

Heifer International

Little Rock, AR

Main Entrance-Heifer International Headquarters: A Green Building



In Little Rock, Arkansas, a 28-acre site with a history of invasive industrial use has become home to a brand new Green building; that is, one that minimizes environmental impact. This state-of-the-art facility serves as the new headquarters for **Heifer International**, an international organization working to end hunger in the United States and countries around the world. Thanks to the efforts of private, state, and federal entities, this previously contaminated property now benefits and positively impacts, not only Little Rock, but also communities worldwide. For more than 100 years, this site, situated on the banks of the Arkansas River in Downtown Little Rock, was used by Union Pacific Railroad as a rail yard. The property was also polluted during stints as warehouses, light industry, and trucking companies' occupation. Superior Trucking operated on the site for more than 50 years, contaminating the area through decades of vehicle maintenance and other industrial activities. Chemicals and residues from the railroad ties and tracks also contributed to contamination and to the site's status as a brownfield.

Enter: Heifer International. The non-profit organization provides livestock and training to families worldwide to serve as sources of food and income. Heifer's 94,000-square-foot green facility, designed by Polk Stanley Architects of Little Rock, includes a four-story office building and education complex. Plans are being implemented for a "Global Village;" an outdoor replica of impoverished communities from around the world, where visitors will learn about solutions to world hunger and poverty during indoor/outdoor education programming and public events. The project proceeded in stages. The site was first enrolled in the Arkansas' Brownfields Program. Initial environmental assessments were performed by a local environmental firm, EcoLogic Inc., and cleanup efforts began with the removal of all rail yard ties and tracks. To determine the extent of cleanup and ready the site for construction, a comprehensive site assessment was required. To meet Heifer's planned October 2003 groundbreaking, both the Arkansas Department of Environmental Protection (ADEQ), through an EPA Region 6 Targeted Brownfield Assessment, and Arkansas' Brownfields Program assisted with the completion of the comprehensive site assessment. The collaborative technical assistance provided by each entity, in the form of Quality Assurance Project Plan and work plan development, field sampling, and laboratory analysis, allowed for construction at the site to begin as scheduled. This site is the largest brownfields cleanup by volume in Arkansas; it was successfully prepared for hazard-free occupation as of May 2004. The Heifer International Center opened in September 2005.



The property on which the Heifer facility is being built is part of a larger constructed wetland, and, as a result, one of the greatest challenges to site redevelopment is the integration of a proposed 4.2-acre, 337-space parking lot on the site. Conventional paved parking lots are impervious to rain water, causing rapid runoff, erosion, and flood damage during severe storms. Parking facilities can also contribute to contamination from oils, metals, and other vehicle pollutants, which are swept from parking lots during storms, creating pulses of contaminated waters into the surrounding environment. To develop an innovative design for the parking lot that would minimize the impact on the surrounding wetland environment, Heifer International was awarded an Innovation Demonstration Grant from EPA's Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response (OSWER). Included in the proposed parking lot design is a series of small "green" parking plazas that will move storm water through a vegetated runoff collection system that will collect and cleanse storm water and return it to the environment.

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"Success in Arkansas!" Little Rock, AR



To further its commitment to sustainable design in the development of its new headquarters, Heifer developed a 15-member Smart Building Committee to ensure that its new facility will meet the standards of the LEED (Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design) rating system for new buildings. The LEED system is a voluntary national standard developed by the U.S. Green Building Council to create sustainable buildings through green design strategies. As a result of the organization's efforts to utilize green building design and green product technologies in transforming this former industrial site, Heifer International was named a "Green Building on Brownfields" pilot project by the U.S. EPA on September 25, 2002. The pilot program provides technical, financial, planning, outreach, and design expertise to incorporate environmental considerations into redevelopment efforts. Through creation of its new "green" facility, Heifer has created more than 200 full-time jobs, and expects to draw as many as 250,000 people to the site each year upon the future opening of its educational Global Village. Visitors to Heifer International also have the opportunity to learn about world cultures, issues of hunger and poverty, and the role that a healthy environment plays in solving these problems. These events use the environmentally sustainable features of the facility to illustrate how the United States and other wealthy countries can improve properties in ways that protect and preserve the environment.

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