



Port of Camden, Arkansas

Transforming a Blighted Industrial Property into a Riverfront Marina and Business Hub

With the backing of federal entities such as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Economic Development Administration (EDA), and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), the Port of Camden, Arkansas is working to restore a blighted area of town along the Ouachita River.



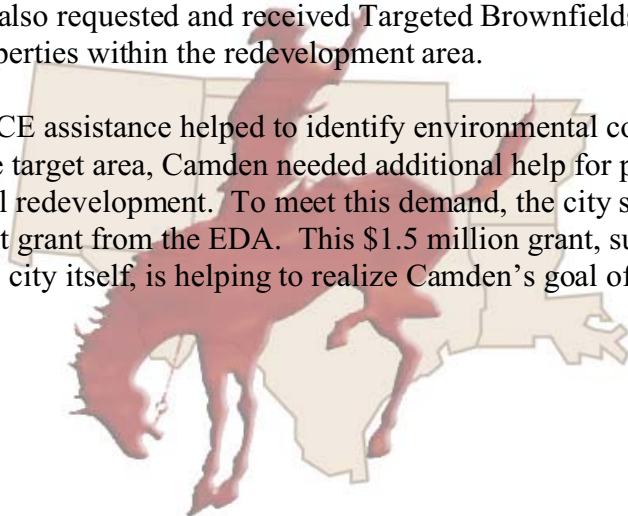
Former Adams Avenue Property

For nearly a century and a half, from its founding in 1839, the City of Camden enjoyed prosperity as a cotton shipping terminal, a timber and paper industry hub, and a home for people working at nearby military installations. More recently, a steady migration of residents away from the river was compounded by post-Cold War defense industry layoffs and cutbacks in timber-related jobs. As a result, the area along the river became deteriorated and littered with abandoned and underused former industrial and commercial properties.

In response to the area's continued economic and aesthetic deterioration, the city created the Adams Avenue Brownfield Redevelopment Plan. The plan involves the acquisition, demolition, cleanup, and redevelopment of 77 individual parcels along the river into a regional, intermodal transportation center, with the expanded Port of Camden and a downtown business incubator as its centerpieces. The city also formed plans for a riverfront development that will include a marina and new greenspace, in the form of hiking and biking trails, adjacent to the redevelopment project.

Camden's effort to restore this area was aided by an EPA Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilot award of \$200,000, with an additional \$50,000 provided to support the greenspace portion of the project. Camden also requested and received Targeted Brownfields Assessment assistance from USACE for properties within the redevelopment area.

While EPA and USACE assistance helped to identify environmental concerns across the 77 parcels making up the target area, Camden needed additional help for property acquisition, demolition, and actual redevelopment. To meet this demand, the city successfully applied for an Economic Adjustment grant from the EDA. This \$1.5 million grant, supplemented by a \$445,000 commitment from the city itself, is helping to realize Camden's goal of transforming the area.



Area-wide preliminary assessments also have been completed. During the assessment phase, the Ouachita Valley Business and Technology Development Center property was environmentally cleared. Following construction, the center opened its doors for business on October 14, 2004. In addition, assessments of the site of the planned marina indicated that contamination does not exist in levels high enough to delay construction. As a result, the riverfront development is currently underway with the help of a \$100,000 Arkansas Game and Fish Commission Boating Infrastructure Grant to construct the marina and floating dock, and more than \$200,000 in grant funding from the Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department to construct the riverwalk and overlooks. To meet the match requirements for these grants, the city is providing in-kind labor and equipment.

While initial environmental assessments of the entire project area have been completed, more detailed assessments are underway on properties identified as having environmental concerns. On properties where cleanup is required, Camden plans to utilize the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality's Voluntary Brownfields Cleanup Program to ensure the quality and completeness of contamination removal. Acquisition of the 77 sites will be completed by the end of 2004. For more information about brownfields redevelopment in the City of Camden, contact Mayor Chris Claybaker or Kathy Lee by phone at (870) 836-6436 or via e-mail at admin1.camden@cablelynx.com.



Newly Constructed Ouachita Business and Technology
Redevelopment Center

