

Former Metalfab Facility

PUB-RR-735

August, 2005

Former Metalfab Facility

240 North Birdsey St.
Columbus, WI
Columbia County

2.36 Acres

**Location: Downtown Columbus,
adjacent to the Canadian Pacific rail line**

Columbus' downtown commercial district and its Main Street historic district are both found on the National Register of Historic Places. Located within these two unique areas is the former Metalfab facility, a privately held business that went bankrupt just at the time when communities and developers became interested in cleaning up and redeveloping these contaminated sites, now known as "brownfields."

History

The Metalfab Company was housed on this property in a single-story manufacturing building, built in 1950. The owner ran a custom metal manufacturing and paint business used to fabricate and paint metal construction and agricultural equipment. Metalfab operated in Columbus for 40 years until 1990, when the facil-

ity was closed. Metalfab went bankrupt in the early 1990s, leading to the abandonment and vandalism of the building.

Investigation & Cleanup

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR), through a federal program called the Brownfields Environmental Assessment Program (BEAP), completed Phase I and Phase II Environmental Site Assessments at Metalfab in 1998.



The Metalfab brownfield site, located in downtown Columbus, before cleanup and redevelopment (photo by Paul Kozol, DNR).

The developer investigated soil and groundwater contamination, and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) were found in groundwater at wells located north and southwest of the building.

The soil was contaminated with polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and petroleum products.

Fluorescent light tubes, ballasts, abandoned



Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Remediation and Redevelopment Program

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metal equipment as well as asbestos containing materials were also found on the property. All abandoned materials were removed and disposed of or recycled.

Ninety-nine tons of contaminated PCB and PAH soil was removed and land-filled. Any residual contaminated at the site was covered with clean soil.



The new building houses many businesses including a textile scrap company (DNR photo).

In 2000, city officials received a \$29,000 Brownfields Site Assessment Grant (SAG) from the DNR's Remediation and Redevelopment Program. The SAG was used to remove and dispose of abandoned tanks and transformers.

Contacts

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Redevelopment

Once the remediation at Metalfab was complete, several commercial and light industrial tenants have now occupied the building. GAR Plastics, an industrial and textile scrap company, is renting space at this property, as well as C-N-W Solutions, a recreational vehicle installation and repair company.

This redevelopment has put the facility back on the tax rolls, increased the property value by \$200,000 and created 15-35 new jobs for the community.

Financial, Liability, Technical Assistance

In 1998, the developer received a Brownfields Grant from the Wisconsin Department of Commerce for \$167,000, and the city created an Environmental Remediation Tax Incremental Finance (ER TIF) district for the property.

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