

Colorado Brownfields Foundation Celebrates Five-Years Of Overcoming Environmental Obstacles



Helping Local Communities

(Littleton, CO) Colorado Brownfields Foundation celebrates five years of helping local communities overcome environmental obstacles to community and economic development. Environmentally stigmatized sites, easily identified as real estate eyesores, can successfully be turned into opportunities and community assets. Since inception in 2003, the Colorado Brownfields Foundation has helped facilitate transformation of these underused or abandoned sites, commonly known as Brownfields, in rural and urban communities across Colorado.

Most every community is affected by abandoned gas stations, long-time dry cleaners, former dumps, and other businesses that operated before certain materials were discovered to be toxic. CBF guides local communities and small business owners to redevelop these former sites. Such redevelopment stimulates local economies and "preserves and improves our environmental assets," says Jesse Silverstein, Founder and Executive Director of Colorado Brownfields Foundation. "Addressing these lingering issues not only helps build communities, but preserves and improves our environmental quality," Silverstein adds.

A train depot in the rural town of Manzanola had a century worth of lead based paint peeling onto the ground along with long-stored agricultural chemicals. With the assistance of CBF, the depot is now in use as a city hall and a senior center. "It is also a great source of community pride," Silverstein says. Similarly, the Colorado Brownfields Foundation has been working with many Colorado communities that are realizing their tourism potential and recovering historic sites, many with environmental pollution issues. "We are happy to be able to provide the technical assistance, coordination, and identify sources of funding for these wonderful community projects" Silverstein says.

The concept of the Colorado Brownfields Foundation emerged in 2003, in the back corner of Pints Pub in downtown Denver, over a casual conversation about an untapped economic resource for local communities. "Sites in small communities were being overlooked for redevelopment because of real or perceived environmental risks," Silverstein says. "What was missing was the

knowledge about these properties and a mechanism for getting the information out to business and investment communities," Silverstein adds.

So, out of a discussion that took place in an English style pub, grew the Colorado Brownfields Foundation. CBF provides business and local communities with current information on brownfield redevelopment and provides services to promote the clean-up and reuse of environmentally impaired sites and facilitate in fill development.

"Colorado Brownfields Foundation seeks to create business ready sites, stimulate investment in local economies, and preserve and improve our natural assets in Colorado," Silverstein says. A project that exemplifies CBFs vision is the Paris Mill site. CBF, working in collaboration with Park County, is pursuing a program to preserve and create a historic tourism destination by converting the historic Paris Mill, a former hard-rock mill, into a back country commercial tourist rest and staging area. This area, at the base of Mounts Democrat, Lincoln, and Bross, attracts outdoor recreation enthusiasts from around the world.

The Colorado Brownfields Foundation continues to look ahead as it begins its sixth year of assisting with community revitalization. Furthering Colorado Brownfields Foundation's vision, four task forces in the areas of economic development, legislative issues, environmental sustainability, and advanced technologies have recently been created. "At CBF we want to explore various issues to further advance the role of environmental stewardship in the pursuit of sustainable economic and community development," Silverstein says.

Colorado Brownfields Foundation

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