First Home Nears Completion

The City of Maquoketa was awarded $113,000 from a USDA-Community Facilities grant to build a new fire truck for the Maquoketa Fire Department. The City of Maquoketa was able to put together its own program. The Iowa Finance Authority has awarded Homes for the South Dakota councils of governments and others. Newton Correctional Facility has adopted a project that will provide inmates with important job training to use once they are released.

New Fire Truck for Maquoketa

The City of Maquoketa was awarded $113,000 from a USDA-Community Facilities grant to purchase an Aerial (fire truck) and outfit it for service with the Maquoketa Fire Department. The purchase of the new truck is a 15 year update from their previous truck which was over 34 years old and starting to age. The apparatus will serve the Maquoketa Fire District of approximately 144 square miles and with 30 trained volunteer fire members.

Brownfields Site Revitalized

The city completed a Phase II ESA using ECIA Brownfields Assessment Coalition funds awarded under CERCLA section 104(k). The tests determined that the underground storage tanks did not pose any risk of release or concern. However, an asbestos-containing materials (ACM) investigation was recommended. The next step is to characterize the site and then determine if the site presents an unacceptable risk to human health and the environment. ECIA assisted the city with asbestos abatement through CERCLA section 128(a) sub-award funding.

One of the sites revitalized by the ECIA Brownfields Assessment Coalition has been showcased by the EPA in their monthly bulletin. The former Smitty’s Appliance/Auto Service property in Manchester Iowa sat precariously close to the Maquoketa River outside of Manchester. Due to repeated flooding from the river, the businesses finally closed their doors for good, leaving behind underground storage tanks and asbestos-ridden buildings.

The city of Manchester acquired the properties through voluntary purchase. Prior to the city’s acquisition, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) provided funding for a Phase I environmental site assessment (ESA). This non-intrusive process helps to determine if hazardous materials are present. The tests determined that the underground storage tanks did not pose any risk of release or concern. However, an asbestos-containing materials investigation was recommended. The next step is to characterize the site and then determine if the site poses an unacceptable risk to human health and the environment.

Asbestos testing of soils or groundwater for contaminants (Phase II ESA) is necessary.

Program Provides Emergency Funding

Dubuque initiatives, a nonprofit that focuses on supporting challenging projects, addressing job creation, and revitalizing the community has started an emergency “bridge financing” program partnering with ECIA Business Growth to administer the loan fund. This program will be distributing up to $10,000 per business for City of Dubuque companies that employ 20 or fewer workers. The emergency program is meant to provide funds to businesses in the waiting period before they receive funds from previously applied for loans and grants from state or federal programs.

This “bridge-loan” will be available to companies that previously applied for funds through state or SBA programs. In many cases, businesses have been awarded funding through those programs but haven’t received it yet. In these instances, selected businesses would be given no-interest loans for 60 days and would retire them once they receive their state or federal funds.

Businesses located within the City of Dubuque can apply for assistance by calling the COVID-19 helpline at 563-588-3350. Qualifying businesses will be referred to ECIA and ECIA staff will work with the business through the application process.

This idea originally started in South Dakota under the “Governor’s House program,” a similar program that has provided more than 2,000 homes to the elderly, persons with disabilities, and income-qualified families in South Dakota. Homes were built at the Sioux Falls State Prison and then transported throughout the state after several meetings with the South Dakota councils of government and others. Newton Correctional Facility has adopted a project that will provide inmates with important job training to use once they are released.

After clearance and removal was complete, the city developed the site into Riverfront Park, which now includes a public shelter, restroom and shower house, and public event and concert space. Riverfront Park became the “water trailhead” for the city’s Whitewater Park. Manchester had previously invested millions in adjusting the Maquoketa River’s water flow to create a whitewater sport-challenge route. The acquisition, cleanup and revitalization of the Riverfront Park helped to make the final connection to Whitewater Park for public access.

This program was made possible through the City of Manchester’s commitment to make the park a significant asset for the community and for the state. The project was funded through a combination of resources, including federal, state, and local grants, as well as donations from local businesses and individuals. The park is now open to the public and is a popular destination for visitors and residents alike.

This is a great story of how a community comes together to make a positive impact on the environment and its residents. It’s a testament to the power of collaboration and community investment in creating a better future.