

# New committee to meet to discuss redevelopment of brownfield sites

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By Bob Niedbala, Staff Writer

WAYNESBURG – Greene County Industrial Development Authority is hoping to create more public involvement in its effort to address brownfield sites through the formation of the Greene County Brownfield Redevelopment Advisory Committee.

The committee will hold its first meeting at 10 a.m. Wednesday in the second-floor conference room at the Greene County Office Building.

Municipal officials and representatives of other county development agencies will be invited to attend the meeting, GCIDA manager Crystal Simmons said. But any interested resident can attend.

The committee's purpose, Simmons said, "is to improve public participation and community involvement in the brownfield effort" being initiated by the authority.

A brownfield is land previously used for industrial or commercial purposes that may be contaminated by hazardous materials that complicates it being reused or redeveloped.

Brownfield sites can range from a small one-acre site once used for a gas station that may have contaminated soil or underground storage tanks to a large multi-acre site like the coal refuse dump in Mather.

The authority last month applied for a \$400,000 grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to inventory and assess the county's brownfield sites.

Once the authority has an idea of where the brownfield sites are and has an idea of their potential for redevelopment, it can apply for additional state and federal grants to help prepare the properties for reuse.

The authority hopes local officials and residents will attend the committee meeting to provide input to the authority in identifying and assessing brownfield sites, Simmons said.

"Local officials and residents know their community best," she said. They may not only be able to help identify relatively unknown sites but also provide information important to assessing the property's potential for development, she said.

A person might know something of the history of a particular property and efforts made to develop it that were frustrated by an environmental issue such as a buried fuel storage tank, she said.

The first meeting will involve organizing the committee. The authority also will discuss state and federal programs it began investigating that can provide funding for remediating brownfield sites.

A representative from Langan Engineering and Environmental Services, the consultant which prepared the authority's EPA grant application, also will be in attendance to answer any questions about brownfield programs.

The committee will continue to meet regardless of the authority's success in obtaining the EPA grant, Simmons said.

The authority can always reapply for the EPA grant if it does not receive an award the first time and will also be investigating other state-funded grant programs for brownfield development, she said.

Anyone with further questions about the committee or brownfield development can call Simmons at 724-852-5300.