

# Laying the Foundation for a Prosperous Future in Plainview

*How Greenfield Environmental Trust Group Helped a Small Arkansas City Advance from Superfund Site to Land of Opportunity*

## **Challenge: One Small Rural City Struggles to Save Its "Broken" Asset**

In 1999, just to the west of Highway 28, a main thoroughfare in Plainview, Arkansas, the Mountain Pine Pressure Treatment (MPPT) facility stood empty on 95 acres of land. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) had declared the area a Federal Superfund Site, which indicates property that the EPA has determined creates a substantial risk to human health and the environment because of uncontrolled contamination.



This was a crushing blow to an already-struggling community with a population barely over 700 people. How would this small city battle back against economic decline and few remaining jobs when its only remaining available real estate had become, in essence, a toxic wasteland?

Furthermore, even if a potential solution for redevelopment existed, who would bring all the stakeholders together—the community, local government, state government, and more—to support the revitalization effort and to stand as a

united front in its quest to garner funds for brownfields clean up?

## **Solution: Moving Stakeholders from Project Disbelief to Enthusiastic Project Allies**

Enter Marc Weinreich, Vice-President of Greenfield Environmental Trust Group, Inc. (GETG), an award-winning Boston-based firm that provides real estate and brownfields consulting services nationwide, including aligning key stakeholder interests on property use, disposition, and redevelopment. The challenge of cleaning up and reclaiming blighted lands often pits government against businesses against local community interests, yet GETG always operates under the assumption that all stakeholders can win.

GETG's approach to the MPPT Site was no different. One of its main goals was to expand the stakeholder base and move these key stakeholders from project disbelief to enthusiastic project allies. The firm accomplished these efforts by creating an area-wide Chamber of Commerce to expand its reach and increase community involvement; by facilitating numerous public and multi-stakeholder discussions in order to talk about issues and reach consensus; and by working effectively with local, state, and federal officials.

One such stakeholder, Dwayne Pratt, now Executive Director for the West Central Arkansas Planning & Development District, noted, "...After meeting community officials and Mr. Weinreich, I became convinced the redevelopment of the site was not only possible, but critical to the well-being of this community. This is a testament to Marc's thorough understanding of the needs of the communities and clients with which he works."

Plainview City Councilman Harold Blalock remarked, "Marc addressed the most complex property control issues I've ever encountered, helped manage risks and liabilities stemming from the contamination, educated stakeholders on critical redevelopment matters, and helped procure public grants funds to assure project feasibility in the amount of \$1 million dollars [in 2003] from the

Economic Development Administration (EDA) of the US Department of Commerce and Community Development Block Grant Funds through the Arkansas Department of Economic Development. Without Marc's hard work, dedication, and broad capabilities, I do not believe that we would even be discussing the possible redevelopment of the MPPT Site."

**Results: 8.5 Acres "Cleared" for Use by 2004, New Business, New Jobs, & New Hope**

The results of GETG's hard work—and that of all the stakeholders—were promising. In 2004, the EPA cleared 8.5 acres of land for redevelopment by a new business, and the construction of a new general-purpose industrial building, which could provide up to 20 full-time jobs. In addition, Plainview would receive rental income from the company for its use of the land and the building. The city and its supporters hoped this was a harbinger of more good news to come as clean up continued.



The community celebrated its "rebirth" and honored those involved in making the dream a reality. Marc Weinreich received a key to the city as a token of the City of Plainview's appreciation.

Weinreich noted, "Plainview offers a beacon of hope to cities and towns throughout this country that are grappling with dwindling budgets, limited technical and other resources, and complex matters of real estate that could make a powerfully energizing difference in the

community's future."