

Rockline, Inc.

PUB-RR-730

June, 2005

Rockline, Inc. (Previously R-Way Furniture)

740 South Commerce Street,
Sheboygan, WI
Sheboygan County

3.6 Acres

Location: Downtown Sheboygan on the Sheboygan River, seven blocks from the harbor.

For more than 100 years the R-Way property in downtown Sheboygan was a thriving business establishment. Thanks to state and local clean-up efforts, the site once again has become an economic engine for this southeastern Wisconsin community.

History

Very few businesses in Sheboygan rival the R-Way Company for long-time local roots. The company began manufacturing wooden furniture in 1884, at the same time Sheboygan's first law enforcement agency opened its doors, and kept making furniture there for more than 100 years.

However, like many other industries in that part of the state, the property became abandoned in the 1990s, and lay idle for eight years prior to the discovery of metals and polycyclic aromatic

hydrocarbons (PAHs) in the soil, and mercury contamination in the groundwater.

Investigation & Cleanup

Under an emergency action in 1999, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) removed and properly disposed of about 530 drums and abandoned containers. The drums were either empty or they contained various contents related to machine maintenance and furniture manufacturing.



The R-Way furniture site prior to redevelopment. The company first began manufacturing wooden furniture on the property in 1884 (photo by John Feeney, DNR).

Spills staff with the Remediation and Redevelopment (RR) Program and EPA determined that a public health and safety threat had existed due to the fire potential in the building.



Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Remediation and Redevelopment Program

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To help determine the extent of contamination, extensive soil borings and monitoring wells were drilled and test pits were excavated. Within the first phase of remediation, workers removed and disposed of more than 740 tons of asbestos containing materials along with more than 1,000 tons of mercury and PAH-contaminated materials. During the second phase, nearly 5,000 tons of PAH-contaminated soil was removed.

Redevelopment

Today Rockline Industries, one of the largest suppliers of coffee filters in North America, operates a facility on the former R-way property.

Construction on an additional warehouse to Rockline's existing plant was completed in January 2003. The new 100,000 square-foot building cost \$2 million and provides approximately 124 jobs to the Sheboygan community.

Financing, Liability & Technical Assistance

The city of Sheboygan received a \$30,000 DNR Brownfields Site Assessment Grant in 2000 to help jump-start redevelopment at the brownfield. In 2001, the Department of Commerce awarded a \$500,000 brownfields grant to aid in the cleanup and remediation of the site.

Contacts

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The new Rockline Industries facility, one of the largest suppliers of coffee filters in North America (photo by John Feeney, DNR).

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