

# DeForest Parks Automotive

PUB-RR-781

October 2010

## DeForest Parks Automotive

313 East Holum Street  
DeForest, WI  
Dane County

Less than 1 acre

### Location: Downtown DeForest

Before becoming a brownfield, this site was an active filling station since the 1930's, and with the DNR's assistance became the city's public safety building.

### History

The village of DeForest is named after Isaac DeForest, an early resident who grew wheat in the area prior to the Civil War. The community is a rapidly growing suburb 20 minutes north of Madison, with a population estimated at more than 8,000.

In the village's most recent comprehensive plan, local officials acknowledge the importance of including brownfields redevelopment in their economic development goals:

"Assertively pursue continued revitalization of the downtown..."

Blueprint DeForest: Village of DeForest Comprehensive Plan (p.7)

The village's Town Square redevelopment project is roughly a large city block in size and features 68 apartments, 15,300 square feet of commercial space and several public facilities, including a new library and public safety building. The area consists of many properties with a wide variety of redevelopment needs - some require a mild facelift, others need major cleanup.



The DeForest Parks Automotive site prior to cleanup. Cleanup activities began in 1995 and were completed in 1998 (photo courtesy DNR).

### Investigation and Cleanup

The Parks Automotive site is located in the southeast corner of The Town Square project area. Site investigation of the property in 1990 uncovered petroleum contamination in the soil and groundwater. Three leaking underground storage tanks (LUSTs) and one small waste oil tank were removed.

Additional cleanup efforts began in October, 1995, with the removal of free product, which is



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undissolved gasoline floating on top of the water table. Between 1995 and 1999, a total of 275 gallons of free product were removed and recycled. Also, more than 1,000 tons of soil were excavated and a dual air and soil recovery system was installed in July of 1998. The system removed more than 780 pounds of volatile organic compounds (VOCs).



*The DeForest Public Safety Building includes offices for the police and fire departments (photo courtesy DNR).*

## Redevelopment

The property was bought by the village of DeForest in April, 1996. The city razed the Parks Automotive Services building and finished construction of the village's public safety building in 1998. Residual contamination is now capped by this new building, concrete walkways and parking lot, further protecting the public and the environment against any direct contact with residual soil contamination. The public safety facility employs 31 full-time staff and more than 40 volunteers, serving the needs of a growing community.

## Financial, Liability, Technical Assistance

To help with the cleanup and redevelopment, DeForest received a \$20,000 DNR Brownfields Site Assessment Grant (SAG). The Department of Commerce provided a \$835,000 Petroleum

Environmental Cleanup Fund Award (PECFA) and a \$175,000 brownfields grant, and the village leveraged additional funds by establishing its first Tax Increment Finance district (TIF).

In 2003, the village also received technical assistance and a Certificate of Completion (COC) through the Voluntary Party Liability Exemption (VPLE) process, part of the DNR's Remediation and Redevelopment (RR) Program. Village officials demonstrated that the site had been cleaned up to the state standards and had minimized any harmful effects from the property's contamination.

Finally, because the site had residual groundwater contamination at the time of closure, village officials purchased mandatory environmental insurance, which covers certain state cleanup and investigation costs if natural attenuation fails to remediate residual contaminants. Natural attenuation employs naturally occurring biological, chemical and physical processes to reduce environmental contaminants in soils and groundwater.

The success of DeForest's downtown redevelopment is a testament to the community's foresight and ingenuity. The payoff for this enormous investment is a cleaner environment and a more vibrant downtown.

## Contacts

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