

# Riverside Park/Leach Amphitheater

PUB-RR-777

November, 2007

## Riverside Park/Leach Amphitheater (former manufactured gas plant site)

305 Ceape Avenue  
Oshkosh, Wisconsin  
Winnebago County

8 Acres

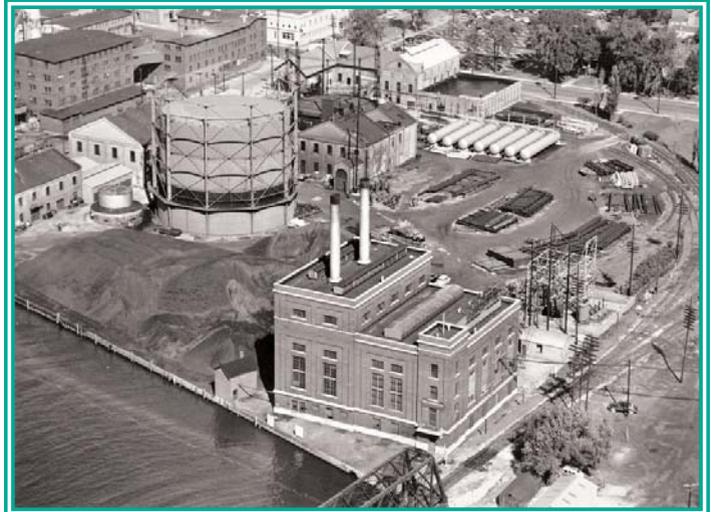
**Location: Along the Fox River, just  
upstream from Lake Winnebago**

Creating an inviting green space for recreation and designing an entertainment spotlight that draws residents and visitors alike, all from the remains of a former manufactured gas facility, is one of the more creative brownfields success stories celebrated by the city of Oshkosh.

### History

From the mid-1800s until about 1950, gas was used as the primary energy source for lighting and heating homes. The gas came from coal and was produced from facilities known as manufactured gas plants (MGPs). In Oshkosh, an MGP facility was constructed in the 1870s, and by 1903 was operated by Wisconsin Public Service (originally Oshkosh Gas & Light

Company). Over the years of gas plant production, the by-product coal tar, a thick, black goeey substance, contaminated the property's soil and groundwater.



Former Wisconsin Public Service (WPS) manufactured gas plant, circa 1953 (photo courtesy city of Oshkosh).

The Oshkosh site consisted of several buildings and structures, including two gas holders, four tar wells, coal storage areas, above ground and underground storage tanks, propane tanks, steam plant, gas purifier and boiler house. Other operations that occurred within a portion of the eight-acre site included a furniture factory, a railroad and lumber storage.

### Investigation & Cleanup

In 2002, WPS cleanup activities included demolition of buildings, disposal of 4,000 tons of debris and excavation of underground gas holders and contaminated soils. Approximately 23,500 tons of material were thermally treated and redistributed on-site. A groundwater trench



Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources  
Remediation and Redevelopment Program

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recovery system was constructed to control groundwater flow and pump contaminated water to the city's sanitary system for treatment. An engineered soil cap was installed to provide adequate stormwater drainage.

## **Redevelopment**

With the completion of remediation activities, in December 2003, the city purchased the property for redevelopment. City officials focused on creating a recreational greenspace on the former brownfield, and in 2005 completed construction on a riverfront walkway and amphitheater that includes concession buildings, landscaping and parking.

## **Financial, Liability, Technical Assistance**

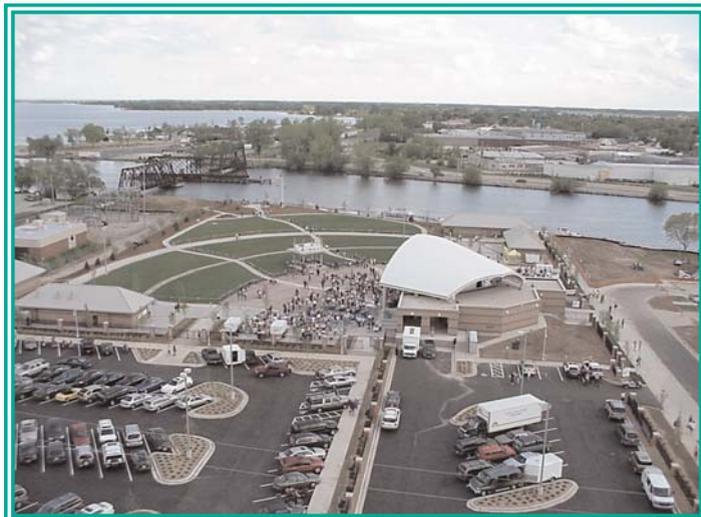
In addition to private funding for the redevelopment, the city also received a \$200,000 DNR Green Space and Public Facilities Grant, a Department of Commerce \$25,000 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and a \$59,895 EPA Brownfield Site Assessment Grant.

Throughout the project, the DNR's Remediation and Redevelopment (RR) Program staff reviewed project plans and reports and oversaw the city's remediation activities.

## **Contacts**

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The Riverside Park/Leach Amphitheater, opening night of Waterfest, May 2005 (photo courtesy city of Oshkosh).