

# Sustainable Reuse Through Recycling of Construction and Demolition Materials, Valley, Alabama

Valley, Alabama, (population 9,000) dates to the 1860s, when twin textile mills were built along the banks of the Chattahoochee River. In 1980, four mill villages incorporated and became the City of Valley. Since the city was almost totally dependent upon the textile industry, Valley's economy was hit hard by the closing of the mills. With an eye to revitalization, the city purchased the Langdale Mill in 2004 for \$300,000 at a bankruptcy auction. One year later, the Riverdale Mill was purchased for \$150,000. Together, the two mills cover 38 acres of riverfront property along the Chattahoochee River.

In 2007, the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) performed an environmental assessment on the sites for the city. EPA then awarded the city a brownfields assessment grant, and the assessment became the basis for developing a cleanup plan. In 2008, EPA awarded the city a brownfields cleanup grant to address the contamination found during the assessment. Redevelopment will require the removal of equipment and demolition of some buildings. The city asked EPA for technical assistance to conduct these activities in a greener sustainable fashion.

In response, EPA selected the Langdale and Riverdale Mills as one of 16 Sustainability Pilots. These pilots demonstrate and promote best practices that can be used by other communities across the country and promote the mission of EPA's Brownfields and Land Revitalization Program to reuse brownfields sustainably. The Valley pilot promotes sustainable redevelopment through reuse and recycling of construction and demolition materials. Under this pilot EPA provided technical assistance to the city to create an inventory of materials that can be reused or recycled from the Langdale Mill site through deconstruction of buildings and other structures. The pilot study also provided the city with suggestions on how to make the redevelopment of the mill property greener and more sustainable. The reuse of deconstructed materials on-site is helping to achieve several of Valley's goals for the project, such as implementing and promoting sustainable redevelopment opportunities, interpreting the site's rich architectural and industrial heritage, and creating local jobs or volunteer opportunities.

Valley converted a small portion of the site into office space and a sewing center. The city partnered with InterfaceFLOR, a carpet tile manufacturer in the redevelopment effort. The sewing center produces purses and tote bags from first run carpet fabric that otherwise would become waste. These bags are purchased back by InterfaceFLOR for sales meetings and marketing. InterfaceFLOR has a "zero waste" policy, and the Valley bag project helps it meet corporate goals. All profits from the bags are reinvested in the business to create new jobs. In addition, the city developed a Farmers Market in the Langdale Mill parking lot that provides marketing and sales opportunities for local farmers and fresh vegetables for the community.

The City of Valley, EPA Region 4, and ADEM are partners in continuing the momentum to secure additional interest and leveraging support from other agencies, organizations, and academic institutions to complete the redevelopment of the Langdale Mill. Final plans include a conference center with retail and restaurants along the Chattahoochee River. The U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Appalachian Regional Commission also have contributed federal funds to this economic development project.



*Farmers market in the Langdale Mill parking lot*