

BROWNFIELD

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renewal



The 2009
Renewal Award
Winners —

Economic, Social and Environmental Impact

Excellence Comes in Many Shapes, Sizes

by Steve Dwyer



Diversity carried the day when the first-annual Brownfield Renewal awards were presented November 17 to four project sponsors in a modest-sized but well-populated conference room at the Morial Convention Center in New Orleans during the Brownfields 2009 convention.

The recipients included:

- ❖ City of Oklahoma City, Metropolitan Area Projects, awarded an ECONOMIC IMPACT award;
- ❖ Mason Run "New Urbanism" Neighborhood and River Raisin National Battlefield Park, Monroe, Mich., SOCIAL IMPACT award recipients; and
- ❖ Menomonee Valley Industrial Center, Milwaukee, ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT award winner.

How does a project achieve excellence? There's no single blueprint, that's for sure. In Oklahoma, the "sheer size" of the project stood out in the minds of judges. In Milwaukee, excellence represented an ability to overcome a variety of challenges through use of innovative solutions.

In Michigan, not one but two projects demonstrated excellence in unique ways. In one case, it was a tribute to a smaller, modest-size initiative. In the other case, it was an ability to be "highly replicable"—a characteristic that might inspire others to use this model for future endeavors.

Indeed, it was a coincidence and a credit to the smallish community of Monroe, Mich. that two Renewal Awards emanated from the same zip code. "There must be something in the water in Monroe, Mich.," proclaimed Todd S. Davis, chief executive officer of Hemisphere Development, a nationally recognized brownfield development firm headquartered in Bedford, Ohio, who served as the master of ceremonies of the event. (Davis also served as a judge).

All total, 30 project nominations were submitted and carefully scrutinized by the eight-person panel of judges, culled from a balanced industry cross section.

Industry participants who believe they have a viable Renewal Award nominee

should begin preparing the nomination papers, as Brownfield Renewal begins accepting project nominations on February 1, 2010. One stipulation for entry is that projects must be completed before applications can be submitted.

Following are descriptions of the four winners and how excellence comes in many shapes and sizes.

MVIC: FROM INERTIA TO INNOVATION

The Menomonee Valley Industrial Center and Community Park (MVIC) in Milwaukee "revitalized a site that had been in industrial use for more than 125 years and had lay abandoned for an additional 20 years," said Gary Rozmus, one of the eight Renewal Award judges.

"The project overcame a variety of challenges through the use of innovative solutions to reap environmental benefits that will be realized both on and off site," said Rozmus, recently elected to serve as the first chairman of the Board of Directors for the NYC Partnership of Brownfield Practitioners (Partnership).

David Misky, assistant executive director, Redevelopment Authority of the City of Milwaukee, said the Menomonee Valley project is a good example of Milwaukee's strategy

to revitalize neighborhoods by building on existing infrastructure.

By helping to coordinate both public and private development efforts in the valley, his office has been an integral part of the city's inclusive approach to brownfields. "We don't mind taking a role or even a leadership role [in a brownfield redevelopment]," he says. "It's a real collaborative effort from all corners. This is definitely a team approach, from my internal staff to the state to the EPA."

MVIC sits on a 133-acre property that re-establishes nearly 60 acres of industrial development, which will in turn support approximately one million square feet of new buildings. MVIC has provided significant economic impacts to the community through the introduction of six new industries since September 2005, an associated 700 sustained jobs, and a total projection of 1,200 jobs. City tax revenue is increasing by \$1 million.

CH2M HILL, a global full-service engineering, construction, and operations firm, partnered with the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Milwaukee, non-profit groups, regulatory agencies, the community, and prospective developers to create a sustainability-focused Brownfield's success.

From the early days of master planning to present-day new business construction, CH2M HILL has helped transform an other-



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wise blighted property into a thriving redevelopment, creating the following additional successes along the way:

- ❖ Beneficial re-use of an estimated 700,000 to 900,000 cubic yards of nearby highway excavation spoils, 20,000 cubic yards of recycled concrete, onsite management of over 120,000 cubic yards of asbestos containing demolition debris, and integration of recycled glass, timbers and brick into development landscaping.

- ❖ Significant site improvements, raising the land out of the floodplain, stabilizing and enhancing the riverbanks, and structurally improving the site subgrade to support sustainable redevelopment.

- ❖ Design and construction of a state-of-the-art, centralized storm water treatment facility that doubles as a recreational park.

- ❖ Creation of \$120 million in ecological, recreational, and aesthetic value on the property.

- ❖ Strong local work-force capacity building program that utilized an unprecedented 40 percent small, disadvantaged business participation, inner city youth internships, college-bound training programs, and heavy community participation.

According to documentation submitted with the project nomination, “the participation and dedication of public and private entities from project inception to build-out has helped to transform the Valley from a place of environmental contamination to a unique eco-industrial park, where manufacturers apply lean manufacturing principles to their buildings, showcasing cutting-edge designs in sustainability.”

RIVER RAISIN NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD PARK: BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

The Frenchtown Settlement/River Raisin Battlefield site is considered by local and state experts to be one of the most important historic and archeological sites in Michigan. The city of Monroe, the state of Michigan, and the previous property owner (Homrich Inc.) took advantage of an unprecedented opportunity to preserve history and turn this former industrial brownfield into a state and federal focal point for sustainable historic preservation, education, recreation, and tourism.

“The River Raisin National Battlefield Park project is a wonderful example of what can be achieved while still preserving a culture’s history,” exclaimed one of the judges.

“Under the abandoned paper-mill buildings in northeastern Michigan lies an historic



‘Investing in Ourselves’

by Russell Claus, Director of Planning, city of Oklahoma City

When I moved here 14 years ago, I was truly alarmed at the prospects for a good quality of life. That is not the case any longer. MAPS is truly a full participation community project because the entire community had to vote to tax themselves to make it happen.

MAPS consisted of nine capital projects that we undertook beginning in 1993 as a way of kickstarting the revitalization of Oklahoma City. As a result of the first MAPS, which we are so honored to be recognized for through the inaugural Renewal Award for Economic Development, the community has voted to tax itself three other times, and will have (hopefully) done so a fourth time by the time this article is published.

Oklahoma City residents do this because they understand and appreciate the enormous benefits that MAPS has wrought. These benefits are many-fold and include environmental cleanup, a revitalized downtown (almost \$5 billion in investment since MAPS was announced), a vibrant new entertainment district, and numerous new corporate offices that have relocated to Oklahoma City because they like what MAPS has done to the city.

Our general quality of life has improved enormously, our economy is one of the best performing in the country and, most importantly, Oklahoma City has evolved into a community that believes in itself, that has elevated its expectations of what we can accomplish, and what we should be as a city.

While the economic benefits of MAPS are unparalleled, it is this confidence and willingness to invest in ourselves that is the greatest legacy of MAPS, because it means that we will continue to grow and prosper. We know this and the national community is recognizing this more and more well. We used to think ourselves lucky to be on the radar screen for national investors: now we’re frequently either the successful candidate or at least a strong finalist. This is a huge turnaround in a very short period of time.

Of note to Brownfield professionals is that several of the sites affected by the MAPS program were significant brownfields, to an extent that no one else had ever wanted to take on the challenge of remediating them. As part of the MAPS programs, they were simply line items to be addressed as part of the overall development package. They were not construed as barriers or deal breakers, just another development issue that we had to address.

Subsequent to the MAPS projects, a much greater number of brownfields have been addressed in supporting the significant private investment that flowed from MAPS. The city has developed an excellent relationship with the Environmental Protection Agency, taking advantage of the revolving loan fund program, both assessment programs, and the cleanup program.

Their assistance and that of the State Dept. of Environmental Quality has been pivotal in our capacity to address brownfields in order to accomplish our ultimate goal of redevelopment.



jewel that has just begun to sparkle for the residents of the community, the state of Michigan, the Great Lakes region, and the entire country," the description continued. "Two facets of this jewel which is listed on both the Michigan and National Historic Registers and soon to be included in the National Park System are the locations of the Battle of the River Raisin in the War of 1812 and the 1780s community of Frenchtown, the original settlement of Monroe."

"While recognizing and returning the rich cultural history of our country is important in brownfield redevelopment, it is often overlooked for more traditional end uses, such as retail, commercial and residential," said Colleen Kokas, Brownfield manager within the Office of Brownfield Reuse at the New Jersey Dept. of Environmental Protection.

"The fact that the project took seven years stuck out [in the minds of the judges]. It showed how well they were able to persevere," said Kokas, adding that it's refreshing to being able to recognize smaller, underrated projects.

Successful completion of the brownfield redevelopment plan for the site provides tourists, history buffs, archeologists, and historians an opportunity to increase their knowledge and understanding of early settlement of the region and the Battle of the River Raisin.

MASON RUN: NO STONE LEFT UNTURNED

The Mason Run development is regarded as "the new icon of a classic American small town. For over 10 years, the city of Monroe, Crosswinds Communities, Soil and Materials Engineers, Inc. (SME) and others have worked together to transform a 50-acre abandoned paper mill site into a thriving 500-home community," said the project nomination endorsement.

"It is one of the largest New Urbanism projects constructed on an urban brownfield site and a national model for residential sustainable development. Mason Run is an example of New Urbanism applied as intended: The redevelopment of urban sites

to reflect existing urban architecture and community. This style of development is ecologically friendly, and reduces pressures for suburban residential sprawl."

Mason Run was awarded a Social award, but its economic/financial prowess was also on display. Good fund managers exhort clients "to diversify" their investments. The Mason Run project team did just that in sharing the Social Impact award with its River Raisin brethren. "Mason Run cobbled together a financial package that consisted of nine tiers of financing. They begged and borrowed to secure these funds," said Todd Davis, adding that Mason Run represent a continuing trend across the nation for "well-conceived residential development on brownfield properties."

"The developer's sheer determination, exhibited through the nearly 10 years necessary to bring the project to fruition, highlights that combining creativity with the tools available through state voluntary cleanup programs will yield tremendous returns on the sustainable development scale across the United States," said Davis, who also emphasized the project's modest size as one that's "highly replicable," serving as an inspiration to other developers and project teams to mimic this strategy.

In addition, the existing municipal infrastructure, including streets, sewers and water mains were wholly adequate to service the Mason Run development. "The city needed to expend resources providing or upgrading the road, water or sewer infrastructure to support Mason Run. The capacities of existing franchise utilities, such as electricity and natural gas, also were adequate to support the development without significant expansions or upgrades. The ability to create a development like Mason Run without large

The Esteemed 2009 Judges



Therese Carpenter is an Environmental Scientist with seven years experience encompassing a broad spectrum of environmental issues.



Todd S. Davis is Chief Executive Officer of Hemisphere Development, a nationally recognized brownfield development firm headquartered in Bedford, Ohio.



Josephine Faass has a Ph.D. in environmental policy from the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers University.



Whitney Hawke currently attends Lewis & Clark law school, where she plans to focus on land use and environmental law. In May 2009, Hawke graduated with honors from Occidental College in Los Angeles.



Colleen Kokas is the Brownfield Manager within the Office of Brownfield Reuse at the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection.



Thomas Muscarello is an Associate Professor in the School of Computing at DePaul University's (Chicago) College of Computing and Digital Media and is the College's Director of External Research.

infrastructure expenditures is one of the hallmarks of green, sustainable brownfield redevelopment," the nomination stated.

Also demonstrating environmental responsibility was Mason Run: Davis said that in the development phase, cinder and other impactful materials that were evident on the site were taken out of the equation as potential health risks. Davis said the team was able to integrate these materials into the road base and cover it up. It was problem-solving along this order that enabled Mason Run to save \$2 million in cleanup costs, he said.

OK CITY/MAPS: TEEING UP A VISION

In Oklahoma City "what were once stockyards, oilfields, refineries, and abandoned warehouses with environmental contamination were transformed over time into vibrant, healthy business and community centers," according to the nominating endorsement.

It was for this capability and others that secured for Oklahoma City Metropolitan Area Projects (MAPS) the Economic Impact award. "The sheer size of the project stood out," said judge Gary Rozmus. "It was not just one facility but nine independent and stand-alone entities. You need a special vision to accomplish something like this. And, it was not a case of proceeding with an initiative and then trying to figure [strategies and tactics] out later."

Added Therese Carpenter, an environmental scientist and one of the eight judges: "In a time of economic upheaval and downtrending, the city of Oklahoma City Metropolitan Area Projects (MAPS) provides a stellar example of what can be done to revitalize cities and bring back new growth and life to what was formerly a struggling major metropolitan area."

"MAPS has not only injected new life into Oklahoma City (see sidebar article 'Investing in Ourselves'), but served as a catalyst for continued growth across the board: Business, transportation, housing, and enhanced public gathering spaces have created new jobs and new hope, and will serve as a model for other communities brave enough to embark on such undertakings," continued Carpenter.

The projects completed included construction of the Bricktown ballpark, the Ford Center, the Ronald J. Norick Downtown library, Bricktown canal, renovation of the Cox Convention Center, improvements to the State Fairgrounds, rebuilding of the Civic Center Music Hall, development of the North Canadian River into a seven-mile series of navigable river lakes called the "Oklahoma River" and the "Oklahoma Spirit" trolley system. **REN**



Chris Olson has over 29 years of experience in the Petrochemical Industry with Amoco/BP where he has held a wide spectrum of roles and responsibilities, including domestic and international oil and gas exploration and directing worldwide environmental compliance and management system audits.



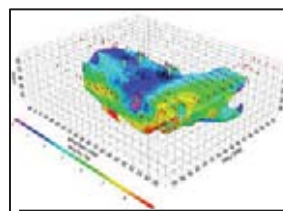
Gary Rozmus P.E. is a Vice President of Gannett Fleming where he directs a firm-wide team that provides nation-wide turnkey Sustainable Brownfield redevelopment services.



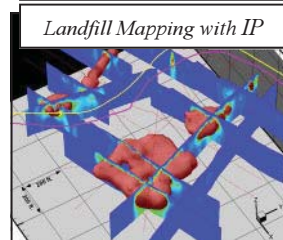
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