

Potosi Brewery

PUB-RR-860

February, 2010

Potosi Brewery

211 S. Main St.
Potosi, WI
Grant County

1.94 Acres

Location: The brewery sits at the end of Potosi's long and winding main street, close to the Mississippi River.

Concerned citizens save a unique piece of Wisconsin's cultural heritage, attracting the National Brewery Museum and spurring tourism.

History

Founded in 1852, the Potosi Brewery was in continuous operation for 120 years. During that time it served not only as a place of employment, but also as a source of community pride and identification. Despite the brewery and neighboring bottling house being placed on the National Registry of Historic Places, the brewery fell into disrepair after it closed in 1972.

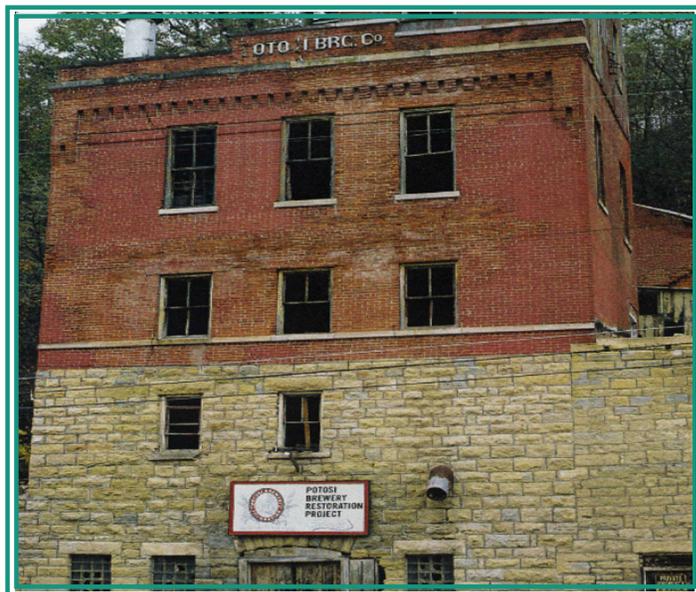
The Potosi Brewery Foundation formed in 2000 with the goal of restoring the building. Although the original stone and brick structure was solid, additions to the building in 1916 and 1933 were dangerously unstable because many of the iron pillars needed to support the three story building were removed for salvage. Lead and asbestos containing materials were suspected in the

additions, but investigators could not access the contamination due to the deteriorated state of the buildings.

Investigation and Cleanup

In 2003, the village of Potosi received a grant to raze the dangerous structures and investigate other possible contamination. Demolition confirmed asbestos in the roofing materials and tar adhesives on the walls and ceiling surfaces, as well as asbestos-containing insulation surrounding brewing equipment.

Soil and groundwater testing detected low levels of petroleum-related compounds, but lead and arsenic concentrations in soil were detected above state standards. Groundwater samples also contained lead and arsenic but were not above state enforcement standards.



Before redevelopment, the Potosi Brewery was a historic building on the verge of collapse (photo courtesy DNR).



Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Remediation and Redevelopment Program

PO Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707
<http://dnr.wi.gov/org/aw/rr>



Southwest Wisconsin has higher levels of naturally occurring lead and arsenic, and levels found at Potosi Brewery are likely due to the geology of the region. The concentrations did not pose a significant threat to human health and the environment, and therefore did not require remediation.



The remodeled Potosi Brewery has attracted visitors and improved surrounding businesses (photo courtesy DNR).

Redevelopment

After the demolition and removal of hazardous materials, the Potosi Brewery Foundation was able to begin restoration of the building. The building, encompassing more than 28,000 square feet, required a new roof, shoring up of walls and new plumbing and electric.

In 2004, Potosi beat out Milwaukee and St. Louis when the American Breweriana Association selected The Potosi Brewery as the home of the National Brewery Museum. The building also houses the Potosi Brewery Museum, the Great River Road Interpretive Center and a restaurant and gift shop. The gushing artesian spring, while unsafe for use as a drinking water source, is an attractive water feature for guests to enjoy as they dine on the outdoor patio.

The project has been a boom for tourism related businesses in the area. A Potosi Brewery Foundation board member and craftsman restored the neighboring Bottling House with handcrafted woods. Two residential apartments now sit above the new gift shop.

Financial, Liability, Technical Assistance

The entire Potosi Brewery redevelopment project will ultimately cost approximately \$7.5 million, with the funding coming from grants and private sources.

One public source of funding was a \$30,000 Brownfields Site Assessment Grant from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Remediation and Redevelopment Program (RR Program). The Program also provided technical assistance.

The Potosi Brewery Foundation received other funding, such as a \$400,000 Brownfields Grant from the Department of Commerce, \$250,000 from The American Breweriana Association, \$449,574 from the Federal Highway Administration's National Scenic Byways Program, a \$400,000 challenge grant from the Jeffris Family Foundation and \$17,745 from the Dubuque Racing Association.

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