



# Brownfield Redevelopment in Rural Communities

West Central Indiana Economic Development District  
Brownfield Assessment Coalition

# WCIEDD Brownfield Assessment Coalition

- Includes Clay, Putnam, Sullivan, Vermillion, and Vigo Counties
- Most activities have been carried out in Cities/Towns of less than 8,000 people
- Sites for assessment are identified by public officials
- Resources used have included the EPA's Brownfields Coalition Assessment Grant, the Indiana Brownfields Trails & Parks Initiative, and the former Indiana Brownfields Site Assessment Grant Incentive and former Brownfields Stipulated Remediation Grant

# Brownfield Impacts on Rural Communities

- Brownfield properties in small communities and rural areas usually involve properties abandoned by the owner and with liens written off by banks not wanting responsibility for any environmental or safety issues.
- These sites usually impact small communities more because they may be a major eyesore that limits any redevelopment opportunities or sites that people fear are dangerously contaminated and pose a threat to health and safety.
- Redevelopment or demolition of such properties or facilities is often the only hope for redevelopment within these communities.
- In most cases town or city officials must take responsibility, and often, ownership of these properties if any action is to be taken.
- This makes careful environmental site assessment essential to determine what action officials should take.

# Community Education



- Good and Consistent Outreach is Necessary for success of the Brownfields Initiative in Rural settings
- Must be prepared to overcome fears there will be agency enforcement
- As a Project Manager, be prepared to translate technical jargon to the general reality of site development
- Fact sheets are helpful tools for public meetings
- Site Status summaries are helpful after each activity (Phase I, limited Phase II, further site characterization, industrial hygiene studies)
- One project might prompt several meetings with different stakeholders such as lead government representative, community representative, property owner, neighborhood, development representatives
- Use successful projects as examples and means to promote more participation in the program

# Types of Sites



# Even Haunted Jails...



# Case Study : City of Clinton

## Former Clinton High School

- Abandoned 3-story turn of the century structure located just east of the CBD in Clinton
- Owned by community theatre group with intentions of rehab.
- Community theatre group ceased to exist and the bank refused to foreclose on the property
- Building became magnet for vandalism, trespassing, fires
- City began considering taking action to reuse or demolish



# Clinton High School

- City Fire Department proposed demolition to make way for the construction of a new firehouse
- EPA Brownfields Coalition funding used to determine issues City would face before undertaking ownership and/or demolition
- With Environmental Site Assessments, Asbestos surveys provided by the grant funding, City has begun the process of applying for the OCRA HUD Community Focus Fund (CFF) grant for demolition
- Use of EPA funds served to confirm the need for demolition, define the scope of demolition, and have provided the basis for the CFF application

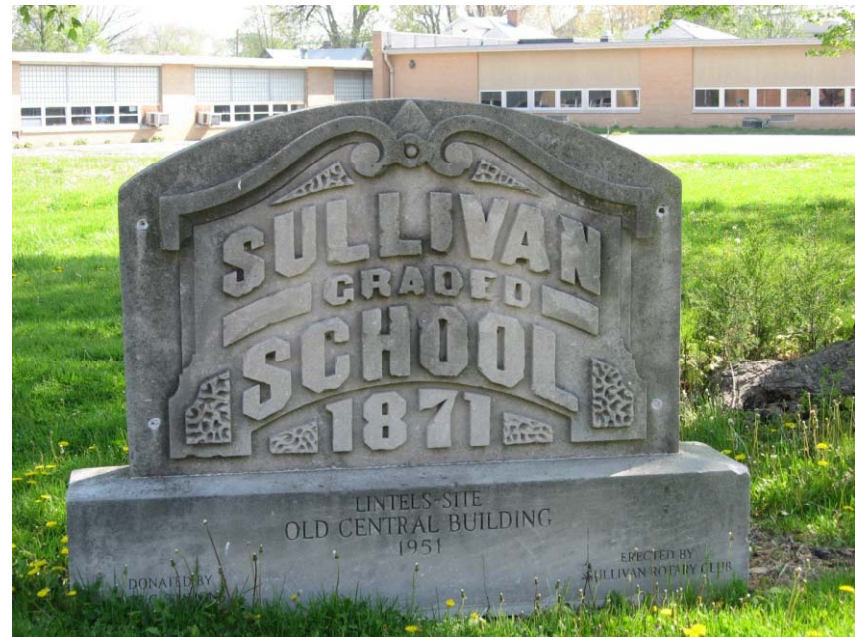




# City of Sullivan

## Central Elementary School

- Former School located on a complete block in center of City
- Portion of building built on old landfill
- Closed decades ago-facility was donated to senior citizens group in the 1990's
- Rehab/maintenance costs overwhelmed the group- deeded the facility over to the City
- Building abandoned, building appeared to be sinking in area over landfill
- Windows broken, interior of school deteriorating



# Central Elementary

- City was granted funding by IBP to conduct Phase I and limited Phase II
- Given data from these reports, IBP issued Site Status Letter with deed restriction (no cleanup took place)
- Restrictions to the deed alarmed developers for future construction
- EPA funds being used to collect additional data including geotechnical studies to determine footprint of landfill and quantify extent of soil contamination
- The goal is to modify the deed restriction with more comprehensive data or if cleanup required, apply for EPA Brownfields cleanup funding
- Once remediation is complete a local developer is interested in developing the block with housing and retail space.



# Town of Shelburn

## Grain Elevator Remediation

- Late 1990's: the grain elevator caught on fire and burned for months. After being extinguished, it reignited and burned for several more weeks until IDEM permanently extinguished it.
- For years the site remained unmaintained and what was left of the grain was causing odors that concerned town residents
- Owner had inherited it, lived out of town and did not maintain the property
- In 2005 the Town decided to take action to identify and resolve issues posed by abandoned grain elevator site



***Abandoned Grain Elevator located in the center of the Town of Shelburn***

# Grain Elevator Remediation

- The Town applied for and received funding from the IFA Brownfield Program that paid for the environmental assessment of the site.
- When completed, the assessment showed that the elevator did not pose any threat to residents but did contain low levels of arsenic and lead contaminants in the soil.
- The assessment did uncover fuel contamination from an old fuel bulk plant located adjacent to the property.
- The Town was awarded \$ 164,413 from the IFA Brownfield Program to remediate the site.
- Two things happened as a result of the remediation:
  - The site has been cleared for future development.(Which is especially important because the site has a rail siding.)
  - The bulk plant which had been contaminating soil on the site and adjoining properties was dismantled and hauled away.

# Lessons Learned & Some Helpful Hints

- Make sure you have a good Site Access Agreement Template to use—much of the work can include trenching, drilling, sampling
- Select a consultant familiar with the Federal **and** State process
- Talk and brainstorm with your EPA or Indiana Brownfields Program Manager frequently—they have good ideas and resources!
- Combine outreach/education and project status with other business matters when attending regularly scheduled public meetings



# Questions?

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