

News Release

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Rock Island Awarded Grant for Environmental Assessment

The City of Rock Island was awarded a \$150,000 brownfield grant from United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) to complete environmental assessment of the future Columbia Park development on the site of a former International Harvester manufacturing plant. Rock Island was one of nine Illinois communities and coalitions to receive funding in the 2009 grant round.

The Columbia Park Master Plan, adopted by the City in 2005, incorporates parks, recreation areas, and other amenities along the Sylvan Slough. The Columbia Park redevelopment will replace the 80-acre Quad City Industrial Center (QCIC) site covered almost entirely with buildings, drives, and parking lots with a mixed use development featuring a linear parkway and major arterials with enhanced landscaping.

In 2006, Rock Island was awarded a \$200,000 grant to begin soil and groundwater assessment on 27 acres of the QCIC. The City will use \$100,000 from the 2009 grant award to complete site assessment reserving \$50,000 for investigation of other Rock Island brownfield sites. To date, the City has received \$750,000 from state and federal sources for environmental assessment and clean-up on sites throughout the City.

Rock Island has a vibrant and active brownfield program resulting in \$22 million in private investment and creation of 439 jobs. The City's brownfield inventory lists 51 brownfield sites ranging from a 5,500 foot former gas station to the 80-acre QCIC site. The City has provided financial or technical EPA assistance for 26 sites, and the City was the remedial applicant for 10 sites enrolled in Illinois EPA's voluntary Site Remediation Program (SRP).

Remediation of four sites in a two-block area of the city's downtown has resulted in private investment of \$7.3 million with creation of 84 jobs, retention of 72 jobs, and a rejuvenated commercial corridor.

The City transformed three adjacent brownfield sites into the Sylvan Slough Natural Area, a five-acre park on the Mississippi River. The former industrial properties were taken through the Illinois EPA's voluntary SRP by the City, and assessment was accomplished with an EPA grant. The Sylvan Slough Natural Area, dedicated in October 2007, will be maintained by the City Parks Department with assistance from River Action, a not-for-profit environmental organization.