

SLIDERFUND

Fact Sheet

Grant Warehouse Portland Oregon

In February 1999, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) finished hazardous waste cleanup at the Grant Warehouse site in Portland. This fact sheet describes efforts since then to recover EPA's cleanup costs and put the site into productive use in the community.

The Cleanup

The Warehouse, located at 3368 NE Martin Luther King Blvd., was used for approximately 20 years to recover precious metals from waste received from other facilities. Large amounts of toxic and reactive chemicals, such as acids, cyanides, ether, and material containing heavy metals were stored in containers ranging in size from glass jars to 55 gallon drums.

Beginning in November 1998, EPA and its contractors removed and disposed of more than 1,300 cubic yards of debris. Approximately 230 (55-gallon) drums of hazardous waste were removed from the warehouse and disposed of off-site. In addition, approximately 80 cubic yards of contaminated soil from the yard area of the warehouse was also removed and disposed of off-site.

Air monitoring and soil samples collected by EPA at locations across the street and in the nearby neighborhood indicated that no contaminants were released into the neighborhood from the removal activities or accumulated in soil from past activities at the warehouse.

Cost Recovery

After the removal, EPA began an enforcement effort to recover the government's cleanup costs, approximately \$1,200,000 from the federal Superfund. The Superfund is a trust fund that gets

much of its money through reimbursements from those responsible for polluting sites that have to be cleaned up. EPA negotiated with the site owner to attempt to settle the cost recovery claim and has a lien on the property in case the owner attempts to sell it. Slow progress of the negotiations led EPA to take further steps in December 1999 to perfect the lien and then obtain the property as partial payment for the removal.

EPA has honored the site owner's request for a hearing before an impartial EPA official, who has not been involved in earlier decisions about the site, to decide whether EPA has a reasonable basis to perfect its lien on the property. The impartial official will publish a decision by the middle of February, 2000. Should the neutral official decide EPA has a reasonable basis on which to perfect its lien, EPA will then request that the United States Department of Justice and the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Oregon foreclose on that lien.

The final decision as to whether the lien will be foreclosed on rests with the Department of Justice, not EPA, as only the Department of Justice can commit the U.S. Government to litigation. Going this route could be a long legal process. EPA continues to be willing to settle with the site owner to place the property into productive use in the community as soon as possible.

Brownfields Showcase

EPA has been working with the Portland Brownfields Showcase Program to put the Grant Warehouse site into productive use in the community. Brownfields are abandoned, idled, or under-used industrial and commercial facilities where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by real or perceived environmental contamination. Portland has more than 1,000 brownfields properties throughout the city. Since 1994, public and private partnerships have cleaned up and recycled hundreds of acres of contaminated property and created thousands of jobs, while promoting redevelopment of these properties, pollution prevention, and greenspace protection.

EPA funding for the Showcase Program supports the continuing efforts to identify any environmental concerns remaining at the Grant Warehouse site and to help involve the community in decisions about future use of this site. The US Army Corps of Engineers used EPA Brownfields money to assess the current environmental conditions at the site, providing the information needed to address any environmental problems as part of reasonable future uses of the site. Copies of the site report are available from the Showcase Program.

Next Steps

A meeting is being planned by several agencies and community groups for the near future. When the details have been finalized, you will be sent the information by mail.

For More Information

For questions about EPA activities at the site, please contact one of the following people:

Mike Slater, Brownfields Project Officer
(503) 326-5872

Krista Rave, Grant Warehouse Removal Outreach
Coordinator (206) 553-6686 or,
toll-free at 1-800-424-4372

For additional information about the Portland Brownfields Showcase Program, please contact either Domonic Boswell or Dan Heister at (503) 823-7053.

To ensure effective communication with everyone, additional services can be made available to persons with disabilities by contacting EPA toll free at 1-800-424-4372.