

Quality Wood

PUB-RR-913

August 2011

Quality Wood

1601 E. Lessard Street
Prairie du Chien, WI
Crawford County

15 acres

Location: An industrial property on the rural edge of the city of Prairie du Chien.

Clever collaboration in Prairie du Chien allows two businesses to expand at one brownfield property.

History

Quality Wood Treatment Company, Inc was a successful, family-run wood treating business in Prairie du Chien. The company operated in the same location for 30 years, beginning in 1973.

Quality Wood built its business by processing lumber using a pressure treating process, which involved a number of chemicals. When the company stopped operations in 2003, city planners believed the property had good potential as a landing spot for other local businesses looking to expand. However, getting there would require addressing underlying contamination concerns.

Investigation and Cleanup

Due to the nature of the wood-treating business, environmental work had been conducted previously at the Quality Wood site to address chemical releases. In 1991, three underground storage tanks were removed from the site, but no

residual contamination was found. Additionally, limited amounts of contaminated soil were removed from a portion of the property, prior to the business closing.



The former Quality Wood site presented an opportunity for the city of Prairie du Chien to retain thriving businesses (photo courtesy DNR).

In 2006, the city of Prairie du Chien obtained permission to begin site assessment work on the property. A site investigation followed. Testing at various locations on the property revealed chromium and pentachlorophenol (PCP) contamination in the groundwater. Also, the soil was found to be contaminated with chromium, arsenic, copper, PCP and polyaromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs).

A remedial action plan was developed to address these concerns. Certain areas of contaminated soils were excavated and moved to a licensed hazardous waste landfill. Other areas of contaminated soil were remediated in place, with asphalt, gravel and the building's foundation serving as a cap. Groundwater contamination was addressed through the injection of calcium polysulfide and capping to prevent infiltration.



Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Remediation and Redevelopment Program

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



Redevelopment

Redevelopment of the former Quality Wood site was an important component of the city of Prairie du Chien Redevelopment Authority's (RDA) Gateway Project: a redevelopment effort aimed at beautifying the entrances to the city, while creating good jobs.

The property was eventually divided into three parcels. One parcel served as a new home for Wolf Machine. The city worked with the machine parts company to move their former operations to this site, thereby allowing the company room to grow, and allowing for a more attractive development in their downtown location. As a result of the move, the company added four new jobs.

Another parcel was sold to United Forest Products, located next door. The company purchased approximately ten acres and expanded its operations. The former owner retained the remaining parcel.



United Forest Products is one of two companies that was able to expand on the former Quality Wood site (photo courtesy DNR).

Financial, Liability, Technical Assistance

The success of this project is due mainly to the cooperation of many parties, including the city of Prairie du Chien, the RDA, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the Wisconsin Department of Commerce, and the private companies involved.

A DNR Remediation and Redevelopment (RR) Program project manager provided important

technical assistance and advice during the assessment and remediation. The assistance included a General Liability Clarification Letter from the DNR, explaining who is considered liable for contamination on the property.

RR Program staff worked with the RDA to provide needed financial assistance. The RDA was awarded two "large" Brownfield Site Assessment Grants (SAG); receiving \$100,000 in 2007 and \$75,000 in 2008. These funds helped the RDA conduct a Phase II Environmental Site Assessment, a site investigation and demolish buildings which hindered the investigation. Two Ready for Reuse funding awards (\$344,917 total) supported the cleanup portion of the project.

The RR Program and RDA worked to enroll the Quality Wood site into the state's Voluntary Party Liability Exemption (VPLE) process. Once the remediation of the site was deemed complete by the DNR, the RDA was issued a Certificate of Completion (COC). This certificate signifies that the site was cleaned up to state standards, and relieves the property owner, or future owners, from liability for any past contamination.

The city was a driving force in completing this project. One important step was issuing a blight determination, which allowed the city to take ownership without incurring liability for the environmental contamination. The city also created an Environmental Tax Incremental Financing District (ERTIF) to assist with remediation expenses.

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