

BROWNFIELDS

Revitalization And Economic Development Program



Former Manufactured Gas Plant Site

Watertown South Dakota

South Dakota
Department of Environment and Natural
Resources
Joe Foss Building
523 East Capitol
Pierre SD 57501-3182

Information

The Former Manufactured Gas Plant site is located at the intersection of 1st Avenue NW and 3rd Street NW. The site consists of an approximate 0.64 acre parcel of vacant land in the central part of Watertown.

The site was developed in 1906 by a group of local investors as the Watertown Gas Company, a coal gasification plant. The plant manufactured gas for lighting and heating using a “carbureted water gas” process. The process used both coal and oil to produce gas. One of the principal byproducts was coal tar.

Coal tar is usually dark reddish to black in color and may have the same viscosity as vegetable oil. The liquid nature of this tar allows it to migrate through soils and appear at different locations from where it leaked or was disposed. It has a very strong odor that many people find similar to mothballs or driveway sealer.

It has been estimated that 56,000 gallons of coal tar may have been generated during gas plant operation. Some of this waste material appears to have been disposed of on site. Surface buildings and tanks associated with the coal gasification plant were removed prior to 1970 but subsurface structures and coal oil contamination remain at the site.

Excavation and off-site disposal is considered the most effective means of addressing the environmental impacts associated with the subsurface structures, rubble and coal tar that was disposed at this location. Since coal tar odor is likely to be an issue during cleanup of the onsite material, air monitoring will be conducted at selected locations. Excavation activities will be discontinued should air quality monitoring indicate that established public health limits are exceeded at the selected locations.

If you would like more information about the Former Manufactured Gas Plant Site project, please contact the following people:

DENR Brownfields Program

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3 AVE NW

1 ST NW

3 ST NW

Former
Manufactured
Gas Plant Site

Former Gas Plant
Waste Disposal
Area

6 ST NW

1 AVE NW

2 ST NW

1 ST NW

4 ST SW

KEMP AVE W

3 ST SW

2 ST SW

1 ST SW

5 ST SW

1 AVE SW