

Evanston, Wyoming Redevelops an Historical Former Rail Yard into Multipurpose Event Space



EPA Brownfields Assessment funding helped the City of Evanston, Wyoming redevelop its historic Roundhouse Complex into a centerpiece for the city that has increased its tourism economy. This project now serves as a model for restoring historic buildings on formerly contaminated lands.

Railroad Boom Comes to Evanston

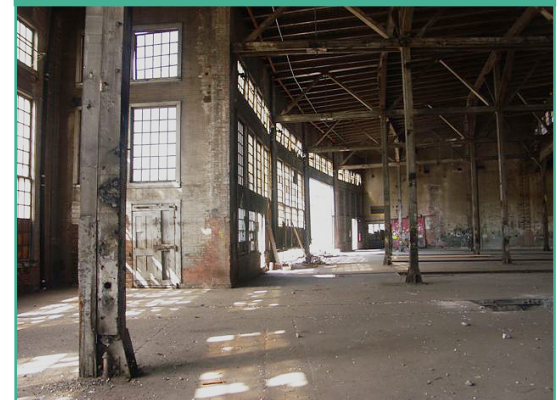
Since 1868, Evanston has been a hub of railroad activity as a stop on the transcontinental railroad. Located just 80 miles from Salt Lake City, Utah, Evanston offered a convenient location to fill up on coal and water as steam locomotives could only travel about 100 miles before refueling. In the early 1900s the Union Pacific Railroad opened a repair and maintenance facility in Evanston, providing approximately 125 jobs for residents. In 1971, due to the increasing use of diesel locomotives, the Union Pacific Railroad shut down its operations in Evanston and donated its 290-acre property and buildings to the city. The Roundhouse Complex, a 22-acre portion of the donated property, included a Machine Shop, Roundhouse, and other auxiliary buildings. For the next 27 years, the city leased the Roundhouse Complex to various rail companies. Though the city was interested in eventually redeveloping the property for other uses, it recognized the importance of preserving and restoring the historic Roundhouse Complex.

Environmental Assessment Lays Tracks for Redevelopment

Through the early 1990s, as the demand for rail maintenance decreased, the city considered historic restoration options for the Roundhouse Complex. Because the property had been used as a maintenance and repair facility, the city was concerned about environmental contamination. In addition, the site's buildings were in dire need of repair. In 1994, the city funded a preliminary environmental assessment and an architectural study to better understand potential restoration and reuse opportunities. Additional environmental assessments were necessary and in 1998, Evanston received the funding it needed through a \$200,000 EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant. An additional \$200,000 in supplemental and greenspace funding was also provided by EPA. The assessments were completed in the summer of 2001 and identified asbestos, lead, benzene, and arsenic. Cleanup began on the Machine Shop in October 2002, at an estimated cost of \$140,000. Investigation and cleanup activities were conducted under Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality's Voluntary Remediation Program, with \$200,000 provided by WYDEQ for cleanup and construction of the Machine Shop parking lot. Groundwater on the property continues to be monitored to ensure the cleanup's integrity.



The Machine Shop has been converted to a premier event space.



KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Developed partnerships with more than 15 federal, state, and local agencies/organizations
- Redeveloped a portion of the 22 acre Roundhouse Complex, leading the way for full redevelopment
- Leveraged more than 200 new jobs

Redevelopment of the Machine Shop Spurs Tourism through New Event Space

With assessments and cleanup finished, the Machine Shop underwent a \$2.5 million redevelopment and restoration that included extensive efforts to maintain its historical integrity. Since its opening in February 2004 as premier event space, the Machine Shop's 500 person capacity and large kitchen has greatly enhanced the City of Evanston's ability to host events and increase tourism. The space has been used for events such as the annual Urban Renewal Ball, the annual Roundhouse Festival, special event dinners, junior proms, and the Cowboy Day Spring Fling.

Additional Redevelopment Efforts are Underway at the Roundhouse

With restoration of the former Machine Shop complete, redevelopment efforts are now underway at the 65,000 square-foot roundhouse. To aid restoration efforts, the property was split into four roughly equal sections; the first section is scheduled to open in April of 2009 as a state-of-the-art conference center to compliment the Machine Shop. Though plans for the remaining parts of the Roundhouse have not been finalized, many city officials would like to see these last three sections used as City Hall, bringing various city offices into one building.

Partnerships are Key to Redevelopment Success

Assessment, cleanup and redevelopment would not have been possible without significant leveraged resources. The city has developed more than 15 partnerships with local, state, and federal agencies representing areas such as historical preservation, environmental cleanup and economic development. One such partnership was with the Wyoming Business Council, which gave the city a \$1.5 million grant that was used to replace thousands of windows at the Roundhouse and restore the building's masonry.

Historical Restoration Spurs Tourism Reuse

Through redevelopment of the Roundhouse Complex, Evanston has increased its tourism economy by converting an under-utilized property to a premier events center and future state-of-the-art conference center. Since redevelopment began, over 200 jobs have been leveraged. Of primary importance, Evanston has redeveloped and preserved a classic piece of Americana that future generations will learn from and enjoy.

LEVERAGED RESOURCES

- \$400,000 from an EPA Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilot (includes Supplemental and Greenspace funding)
- \$200,000 from the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality in Brownfields Cleanup Assistance
- \$1.5 million from the Wyoming Business Council
- More than \$1 million from a Wyoming DOT Transportation Enhancement Activities Local (TEAL) Grant
- More than \$50,000 annually from Urban Renewal Ball proceeds
- \$50,000 grant from the Union Pacific Railroad
- \$30,000 from Preserve America
- Technical assistance from the National Trust for Historic Preservation
- Technical assistance from the Lincoln-Uinta County Association of Governments (LUAG)

For additional information, please contact:

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



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