

Targeted Brownfield Assessment Former Bennett's Car Dealership Burns, Oregon

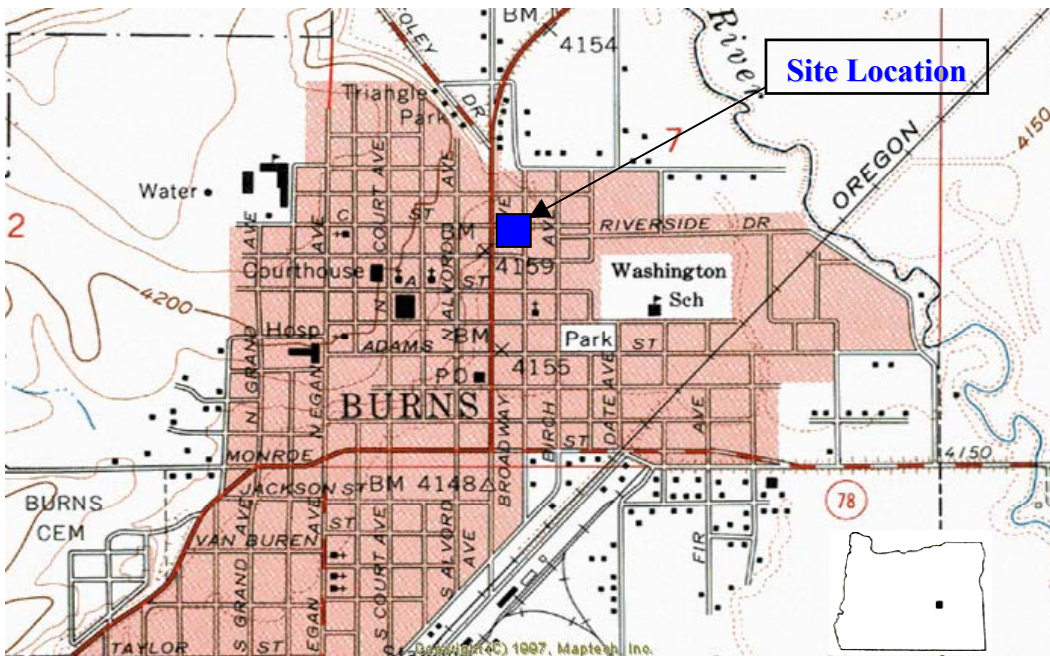
Project Overview

In September 2001, the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) completed a Targeted Brownfield Assessment (TBA) at the Former Bennett's Car Dealership in Burns, Oregon, under a Cooperative Agreement with EPA Region 10. The TBA was designed to determine whether historical auto repair/refueling operations had contaminated this 0.9-acre, downtown site. The property owner, with city support, wished to remove the blighted structure from the property and make the site available for redevelopment. The map below shows the site's location.

Site Background

Beginning in the early 1920s, a car dealership operated at the site, conducting auto maintenance and repair, body-shop work, and gasoline fueling. Original owner Stan Bennett sold the property to Ray Cole, who continued to operate the facility as a car dealership until the late 1970s. The current owner, C&F Investment Group, purchased the vacant property in 1985, and remodeled part of the building for commercial (retail) use. However, most of the building deteriorated gradually, and by 2001, demolition/removal and redevelopment became the only viable site option.

No environmental investigations had occurred at the site. Potential contaminants of concern included solvents, waste oil, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), and petroleum hydrocarbons, resulting from auto-repair activities, paint-booth operations, and use of hydraulic hoists. Abandoned underground storage tanks (USTs) also were suspected of being present at the site.



In January 2001, the City of Burns endorsed C&F's request for a TBA to investigate potential site contamination. The Oregon Economic and Community Development Department (OECD) also endorsed the TBA, having designated the

City of Burns as a "Rural and Distressed Community" that could receive redevelopment assistance – once environmental issues were identified. If EPA approved the TBA, C&F agreed to: 1) provide a backhoe to assist in soil sampling; 2) excavate and dispose of up to 150 yards of contaminated soil (as needed); and 3) raze the majority of the on-site building after the TBA's completion.

What We Did

Soon after EPA approved the TBA in April 2001, DEQ developed a scope of work and made arrangements for sampling. In late May 2001, DEQ directed the excavation of eight backhoe test pits in areas most likely to be contaminated and in one background location, collecting one soil sample from each. DEQ staff installed two soil borings to obtain shallow groundwater samples, but an extensive layer of hardpan at a depth of about 10 feet blocked the hydraulic probing device and prevented any contact with groundwater. EPA laboratories analyzed the nine soil samples for volatile and semi-volatile organic compounds (VOCs/SVOCs), PCBs, pesticides, and metals.

What We Found

Only one site-related VOC (1,1,2-trichloroethane) was present at levels above EPA Region 9 Preliminary Remediation Goals (PRGs) for residential and industrial use; this detection occurred in a suspected former refueling area. (Widely used for screening purposes, *residential* PRGs are the most conservative screening levels for evaluating specific contaminants, while *industrial* PRGs are somewhat higher and therefore less conservative.)

Low levels of PCBs and pesticides were found in several samples, but in each case at concentrations below residential PRGs.

Among metals of concern, arsenic exceeded residential PRGs in all nine samples, but DEQ concluded that the levels found were representative of naturally occurring concentrations in Harney County soils and did not result from past site operations. The lead level in the soil sample from the background test pit exceeded the residential (but not industrial) PRG. No other samples contained lead above the residential PRG.

The excavation of one test pit led to DEQ's discovery of petroleum-contaminated soil (PCS), two product pipes, and three USTs, one of which was filled with water and had several holes on one side. As a result, C&F joined DEQ's Voluntary Cleanup Program. Under DEQ oversight, C&F removed all three USTs and associated piping, and excavated and disposed of 68 yards of PCS. No petroleum was detected in either of the post-excavation soil samples. (C&F performed and paid for these remedial actions, and did not use TBA funds.) Because DEQ received EPA's analytical results after this remedial action was completed, C&F will collect an additional soil sample to confirm the removal of 1,1,2-trichloroethane in soil. C&F will also obtain more data to assess lead levels in the background soil sample location. Once this work is completed, DEQ expects to make a no-further-action decision at the site.

The Next Steps

As indicated above, C&F plans to build on TBA findings and continue addressing environmental concerns at the site. C&F also has begun planning for the removal of the entire site structure – or parts that are unsafe – to allow for productive re-use of the property.

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