

# Brownfields

South Dakota  
Department of  
Environment and  
Natural Resources

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## Brownfields Stories

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## Brownfields funds can be used for:

- ◆ Phase I Assessments - record searches of the property.
- ◆ Phase II Assessments (soil, ground water, and asbestos testing).
- ◆ Cleanup plans and cost estimates can be developed.
- ◆ In certain circumstances, removal and clean up of identified contamination.

## What is a Brownfields Site?



Brownfields sites are defined as “real property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutants or contamination.”

What does a Brownfields site look like? Is it an abandoned gas station or petroleum bulk site? Maybe it is a salvage yard, rubble site, grain elevator or an abandoned hospital or school? Each community has these types of sites.

## Do You Have A Brownfields Site in Your Community?

In the early 1990s, concerns were expressed nationally that many properties once used for industrial, manufacturing, or other commercial purposes were abandoned or underused due to the suspicion of contamination. Unknown environmental liabilities were keeping developers from restoring these properties to a productive use.

The South Dakota Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has received federal funds to assist communities with the assessment and clean up of abandoned, idle or

underused properties. Whether the property is vacant because of actual environmental contamination or the perception of possible contamination, redevelopment of these areas can increase property values, create jobs and generate local property and sales tax revenues.

Under the state's Brownfields Program, we work with municipalities, realtors, and developers to identify potentially eligible Brownfields sites. Once identified and if the municipality is supportive, DENR uses these federal

funds to hire an environmental contractor to perform record searches and on-site testing and if necessary, develop clean up plans and cost estimates for the property.

In certain situations, DENR can also assist in the cost to clean up the contamination so the property can be redeveloped.

### **These funds require no match from the community!**

If you have a question or would like to learn more about the Brownfields Program, please contact Kim McIntosh at 605-773-3296.

## Huron's Water Park

When Huron University closed its doors in 2005, there was a flurry of committee meetings, strategic planning sessions, and discussion on what would be done with the seven buildings located on the large 15.2-acre property. A number of private entrepreneurs looked at different buildings over the years for a variety of uses. After an extensive amount of research and financial planning, the city of Huron came up with the "Central Park" redevelopment concept for a new aquatic center (Water Park) and the renovation of the Campus Center. To

construct the aquatic center, a number of environmental issues had to be addressed before the campus's old buildings could be torn down. Each building contained asbestos, lead paint and a number of underground storage tanks were identified which needed to be removed. Through the use of the state's Brownfields Program and Abandoned Tank Program, many of the environmental issues were identified and resolved. Today the property hosts a large facility, featuring

a traditional 8-lane competition and recreation pool, lazy river, and leisure pool. In addition, the park area includes a picnic and shade shelters, playground, volleyball and basketball courts and an on-site campground for "destination visitors" to the water park. Through the fund-raising efforts of the community and the state's Brownfields assistance, the aquatic center is an astounding family recreation facility for the community and east-central South Dakota.



## Parkston's Abandoned Gas Station

Gas stations and body shops lined the streets of communities across the country for many years. However, times have changed and many small stations have given way to larger convenience stores. These small gas stations were abandoned. Perceived environmental impacts made lenders, developers and buyers weary of these properties.

In 2012, the city of Parkston requested Brownfields assistance to investigate one of these abandoned gas stations. A records search, soil and ground water sampling and an asbestos survey were performed. The information obtained through the Brownfields Program was extremely helpful in proving the information needed to confirm that environmental impacts were minimal. A buyer has since made an offer with the intent of demolishing the run-down building and redeveloping the property for a new business endeavor. Once redeveloped, the city of Parkston hopes to receive the added benefit of increased tax revenue due to a higher productive use.



## Gary - Former School Transformed



2007



Gary is a small town located along the South Dakota/Minnesota border. The state School for the Blind opened in 1900 and operated until the fall of 1961. After closure of the school, the large beautiful buildings began to deteriorate, roofs caved in, and the grounds became an eyesore to the community. Despite the efforts of the community to save the structure, the only apparent course of action appeared to be demolition.

In 2008, a wind energy entrepreneur purchased the property and began what was described today as a whirlwind transformation. Funds from the Brownfields Program and the state's Abandoned Tank Program were used to remove the abandoned fuel tanks and to assess and clean up the asbestos and lead contamination. Extensive refurbishment of the historic buildings and property took several years of very hard work and commitment.

Today the Buffalo Ridge Resort and Business Center is a charming historic facility. The 37-acre property features a small trout lake, walking trails, a hotel, ballroom, conference center, and a restaurant offering gourmet meals. The facility brings people to the community of Gary from all over the area to attend special events such as destination weddings, Fourth of July celebrations, or just for a weekend get-away.



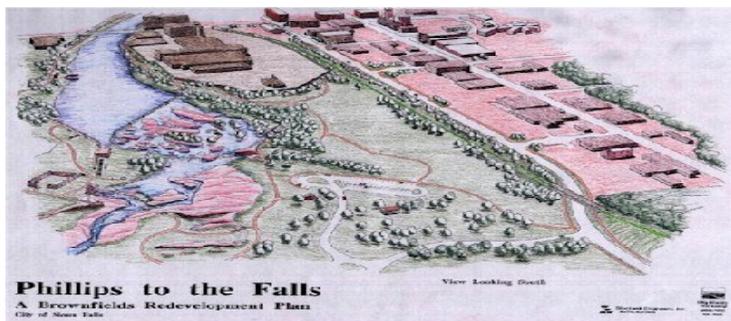
TODAY—Buffalo Ridge Resort and Business Center



## Phillips to the Falls - Brownfields Showcase



Operating salvage yard in 1996



Conceptual plan for the property



TODAY - Phillips Avenue now connects downtown Sioux Falls to Falls Park

For many years, an area in downtown Sioux Falls had been the location of a large salvage business and an industrial railroad hub. Over the years, this area of downtown Sioux Falls had become run-down. Historic operations of the salvage yard and the railroad had impacted soils with lead and other chemical contaminants. In 1996, the city of Sioux Falls received one of the first EPA Brownfields grants awarded in the nation. With the use of the Brownfields grant, Sioux Falls negotiated the land acquisition and developed plans to clean up the property and redevelop the area.

Jumping ahead to 2014, the area known today as the Phillips to the Falls Redevelopment site is a model of what the Brownfields Program can do for a community. The once blighted area is undergoing incredible regrowth. New business centers, office spaces and upscale lofts are being constructed. Adjacent property owners are reinvesting in their property by rehabilitating many of the beautiful quartzite buildings and remodeling many of the other structures in the area.

Downtown Sioux Falls is the city's center for arts business, and culture, with a wide range of entertainment opportunities for dining, and shopping. Thanks to the vision of city leaders to revitalize this portion of downtown Sioux Falls, this area has become a prosperous, safe, and attractive destination for locals and out of town guests. The city's investment in the former blighted area and reinvestment in other areas along the river, has made the downtown a wonderful place to play, work, and live.



Aberdeen	Parker (2)
Alcester	Parkston
Belle Fourche	Redfield (3)
Canistota	Sioux Falls (9)
Canton	Stephan
Custer	Sturgis
Dell Rapids	Turton
Elk Point	Wagner
Gary	Watertown (5)
Huron (2)	Waubay/Day Co
LaBolt	Winner
Madison (2)	Yankton (4)
Mitchell (6)	

Do you have a property in your community where someone said..."We wish we could buy that land and build a grocery store, bank, city park, or community center but we are afraid of what could be buried there?" Then you may have a Brownfields site!



Dell Rapids fire station -2011



## Abandoned Tank Program Assists Communities

Abandoned petroleum tanks can be found throughout our communities. They may be at schools, homes, businesses and farms. These tanks pose numerous issues for property owners: risk of leaking into the ground water (one gallon of gasoline has the potential to render one million gallons of water undrinkable) and the risk of corrosion and collapse, allowing someone or something, to fall into the hole.

For these reasons, buyers, lenders and developers are concerned about the potential liability associated with an abandoned tank. To address these issues, the Abandoned Tank Program was initiated. Under this program, DENR hires a contractor to remove these unwanted petroleum tanks at **no expense to the property owner** (except for resurfacing). To learn more about this very popular program, please give us a call at 605-773-3296.

Contact the Department of Environment and Natural Resources for any questions you may have concerning tanks, spills or contamination.

## Department of Environment & Natural Resources

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We're on the Web!

<http://denr.sd.gov/des/gw/Brownfields>

### Other Important Links:

- DENR's Environmental Events Database - Database of known spills or releases, which may impact properties in your community: <http://denr.sd.gov/spills>
- DENR's Tank Database - Information on regulated aboveground and underground storage tanks in your community: <http://denr.sd.gov/des/gw/tanks/search/Index.asp>
- DENR's Main Website - Information and resources on numerous environmental issues effecting your community: <http://denr.sd.gov>
- Federal Environmental Protection Agency's Brownfields Website - details on the Federal Brownfields Program: <http://www2.epa.gov/region8/brownfields-region-8>