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Brownfields/Arkansas: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Announces Grant Awards for Southwest Arkansas Planning/Development District, Arkansas Department of Energy & Environment and Pulaski County

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The United States Environmental Protection Agency (“EPA”) announced in a May 23rd news release Brownfield grants have been awarded to the following Arkansas entities:

- Arkansas Department of Energy & Environment (\$1,000,000)
- Southwest Arkansas Planning and Development District, Inc. (\$2,000,000)
- Pulaski County Brownfields Program (\$1,000,000)

The federal government and many states (including Arkansas) have statutes, regulations, and policies that are intended to address “Brownfields.” Brownfields are often referred to as 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, funding programs, liability exemptions, 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 Brownfield programs is to encourage redevelopment and investment in such properties to increase the local tax base, facilitate job growth, utilize existing infrastructure, encourage infield use, and take pressure off greenspace.

EPA describes the Arkansas Department of Energy & Environment grant as funding 15 Phase I and 10 Phase II environmental site assessments. Community-wide grant funds will be used to develop five cleanup plans and conduct community engagement activities. Target areas for the grant are stated to include:

- City of Earle
- West Memphis Broadway Corridor
- East Little Rock

The Southwest Arkansas Planning and Development District, Inc., grant is stated to be slated to clean up the \$80,600 square foot west wing of the former Warner Brown Hospital. This structure is located in the City of El Dorado. The 2.7-acre cleanup site is stated to have operated as a hospital and has been vacant since 2015. Further, contaminants are stated to include heavy metals and inorganic contaminants.

EPA notes that the \$1,000,000 grant to the Pulaski County Brownfields Program constitutes a supplemental grant in addition to the \$4,870,000 that has already been awarded to the County. The award is stated to be due to what it describes as a “high-performing RLF Program” with significantly depleted funds. The program is stated to have successfully made loans or subgrants leading to 19 cleanup projects that are either completed or in progress. Potential projects that are cited in the EPA description include a former hotel and job-training site and Godsey Cleaners.

A copy of the EPA news release can be found [here](#), and descriptions of the three awards can be downloaded below:

- [Brownfields 2024 Assessment Fact Sheet](#)
- [Brownfields 2024 Cleanup Fact Sheet](#)
- [Region 6](#)