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U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: Administrator Wheeler/Region 6 Administrator McQueen Tour Arkansas Brownfields Sites/Water Projects/Meet with Agricultural Partners

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United States Environmental Protection Agency (“EPA”) Administrator Andrew Wheeler and Region 6 Administrator Ken McQueen visited Arkansas on November 19th and 20th.

EPA news releases indicated that during their visit they toured Brownfields sites and water projects.

On November 19th the Administrator and Regional Administrator were stated to have toured Brownfields sites which are described as:

... the “Creative Corridor” transforming four neglected blocks of Main Street in downtown Little Rock, Arkansas thanks to historic tax credits and EPA Brownfields funding.

Officials accompanying the Administrator and Regional Administrator on the Brownfields tour included:

- Arkansas Department of Energy and Environment Secretary Becky Keogh
- Arkansas Senate Public Health, Welfare and Labor Committee Chairman Missy Irvine
- Arkansas Public Health, Welfare and Labor Committee Chair Jack Ladyman
- Pulaski County elected officials
- Arkansas Department of Energy and Environment staff
- United States Senator John Boozman staff
- United States Senator Tom Cotton staff
- University States Representative French Hill staff

Many states (including Arkansas) and the federal government have statutes, regulations and policies that are intended to address “brownfields.” Brownfields are also often referred to as real property (improved and unimproved), the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of hazardous substances, pollutants or contaminants.

Incentive provisions, liability exemptions, funding programs, and action/cleanup standards have been utilized for a number of years to attempt to reduce the barriers for reuse or redevelopment of brownfield properties. The goal of the Brownfield Programs is to encourage redevelopment investment in such

properties to increase the local tax base, facilitate job growth, utilize existing infrastructure, encourage infield, and take pressure off greenspace.

Various Brownfields sites that have been the subject of redevelopment in the Creative Corridor are described in the news release.

The November 20th activities are stated to have included Administrator Wheeler's announcement of a grant of \$3 million in funding to the Arkansas Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Commission to address state water qualities. Further, there was a tour of the Grand Prairie Farming and Water Company, LLC project and a roundtable discussion at L.T.D. Farms in Stuttgart which included:

- Arkansas Attorney General Leslie Rutledge
- Arkansas Department of Energy and Environment Secretary Becky Keogh
- Arkansas Secretary of Agriculture Wes Ward
- Arkansas Farm Bureau President Rich Hillman
- Arkansas Senate Public Health, Welfare, Arkansas House Agriculture, Forestry, and Economic Development Committee Chair Dan Douglas
- Staff from United States Senator Boozman's office
- Staff from United States Senator Tom Cotton's office
- Staff from United States Representative Bruce Westerman's office

A copy of the November 19th news release can be downloaded [here](#) and the November 20th [here](#).