

# North Barstow Redevelopment

PUB-RR-773

August, 2007

## City of Eau Claire's North Barstow Redevelopment

Eau Claire, WI  
Eau Claire County

15 acres

**Location:** In the center of the city at the confluence of the Chippewa and Eau Claire rivers

A former manufactured gas plant and foundry/sawmill, the new Phoenix Park area includes a credit union, multi-use Park Pavilion, amphitheater and hiking/biking trail.

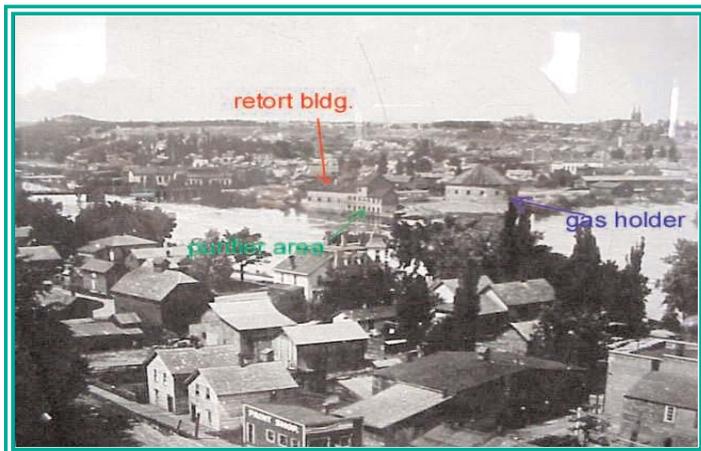
### History

This Eau Claire brownfield consisted of many properties, all scattered along the confluence of the Chippewa and Eau Claire rivers. In 1875, the Phoenix Manufacturing Company built an iron foundry and machine shop, producing sawmill and gristmill machinery and other products, on a five-acre site along the Chippewa River near the confluence.

In the 1920's, another company purchased the facility and continued manufacturing machinery until 1951, when the Phoenix Steel Company bought the property for salvaging metal,

including lead batteries. In 1971, the site was abandoned, leaving contamination from nearly 100 years of industrial operations.

Nearby on the Eau Claire riverside, another section of waterfront property was used for railroads and sewer pipe manufacturing. In



The Eau Claire downtown in 1935. The North Barstow Redevelopment is located at center, where the Eau Claire and Chippewa rivers meet (DNR file photo).

1901, a manufactured gas plant was operated by the Eau Claire Gas & Light Company until 1923 when Northern States Power (now Xcel Energy) took it over. With the exception of an office building operated by NSP, the site had otherwise become abandoned by 1963, requiring significant cleanup.

### Investigation and Cleanup

The city of Eau Claire took ownership of the tax delinquent Phoenix Steel portion of the brownfield area in 1981. Site investigations revealed lead contamination at levels well above acceptable state standards. In 1994, the city



Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources  
Remediation and Redevelopment Program

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<http://dnr.wi.gov/org/aw/rr>



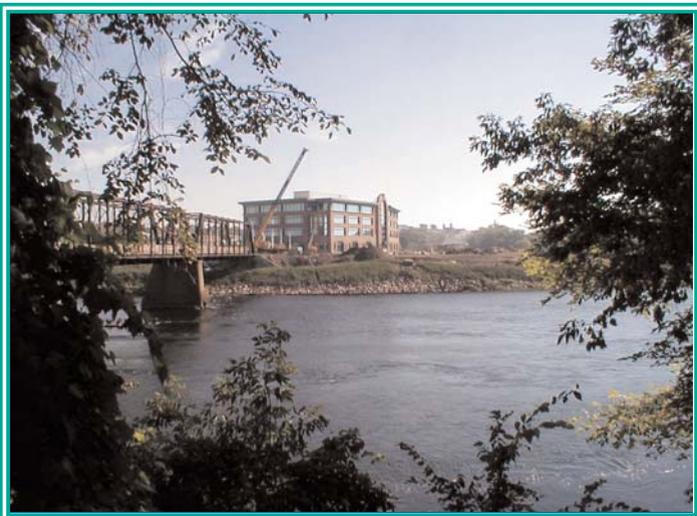
joined forces with the DNR's Remediation and Redevelopment (RR) Program to cleanup the site. More than 7,600 cubic yards of lead contaminated soil was excavated and treated. The treated soil was placed on-site and covered with 20 inches of clay and four inches of topsoil, then seeded. Meanwhile, on the southern end of the brownfield, NSP completed environmental site assessments in 1985. The company discovered soil and groundwater contamination, including coal tars, cyanide and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH's). In 2002, the company began cleanup activities, including the removal of more than 12,000 tons of contaminated soil.

## Redevelopment

Today the four-story Royal Credit Union office building now stands on the property, parallel to the Eau Claire and Chippewa rivers, and three businesses there employ 265 people. An 11,200 square-foot park pavilion hosts the Eau Claire Farmers' Market, and the Chippewa Valley Bike Trail extends along both riverbanks. East of the pavilion, \$9 million has been designated for condominium and business construction.

## Financial, Liability, Technical Assistance

In addition to the \$1 million Xcel Energy spent on cleanup, more than \$2.1 million in state and



The Royal Credit Union after redevelopment was complete (DNR photo).

federal funding was provided to the city to facilitate redevelopment, including:

- a \$100,000 DNR Brownfields Site Assessment Grant (SAG) for investigation and demolition of the former Xcel Energy buildings;
- \$200,000 from the state environmental fund to help the city with the Phoenix Steel cleanup;
- a \$750,000 Department of Commerce brownfields grant for acquisition, investigation, demolition and redevelopment of the former manufactured gas plant site;
- \$625,800 in DNR Stewardship grants to facilitate the purchase of the park property, and a \$5,000 DNR Green Space and Public Facilities Grant for environmental cleanup of the Farmers' Market Pavilion area;
- \$242,185 from the DNR's Urban Rivers Program for trail development; and
- a \$223,500 U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) grant to help with the construction of the Farmers' Market Pavilion.

In addition, in 2002 the city and Royal Credit Union received DNR liability clarification letters that summarized potential environmental risks at the site, and in 2005 the Credit Union also received a DNR Voluntary Party Liability Exemption (VPLE) clarification letter. Along with a VPLE Certificate of Completion, the package limits liability on past contamination for current and future property owners.

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