

**Contact Information:**

Edward VanderVries, Director  
Department of Land Services  
[vandervriese@vbco.org](mailto:vandervriese@vbco.org)  
(269) 657-8243



*June 2, 2016*

***For Immediate Release***

**EPA Awards \$400,000 Assessment Grant to the Van Buren County  
Brownfield Redevelopment Authority**

Paw Paw, MI – The Van Buren County Brownfield Redevelopment Authority (VBCBRA) was successful in securing a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Brownfield Community-Wide Assessment Grant. These funds were granted to assess contaminated or potentially contaminated sites, provide cleanup planning and community outreach activities. Although Brownfield sites are typically contaminated sites, they may also be blighted, functionally obsolete, tax reverted, or historic properties and eligible to receive assessment dollars. These grant funds will provide the resources not only for environmental assessments but cleanup planning and community outreach activities as well. EPA Assessment Grants are extremely competitive; in Michigan only four communities received the EPA funds out of twenty-six applications. The communities that received funding have demonstrated leadership, developed strong local and state partnerships, and have the skills necessary to transform brownfield sites into productive uses which will benefit grant targeted areas and the community as a whole.

In June of 2002, the county formed a Brownfield Redevelopment Authority (BRA), with the purpose of identifying possible brownfield sites in the county and subsequently searching for resources to help move them toward redevelopment. Since its inception, the VBCBRA has received three previous EPA Assessment Grants worth \$600,000. These earlier grants were used to conduct assessment activities on properties within multiple municipalities across the county; including environmental assessments (Phase I & II ESA, BEA) as well as asbestos surveys and underground storage tank removals to support property acquisition and redevelopment.

“These grants will empower communities to transform idle, languishing lands into vibrant hubs for business, jobs, and recreation”, said EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy. “It's all about providing that initial funding, and sparking that first conversation to set stalled sites on a path toward smart, safe redevelopment that directly benefits communities.” These highly competitive funds will help the county move forward with their vision and provide the targeted communities the resources necessary to leverage additional partnerships.

To learn more about Van Buren County’s Brownfield Redevelopment Authority, please visit our website at <http://www.vbco.org/brownfield.asp> or contact Edward VanderVries at [vandervriese@vbco.org](mailto:vandervriese@vbco.org) or (269) 657-8243.

#####