

Old Ironsides Battery

PUB-RR-858

February, 2010

Old Ironsides Battery

W3415 HWY 67
Ashford, WI
Fond Du Lac County

3.78 Acres

Location: A rural commercial property in Fond Du Lac County, east of Campbellsport.

Much like the famous US Navy Ship it is named after, Old Ironsides in Ashford needed a major overhaul to give this brownfield site a renewed purpose.

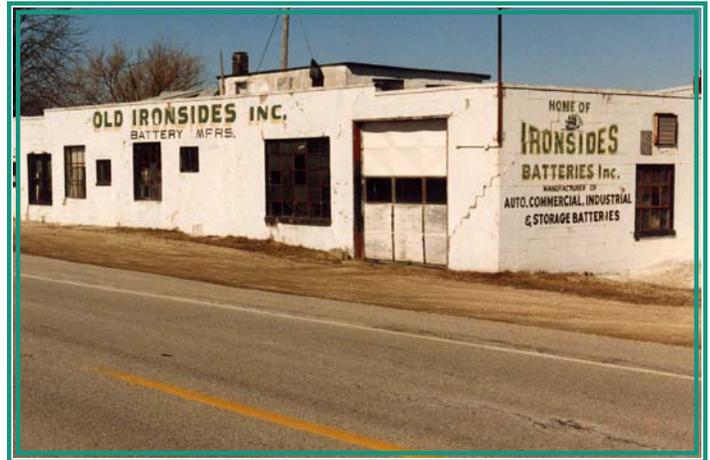
History

The Old Ironsides Battery property has been in Fond du Lac County outside the city limits of Campbellsport since the late 1930s. The facility started as a car repair facility. Quickly, the owners shifted gears and began production of lead-acid Farmlight batteries that were encased in glass tubes the size of 5-gallon jugs. By the early 1940s, rural electrification made Farmlight batteries unnecessary and the facility started making car and train locomotive lead-acid batteries. The battery manufacturing and reclamation business went closed in 1990. The site remained mostly vacant and continued to decay for nearly 10 years.

Investigation and Cleanup

After failed attempts at selling the property, Fond du Lac County considered taking the property under tax delinquency. Officials were concerned in regard to the amount of abandoned containers left in the building. In 2000, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) requested and received approval for assistance from the US EPA to conduct a removal action to mitigate the threat posed at the property, which included high lead levels and asbestos pipe insulation found on the floors.

The removal involved characterization and removal of three sump pit contents and more than 48 containers and drums, sweeping and pressure washing the interior



Environmental contamination initially prevented the former Old Ironsides Battery Company from being purchased by a new owner (photo courtesy DNR).



Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Remediation and Redevelopment Program

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of the new building, demolishing the old building containing lead dust that could not be effectively cleaned, and disposing of building demolition debris and associated lead contaminated soil. The county completed its site investigation and cleanup in 2004.

Redevelopment

In 2006, a potential purchaser came forward with the vision to see this dilapidated site as a new home to expand his business. West Bend Machine Works, a business which custom-machines metal parts, bought the property in 2006. This put the property back on the tax rolls and allowed the owner to expand and add six new positions to the company. Refurbishing the long vacant property included front restoration, a new roof, new offices and landscaping.

Following remediation and redevelopment, the property value was listed at \$126,200 – an increase of \$76,500.

Financial, Liability, Technical Assistance

The EPA removal, in the amount of \$390,000, was significant in funding the site cleanup. Fond du Lac county contributed \$20,000 for site investigation and other work.

Coinciding with the closure, Fond du Lac County also received a \$100,000 Department of Commerce brownfields grant to finish the site and assist with the redevelopment.

Contacts

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A relocated machine shop has thrived and expanded at the site of the former battery processor (photo courtesy of Mike Wisnefske, West Bend Machine Works).



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