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EPA Awards East Ark. Planning & Development District \$300,000 for Brownfields Assessments

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DALLAS – (April 25, 2018) The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) awarded \$300,000 to the East Arkansas Planning and Development District in Jonesboro, Ark., in Brownfields assessment grants. The award is part of \$54.5 million EPA is distributing to 145 communities nationwide to assess and clean up underutilized properties while protecting public health and the environment.

“EPA’s Brownfields Program expands the ability of communities to clean up and recycle blighted properties for productive reuses that will utilize existing infrastructure and generate economic growth,” said **EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt**. “Brownfield grants leverage other public and private investments and improve local economies through property cleanup and redevelopment.”

“Brownfields grants can be a jumpstart to community redevelopment and revitalization,” said **Regional Administrator Anne Idsal**. “EPA is proud to partner with the East Arkansas Planning and Development District to leverage these funds to benefit communities around the area.”

“This grant affords us an unparalleled opportunity to aid communities in addressing the unique Brownfield challenges that face our region,” said **East Arkansas Planning and Development District Executive Director Melissa Rivers**. “It will position our region to compete in our global economy and create an environment fostering job growth and economic development. We are excited to work with EPA and our communities to see the project through to fruition.”

The Jonesboro organization will receive two assessment grants targeting 12 counties in eastern Arkansas. A community-wide hazardous substances grant of \$200,000 will be used to conduct Phase I and Phase II environmental site assessments. A \$100,000 grant for petroleum will also be used for similar site assessments. Both grants will also be used to update the area’s brownfields inventory, prioritize brownfields sites, prepare cleanup and reuse plans, and support community outreach activities.

The Brownfields Program targets communities that are economically disadvantaged and provides funding and assistance to transform contaminated sites into assets that can generate jobs and spur economic growth. A study analyzing 48 Brownfields sites found that an estimated \$29 million to \$97 million in additional tax revenue was generated for local governments in a single year after cleanup. This is two-to-seven times more than the \$12.4 million EPA contributed to the cleanup of these Brownfield sites. Another study found that property values of homes located near Brownfields sites that are cleaned up increased between 5 and 15 percent post cleanup.

Communities can use Brownfields funding to leverage considerable infrastructure and other financial resources. For example, EPA’s Clean Water State Revolving Fund (SRF) and Drinking Water State Revolving Fund can be used to address the water quality aspects of Brownfield sites and the assessment and construction of drinking water infrastructure on Brownfields, respectively. EPA’s Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) program may also serve as a potential source of long-term, low-cost supplemental financing to fund Brownfields project development and implementation activities to address water quality aspects of Brownfields.

List of the FY 2018 Applicants Selected for Funding:

<https://www.epa.gov/brownfields/applicants-selected-fy18-brownfields-assessment-revolving-loan-fund-and-cleanup-grants>

For more information on the grants: <https://www.epa.gov/brownfields/types-brownfields-grant-funding>

For more information on EPA’s Brownfields Program: <https://www.epa.gov/brownfields>

For more information on how Brownfields restoration has positively impacted local economies and the quality of life for neighboring communities: <https://www.epa.gov/brownfields/brownfields-success-stories>

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