



CLEAN Community Challenge Success Story:

Downtown Revitalization Tell City, Indiana



Background

The CLEAN stakeholder committee selected this downtown revitalization project as one of their five CLEAN goals, as several abandoned buildings in the downtown area were becoming a blight to the community.

Goal

Transform downtown by inventorying, assessing and cleaning up buildings and properties in the downtown area for public use. Perform necessary environmental testing and cleanup for properties in the target area.

Action Plan and Tasks Completed

- Designated a revitalization area that encompassed Tell City's downtown and riverfront neighborhoods
- Identified vacant, abandoned, foreclosed and run-down structures in need of demolition, including the William Tell Hotel, Tell City Chair and William Tell Woodcrafters
- Held meetings with both public and private stakeholders (citizens, businesses, etc.) to determine potential reuse ideas for the structures
- Worked with property owners and other city partners, including the Perry County Port Authority and Perry County Development Corporation, to encourage clean up and demolition of identified structures

Accomplishments

The city of Tell City, a member of the CLEAN program since 2008, has made great strides in revitalizing its downtown area. This project has not only improved the community from a visual standpoint, but has also improved the quality of life of Tell City in general.



The city transformed several privately owned commercial properties that had fallen into disrepair. Tell City officials encouraged action on the crumbling William Tell Hotel and gained ownership of Tell City Chair through an auction. The city acquired the former William Tell Woodcrafters property, and the brand new Tell City Depot now stands at the site. It is currently being leased to the Perry County Convention and Visitors Bureau as a welcome center and meeting space, with a gift shop selling items from local artists and vendors.

Photo: The Tell City Depot ribbon cutting ceremony (from left to right) Jacob Sipes, IHEDA Executive Director; Barbara Ewing, Mayor of Tell City; Peter Hunt, NSP Manager; Brian Philps, IHEDA Representative; Lt. Gov. Sue Ellspermann; and Jodi Swinford, IHEDA Representative (front)

The project is just the beginning of what community leaders plan to be an overall revitalization of Tell City's riverfront, adding homes and businesses to a section of town long considered defunct. Using \$3,259,092 in federal funding from a Neighborhood Stabilization Program grant, the city has acquired 22 sections of property, including the downtown and riverfront areas of Tell City. Eighteen vacant and abandoned structures have been demolished to date. Several Habitat for Humanity homes have been rehabilitated or constructed and seven new middle income homes have been built and sold. Additionally, four vacant lots have been sold to property owners for further development.

Savings

Savings for this project are difficult to measure in dollars, but are reflected in both its positive environmental impacts and impacts on the downtown infrastructure as a whole. Redeveloping downtown areas transforms neighborhoods into thriving new centers of commerce and industry, creates jobs through cleanup and reuse, and formats innovative partnerships among federal, state and local government entities and private-sector stakeholders.

Recommendations from the city of Tell City

Tell City acknowledges that this project could not have been accomplished without the public and private sectors working together to make both demolition and redevelopment possible. Additionally, city officials indicate public interest is of utmost importance in any city improvement initiative, stating a city alone cannot act on such initiatives without partnerships.

The Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) was established for the purpose of stabilizing communities that have suffered from foreclosures and abandonment. Goals of the program are realized through purchase and redevelopment of foreclosed and abandoned structures. NSP1, a term that references the NSP funds authorized under Division B Title III of the Housing and Economic Recovery Act (HERA) of 2008, provides grants to all states and selected local governments on a formula basis. For more information about the program and Neighborhood Stabilization Program grants, available through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, please visit http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/comm_planning/communitydevelopment/programs/neighborhoodspg/nsp1.



Photos: Before and After - The Tell City Depot

About the CLEAN Program

CLEAN stands for Comprehensive Local Environmental Action Network. The CLEAN Community Challenge is a voluntary recognition program for cities, towns, and counties that go above and beyond environmental regulatory compliance and make significant commitments to environmental management. For more information about CLEAN, please visit <http://www.in.gov/idem/prevention/2361.htm>.