

Welcome to the 1st edition of BERC's Brownfield e-Newsletter

BERC initiates a Brownfield Assessment Project for Sacramento County

Thanks to a \$200,000 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) grant awarded to the Sacramento County Business Environmental Resource Center (BERC), urban property owners will have a much better understanding of what is needed to clean up their properties for redevelopment.

Business owners and investors in five neighborhoods and 18 commercial corridors will have access to BERC staff expertise in assessing potential pollution on their properties and meeting environmental cleanup requirements. In some cases, property owners may learn there is little or no cleanup required.

"This grant gives businesses and property owners one more tool in their reinvestment strategies," said BERC Director Rob White.

The \$200,000 assessment grant was awarded as part of the EPA Brownfields Program. Brownfields are environmentally blighted properties in urbanized areas that require some level of cleanup or controls to become productive again.

Alkali Flat, Del Paso Heights, North Sacramento, Oak Park, South Sacramento, and other areas targeted for commercial reinvestment will benefit as facilities are assessed for reuse. These include former auto repair facilities, transportation operations, small manufacturers, storage yards, gasoline stations and shopping centers with dry cleaners.

"Revitalizing neighborhoods by bringing businesses back to urban properties helps reduce the need to encroach on farmland in outlying areas," County Board of Supervisors Chair Muriel Johnson said.

Community meetings, newsletters and additional outreach will ensure that community stakeholders learn about available funding resources to turn current blight into future business opportunities.

"We want to replace the notion of brownfields, which conjures visions of unusable or abandoned properties, with successful reuse," said Sacramento County Economic Development Director, Paul Hahn.

As part of the grant, BERC will create an inventory of reinvestment properties which will help identify prioritized planning for assessment and cleanup. The Sacramento Brownfield Working Group, which was established by BERC in late 2003, will gather input from many community groups and includes representatives from the County of Sacramento Economic Development, Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency (SHRA), the City of Sacramento, the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) and other city and county agencies.

*This article was reprinted from the
Sacramento Business Journal*



For more information about BERC's Brownfield Assessment Project, please contact Marcy Barnett at (916) 364-4108.

Director's Corner

As we embark on the Sacramento Brownfield Assessment project, we wish to extend to you an invitation to attend a special workshop designed to bring together property owners, real estate professionals, government agencies and non-profit organization representatives interested in brownfields restoration.

The workshop will be held in downtown Sacramento on Wednesday, February 23, 2005. Please see the link below for more information on the workshop:

www.sacberc.org/road-to-reuse.html

Hope to see you there!

Rob White

About BERC

BERC is a:

- *resource center* that provides confidential assistance to business and government, promoting economic success and environmental quality.
- *joint service provider* funded by a coalition of local environmental, public works and utility agencies to assist businesses in complying with federal, state and local regulations.
- *supporter* of pollution prevention, environmental restoration and development focused on smart growth and reuse.