

Doberstein Lumber & Fence

PUB-RR-879

May 2010

Doberstein Lumber & Fence

**W6617 State Highway 64
Medford, WI
Taylor County**

46 Acres

**Location: A rural section of the city of
Medford.**

**Several government agencies partner
to clean up serious contamination at a
former sawmill and wood
treatment facility.**

History

Between 1970 and 1990 the Doberstein property near Medford was used for farming and as a sawmill and wood treatment facility. The property was abandoned upon the owner's death.

In 1996, Taylor County assumed ownership of the property through tax delinquency.

Investigation and Cleanup

Phase I and Phase II environmental site assessments were conducted in 1992. The assessments revealed wood treatments on the property that incorporated the use of

hazardous substances, including copper, chromium and arsenic, which left the soil and groundwater contaminated. There was also a leaking underground storage tank (LUST) that contaminated soil on the property with fuel oil.

The contamination was serious enough to warrant emergency removal action activities by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Work included removal of the LUST, removal of dip tanks, decontamination of the treatment facility buildings, treatment and disposal of contaminated water and soil, removal of non-hazardous waste and installation of a chain link fence.

The Northwest Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NWRPC) utilized a company that specialized in an effective method of cleaning up the type of hazardous substances located at



The abandoned former sawmill property in Medford was left with serious contamination issues (photo courtesy DNR).



Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Remediation and Redevelopment Program

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the property. In 1998, several of the remaining structures on site were remediated and repaired using funds from the Wisconsin Department of Commerce.

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) Remediation and Redevelopment (RR) Program reviewed all remedial activities and granted closure for the property in 2001, with the provision that barriers remain in place to prevent human contact with residual contamination (e.g. a cement cap).

Redevelopment

Large buildings and other infrastructure made the Doberstein site ideal for industrial use. Taylor County auctioned off the property in 2001. The site is now a recycling facility, providing 25 jobs.



The Doberstein property, remediated and remodeled, is now the Commercial Recycling Corporation recycling facility (photo courtesy DNR).

Financial, Liability, Technical Assistance

The DNR's RR Program provided both financial and technical assistance during remediation work at the former Doberstein Lumber property. DNR spent \$700,000 in state-funded response and additional funds for site assessment through the former Brownfields Environmental Assessment Program (BEAP).

As owner of the property, Taylor County worked with the RR Program to enter the site into the Voluntary Party Liability Exemption Program (VPLE). When the remediation work was approved by RR staff, the county received a Certificate of Completion signifying that they were no longer liable for any known past contamination at the site.

In addition, Taylor County forgave \$60,000 in back taxes. The EPA contributed \$825,000 in emergency assistance. Commerce provided an additional \$175,000 in brownfields funds.

The NWRPC acted as a liaison between all of the parties involved, and contributed a \$30,000 brownfields grant.

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