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Brownfields/Arkansas: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Announces Chicot County and Western Arkansas Planning & Development District Grants

06/02/2021

The Region 6 Office of the United States Environmental Protection Agency (“EPA”) announced two Brownfield grants related to Arkansas.

EPA is providing \$300,000 to each of the following public entities:

- Chicot County, Arkansas
- Western Arkansas Planning & Development District

Many states (including Arkansas) and the federal government have statutes, regulations and policies that are intended to address “Brownfields.” Brownfields are 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 the redevelopment investment in such properties to increase the local tax base, facilitate job growth, utilize existing infrastructure, encourage infield, and take pressure off greenspace.

The previously referenced grants to Chicot County and the Western Arkansas Planning & Development District are stated by EPA to be funded through its Multipurpose, Assessment, and Cleanup grants.

Chicot County is planning to use the \$300,000 to conduct environmental site assessments, focusing on the cities of Eudora and Lake Village. Priority sites are stated to include an 18-acre former lumber mill in Eudora and a former gas station in Lake Village.

The Western Arkansas Planning & Development District is targeting the \$300,000 to focus on properties in two Opportunity Zones in the western part of Fort Smith which include:

- Kress Building in the historic downtown district (to be redeveloped for residential use)
- 85 acres of vacant land on the Arkansas River (to be redeveloped for recreation, housing, and commercial space)

A copy of the two EPA news releases can be downloaded [here](#).

