for lead poisoning annually. If the bill is signed by Governor Holden, Missouri will join Illinois and eleven other states that have various lead-testing requirements.

The new law will target other “high risk” kids. These include children who live in older houses under renovation and kids who have siblings or playmates who were poisoned. The law will also require nearly all insurance companies in the state to provide coverage for lead testing and would set up a “Childhood Lead Testing Fund” to pay for kids who are uninsured.

## Who Are We? How Can You Contribute?

The Community Environmental Resource Program (CERP) was launched this past September to provide needed environmental information to the people of St. Louis and East St. Louis. CERP is funded through the Environmental Protection Agency's EMPACT program - a national initiative aimed at providing communities across America with better access to information about the environment.

The program's goal is to empower citizens with information about potential environmental hazards. We want to become the community's leading source for environmental information!

CERP cannot do this without the help of the community. If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions, please contact us. **Is there an area of concern that you would like us to address?? Just let us know!**

## Where Can I Get More Information About Brownfields?

### City of St. Louis

Mississippi River Corridor Brownfields Initiative	(314) 622-3400
RCGA Brownfields Committee	(314) 444-1144
Missouri Department of Economic Development	(573) 751-5981
Petroleum Storage Insurance Fund	(573) 522-2352
St. Louis Development Corporation	(314) 622-3400
US Army Corps of Engineers (D. Roush)	(314) 331-8033

### East St. Louis

Mississippi River Corridor Brownfields Initiative	(618) 482-6635
CDBG Operations Corporation	(618) 482-6635
Illinois Dept. of Commerce and Community Affairs	(217) 782-3233

Phone: (314) 421-4220 ext. 236 / (618) 274-2750 ext. 236 Fax: (314) 231-6120 Email: [cerp@ewgateway.org](mailto:cerp@ewgateway.org)  
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