

Former Miles City, Montana Eyesore Converted to Affordable Housing



For more than ten years, Miles City, Montana was home to a two-block abandoned and vandalized area comprised of two former hospital structures and a six-story building. This community eyesore was recently cleaned up and redeveloped into much-needed affordable housing with the support of more than \$5 million in leveraged resources, including an EPA Brownfields Cleanup grant.

Public Support Initiates Revitalization Project

Melissa Hartman, a lifelong Miles City resident, grew up walking past a two-block area every day on her way to elementary school that was home to two hospital facilities built in 1910 and 1930, and a six-story building built in 1950. In 1990, the three structures were sold to an owner that stripped them of all salable materials, then abandoned them. Years later, Melissa began working for the Miles City Housing Authority and decided to do something to clean up the vandalized buildings. Through the Miles City Housing Authority, Melissa helped organize community meetings and a two-day design charrette that drew architects, county officials, the mayor, council members, and the public. The MT Department of Environmental Quality funded environmental assessments conducted between 2004 and 2005, and the Miles City Housing Authority funded a market study that demonstrated a local need for family-sized affordable housing. This, coupled with the significant public support shown at the community meetings and design charrette, helped determine the future use of the structures.

Leveraged Resources Make Project Goals a Reality

Resources were leveraged from the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in the form of a Community Development Block Grant, and a private donation from Avera Healthcare. These funds were used to create a redevelopment plan that called for the revitalization of the 1910 and 1930 hospital structure into affordable housing and the cleanup and demolition of the 1950 six-story building to make way for landscaped green space. The project leveraged \$5,141,846 from nine different funding sources for cleanup and revitalization, including \$2.2 million in low income housing tax credits.

Hazardous materials, mostly asbestos, had been used in the construction of the six-story building and needed to be remediated to prevent public health risks. In October 2006, The Miles City Housing Authority received the funding they needed through a \$200,000 EPA Brownfields Cleanup grant. Asbestos, vermiculate and a few barrels of oil and detergent were removed in the spring of 2007.



The completed Cornerstone Apartments.

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Leveraged more than \$5 million for revitalization activities
- Removed asbestos, vermiculate and barrels of oil and detergent from the six-story building
- Provided 21 family-sized affordable housing units

Reuse into Affordable Housing is a “Cornerstone” for the Community

Today, cleanup is complete and the two former hospital buildings have been completely renovated into 21 family-sized apartment units for low to moderate income families, with a total of 31,000 sq. ft. of space. The six-story building was demolished and converted to greenspace, a new off-street parking area, and a playground for the tenants of the new apartments.

The newly revitalized area was christened “The Cornerstone” during an emotional ribbon cutting ceremony held in November 2007, which was attended by more than 500 Miles City community members. Since then, the Miles City Housing Authority has received over 60 apartment applications and rented out 16 of the 21 units. Melissa hopes to have the remaining 5 units rented by the end of winter 2008 and cannot wait to finally see her childhood dream become a reality.



The six-story building during demolition.

LEVERAGED RESOURCES

- \$2.2 million in low income housing tax credits
- \$1,056,846 from USDA Rural Development
- \$600,000 from Avera Health Care / Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth, TX
- \$500,000 from the HOME Partnership Program through the MT Department of Commerce
- \$500,000 from the HUD Community Development Block Grant Program
- \$200,000 from an EPA Brownfields Cleanup Grant
- \$50,000 from Home & Gardens TV (HGTV) through the National Trust
- \$25,000 from the Federal Home Loan Bank of Des Moines, IA
- \$10,000 from Walmart

For additional information, please contact:

Miles City Housing Authority: (406) 234-3433

EPA Region 8 Brownfields Program: (303) 312-7074 • www.epa.gov/region8/brownfields



United States
Environmental Protection
Agency

Region 8
Brownfields

EPA 908-A-08-001
May 2008