U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Announces $270 Million in Brownfields Grants: Crossett and Russellville, Arkansas Awarded $1 million and $1.5 Million Respectively



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The United States Environmental Protection Agency ("EPA") issued a June 24th news release announcing $270 million in Brownfield grants.

Crossett, Arkansas and Russellville, Arkansas were awarded $1 million and $1.5 million, respectively.

The federal government and many states (including Arkansas) have statutes, regulations, and policies that are intended to address "Brownfields". Brownfields are often referred to as property (improved and unimproved) the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants.

Incentive provisions, funding programs, liability exemptions, and action/cleanup standards have been utilized for a number of years to attempt to reduce the barriers for reuse or redevelopment of Brownfield properties. The goal of Brownfield programs is to encourage redevelopment and investment in such properties to increase the local tax base, facilitate job growth, and utilize existing infrastructure, encourage infield use, and take pressure off of greenspace.

EPA states that the Crossett grant will be used for the following:

- Conduct 15 Phase I and 8 Phase II environmental assessments.
- Develop four cleanup plans and an area-wide plan.
- Conduct two site reuse visions.
- Conduct other reuse planning and community engagement activities.
- Clean up the Crossett Municipal Building, which is contaminated with heavy metals and inorganic contaminants.

Other priority sites are stated to include the 0.75-acre Crossett Auditorium and the 4.19-acre Crossett Learning Center.

The Russellville grant will be used for the following:

- Inventory sites and conduct 28 Phase I and 20 Phase II environmental site assessments.
- Develop seven cleanup plans and support reuse planning and community engagement activities.

The EPA news release also notes:

... Priority sites include a former dry cleaners and two former car sales businesses in Russellville, two vacant commercial properties in Dover, and two historical storefronts in downtown Atkins.

Non-lead coalition members include Pope County and the City of Atkins.

A copy of the EPA news release and the Crossett and Russellville fact sheets can be found here.