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**Money available for underground storage tank removal,  
brownfields reuse and hazardous discharge cleanup**  
*County offers towns and residents guidance through process*

FREEHOLD – County officials want you to know that federal and state money is available to towns grappling with how to clean up a hazardous materials discharge or revitalize a brownfields site, as well as money for homeowners who wish to dispose of underground storage tanks.

“The availability of federal and state money to address local site remediation can help municipalities get these sites back on the tax rolls,” said Freeholder John D’Amico Jr., liaison to the county Planning Board and the Department of Economic Development & Tourism. “Towns can actively support and return properties to economic viability; it’s important we not let sites lie fallow and be nonproductive.”

Grants and loans are available from either the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) or the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP).

- The EPA Brownfields Program provides financial and technical assistance to revitalize sites that have been identified as brownfields.
- The DEP’s Hazardous Discharge Site Remediation Fund provides grants to public entities for the investigation and cleanup of a suspected or known discharge of a hazardous substance.
- The DEP also offers grants to homeowners to replace residential underground storage tanks with above-ground tanks and to clean up contamination from any tanks that may have leaked.

The Monmouth County Planning Board will provide technical assistance to municipalities and homeowners wishing to take advantage of these grants.

“We have learned that New Jersey is falling behind in attending to these areas of environmental concern,” said D’Amico. “We want to help our towns and homeowners take advantage of these grant and loan opportunities while the money is available.”

D’Amico, Freeholder Barbara J. McMorrow, County Administrator Robert M. Czech and Planning Board staff members attended a seminar on the brownfields program recently at the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers University, New Brunswick, where these programs were discussed. The Bloustein School is home to the National Center for Neighborhood and Brownfields Redevelopment.

(more)

A brownfield is defined as a property that could be expanded, redeveloped or reused were it not complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant or contaminant. The EPA's Brownfields Program provides financial and technical assistance to revitalize the site.

Eligible sites may include abandoned gasoline stations, dump sites or buildings with lead or asbestos contamination. Superfund sites are not eligible for EPA brownfields funding.

"The EPA Brownfields Program is designed to empower states, counties, communities and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up and reuse brownfields," McMorrow said.

The EPA grant will cover the cost of assessment, remediation and job training. Grants are awarded to a coalition of three or more public entities, such as counties and municipalities, in amounts up to \$1 million. The county can act as the lead agency for these grants if municipalities are willing to participate, D'Amico said.

Grants and loans also are available from the state to clean up the discharge of hazardous materials. The Hazardous Discharge Site Remediation Fund is administered through a partnership between the DEP and the state's Economic Development Authority (EDA). It is a grant and loan program available to public entities for the investigation and cleanup of a suspected or known discharge of a hazardous substance.

"The Hazardous Discharge Site Remediation Fund is a valuable resource for municipalities and the county to evaluate and clean up properties identified as areas in need of redevelopment and to facilitate the reuse of brownfield properties," McMorrow said. "There are many different types of grants and loans available to public entities as part of the remediation process in New Jersey."

For homeowners, the state is offering grants to replace residential underground storage tanks with above-ground tanks and to clean up contamination from any tanks that may have leaked. The DEP is offering free workshops about the grant program and the application process.

"With homeowners' insurance policies now limiting liability for leaking underground storage tanks used to store heating oil, replacing them is a smart move," D'Amico said. "If you are considering selling your home it would be wise to take advantage of this program now, especially with the growing awareness by prospective homebuyers about the potential problems with these tanks."

More information about these grant and loan programs can be obtained by contacting Bonnie Goldschlag at the Monmouth County Planning Board, at 732-431-7460.

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