

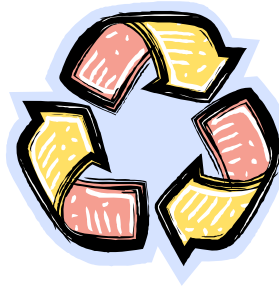
Sand Springs Oklahoma

Cimarron Site Prior to Redevelopment



Overcoming daunting delays and obstacles, the diverse partners of the Cimarron Center redevelopment project located in Sand Springs, Oklahoma transformed a 30-acre site that was home to a former zinc smelter into a vibrant commercial development anchored by a new Wal-Mart Super Center. The \$24 million project, which included \$2.5 million in cleanup costs and \$2.2 million in infrastructure improvements, helped give birth to Oklahoma's Brownfields Program. Since 1995, EPA has provided more than \$1.8 million to support the Oklahoma Brownfields Program. After more than 60 years in operation, the smelter closed in 1985 and the property remained vacant for 14 years. Located in an under-served area at the intersection of two major highways—one that provides the only access across the Arkansas River west of Tulsa—the property held great commercial and retail redevelopment potential. However, it was not until this redevelopment potential was realized in the late 1990s that interest was generated in redeveloping the property.

In October 1994, the owner entered into an agreement with the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to voluntarily investigate and clean up the property, and the process of characterizing the site's environmental condition began. Cleanup and redevelopment of the property was accomplished through a network of partners dedicated to the project. The property owner, Federated Metals, funded and conducted the cleanup of the site in conjunction with the developer, Kucharski Development Company. In addition, the city provided its first Tax Increment Financing District funding to the property to help reimburse the developer for improvements to the infrastructure associated with the project. All on-site waste as well as waste discovered in an adjacent neighborhood, was addressed during voluntary cleanup and redevelopment. In combination, these wastes totaled 61,300 cubic yards of contaminated material. The adjacent residential neighborhood where smelter waste had been used as fill was cleaned up first, followed by the remaining property. In total, approximately 40 acres of contaminated soil and smelter waste were cleaned up on a total of 121 acres; this included 91 adjacent residential neighborhood properties. The waste and contaminated soil were disposed of in an on-site engineered disposal cell, which is located under the new commercial redevelopment and serves as the new cap for the development.



The project experienced delays when legislative action was needed to acquire a brownfields liability release for the developer, lenders, and tenants. To acquire the needed liability protection, the project partners enlisted the assistance of state legislators, who sponsored brownfields legislation for the State of Oklahoma. As a result, in April 1996 the Oklahoma Brownfields Voluntary Redevelopment Act was passed, enabling the Cimarron Center redevelopment project to begin to move forward and giving birth to Oklahoma's Brownfields Program. To ensure additional liability protection, the Oklahoma DEQ began working towards signing a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with EPA Region 6 to provide assurances that EPA would not pursue the site under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act while the cleanup project was in the state Brownfield Program or after the site was cleaned up.

EPA

Region 6

Sand Springs Oklahoma

"Success in Oklahoma!"



Further project delays ensued when a corporate takeover of the owner company, Federated Metals, occurred and when the desired anchor retail store, Wal-Mart Stores, Inc., needed additional time to evaluate property and the environmental liability issues prior to agreeing to locate on the property. Upon review, Wal-Mart chose to change its site evaluation process to consider the property for a super center location. This process change ultimately resulted in Wal-Mart becoming the anchor retailer for the commercial development. After taking more than eight years to complete cleanup and redevelopment of the site, the property was ready for redevelopment in August 2001. The Wal-Mart Super Center held its grand opening in August 2003. Once open, the new retail store quickly out-performed the economic projections and is currently providing huge increases in tax revenues for the City of Sand Springs. As a result, the project has increased the interest of developers in the area. In addition, the project provides additional employment opportunities for the surrounding community, having created 350 new jobs as a result of redevelopment efforts.

The Cimarron Center has become a cornerstone for revitalizing the project area. Currently, the City of Sand Springs is concentrating its Vision 2025 funding in the area. Vision 2025 is funded by a one penny, thirteen-year increase in the Tulsa County sales tax and is specifically targeted to fund development and capital improvements throughout the county. In addition, Sand Springs will be allotted \$14.5 million to improve the Sand Springs Keystone Corridor, including the acquisition and preparation of land for modern commercial development. Sand Springs' involvement will stimulate additional private investment in the area, support the school system, encourage new retail shopping along the corridor, and improve the appearance of the community, all of which will entice additional tourism.

The massive economic development potential that Sand Springs has acquired is the direct result of the developer's vision for the Cimarron Center redevelopment and the willing assistance of its partners "to do what it takes to get the job done." As a result of these efforts, the developer was recognized for its partnership building in 1998 with an EPA Region 6 Environmental Excellence Award. This project is an excellent example of people and organizations from diverse backgrounds learning to speak each other's professional language and step outside their normal routines and thought patterns to make a project happen.

For additional information about the Oklahoma Brownfields Program, please contact Rita Kottke, Oklahoma Brownfields Program Coordinator, at (405) 702-5127 or rita.kottke@deq.state.ok.us.