

Brownfields Success Story

Albany General Store

Albany, Vt.

A 100-year-old general store that closed eight years ago after a fire, has now been redeveloped into an environmentally friendly modern-day general store that serves the town of Albany, Vt. The store acts as a place for residents to gather and connect outside of work and home.

Public and private groups came together to make this nearly \$1 million project a reality. 16 percent of the funding was provided through the EPA Brownfields program. The value of this project shines through the fact that about half the funds came through local donations which is a significant amount for this town.

Priming the Property for Redevelopment

The original general store, which closed after it was gutted by a fire in 2013, was for sale for five years with no buyers stepping forward. In 2018, Albany Community Trust, a community development non-profit formed by local citizens purchased the store and a neighboring lot.

After the trust bought the site, it faced the challenge of paying off the initial investment. Donations and state and federal grants funded the renovations, including an expansion of the store. The next roadblock was environmental contamination, including buried gas tanks and aging gas pumps on the property, as well as the likelihood of isolated areas of petroleum contamination. Extensive environmental studies turned up unexpected additional contaminants, specifically arsenic, likely from the multiple fires on the property and surrounding properties throughout the years.

The Lamoille County Planning Commission provided \$32,894 in assessment funding for the Phase 1 and Phase 2 site assessments conducted from April 2018 to February 2019 to determine the nature and extent of contamination. In addition, the Northern Vermont Development Association provided an additional \$4,102 in assessment funding from September 2019 to February 2020 for cleanup planning. Based on this work a plan was developed to clean up the site by digging up the gasoline-contaminated soils and disposing of them properly off-site. The plan was approved by the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation, giving the trust a green light to proceed. Site cleanup can be very costly, especially for a small nonprofit. Luckily, the State of Vermont was able to provide two key sources of funding to pay for the cleanup. Vermont DEC provided \$32,534 from the petroleum trust fund, and the Agency of Commerce and Community Development provided an additional \$17,850 from their Brownfields revolving loan fund program.



Pre-redevelopment of Albany General Store.
Credit to Albany Community Trust

EPA Grant Recipient:
Lamoille County Planning Commission

Northeastern Vermont Development
Association

Vermont Agency of Commerce and
Community Development

Grant Types:
Assessment, Revolving Loan Fund

Current Use:
General Store

Former Uses:
General Store



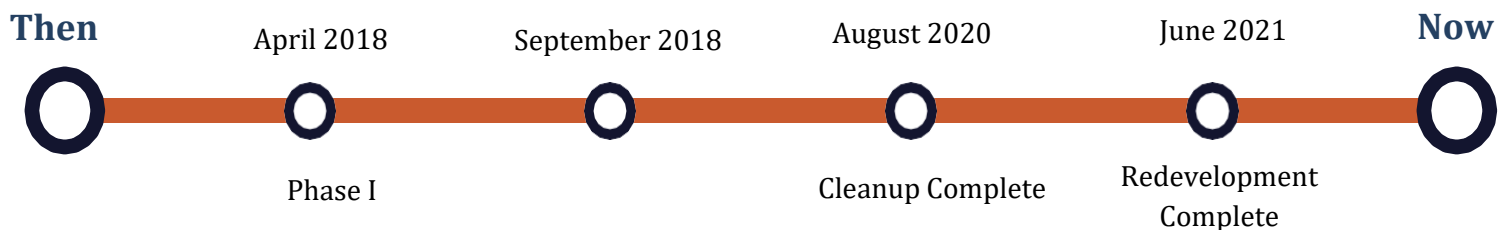
Today

The general store re-opened in June 2021, after sitting idle for almost eight years. The new store anticipated immediately created six full time jobs, an economic benefit in a village that has no other commercial venues. Besides acting as a “third place” for residents to gather outside their homes or work, the store will support local artisanal businesses by featuring local Albany products such as milk, cheese, chicken, apple cider products, and jewelry.

The redevelopment of the Albany general store spurred the creation of Albany Community Trust, a non-profit that will continue to exist and will use some of the revenue from its lease to fund other projects. The organization has considered funding improved signs for snowmobile and mountain-bike trail and the re-use of the village’s former historic schoolhouse as a new home for the library, historical society, and co-working space.

“The clean-up of this property and re-opening of our general store has already had a transformative impact on this community just after two months. We know this new building will be an important part of Albany for decades to come.”

-Hannah Pearce, Albany Community Trust President



For more information:

Visit the EPA Brownfields website at www.epa.gov/brownfields or contact Christine Beling, 617-918-1792 and beling.christine@epa.gov.