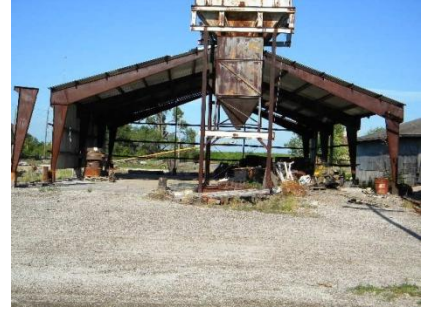


Blighted Property and Hazardous Waste Clean Up – “Economic Development”

In the late 1800's the Mississippi River and the rail road represented the communication and economic lifeline to the rest of the world for Canton, Missouri. Many businesses were developed along the river. As the city of Canton evolved over the last one hundred and eighty years, the major business focus has shifted from the area next to the river to 4th street. Many small businesses had settled in the “down town” area due to the location of “old” highway 61 (now route B).

As the commerce centers moved, the “original” Canton has slowly evolved to include a number of blighted properties that were of little use and potentially dangerous. These properties had a group of owners who were willing to sell their land but did not have the means or plans to clean them up and make them attractive to new and developing businesses.

Several of the buildings contained hazardous waste related to the agricultural fertilizer business. At one time, four to six tons of **Diazinon** were being stored 213 feet from the third grade at the elementary school.



The community needed to do the following:

1. Transform blighted property into property that can be used for economic development and managed by the Lewis County Industrial Development Authority
2. Clean up potentially dangerous property that may house hazardous materials
3. Make the existing dock area more usable for commercial enterprise
4. Stabilize and control property that is blighted and in the existing “Downtown Vision and Development Strategy” approved by the Canton City Council in 2008 and written by “Special Place Development” group based in Columbia, MO

Canton Downtown Vision and Development Strategy



Scope community involvement and discovery:

Bill Smith of The Lewis County Development Authority (LCIDA) adopted the project as his major focus and wrote a \$2,000,000 stimulus grant to purchase blighted properties, demolish the buildings and clean up the property to make them ready for economic development . Full support from the community included The Lewis County Historical Society, The Canton Chamber of Commerce, Lewis County Port Authority, The Missouri Department of Conservation ,The City of Canton , Ursa Farmers Cooperative and Senator Wes Shoemyer.



The community, including the Illinois supporters, have come to understand that Lock & Dam 20 and the waters below it have some unique features that will make it attractive to businesses that need river access. First, the waters below the Canton Lock and Dam are considered open 12 months out of the year. While ice does occur, in most years barges can ship south out of Canton all year round – a dock facility would not have to shut down during the winter. Second, shipping rates are less below the Lock and Dam than above it. Shipping out of Canton would represent a significant cost reduction as compared to shipping the same products above the dam.

On October 21st, 2010 Governor Nixon traveled to Canton and awarded the stimulus grant to fund the project.

The clean up of the hazardous materials has taken place according to the Division of Natural Resources and HUD guidelines. With a good deal of the funds for cleanup going to local contractors.

Planning is now in place to improve the existing dock by extending the usability by a series of pilings and dredging. The economic future of Canton may ironically be found in the river front that was abandon some years ago.

The community is now actively working with several companies that find it a good move to establish themselves in Canton. The combination of a major four lane north and south route, possible rail transportation plus a viable river dock and the availability of generous river front property positions Canton for economic growth in the very near future.



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Thursday, December 30, 2010

Looking back at 2010

Compiled by Dan Steinbeck, editor

The top 100 news events in Lewis County

1 - Missouri Governor Jay Nixon announced a \$1.9 million Community Development Block Grant in October to clean up 10 blighted properties, some of which will eventually house an Ursa Farmer's Co-op grain elevator.

2 - Wet fields in the spring delayed farmers from getting into the fields. Later rains destroyed a lot of the crops that did get planted.

3 - Ayers Oil Company announced plans to build a truck stop in Canton across from Comfort Inn.

4 - The Canton Lady Tigers basketball team took fourth place in Class 2, ending the year with a 25-7 record. It was the second year in a row that Canton was a top-four finalist. Days after the loss, Seth Minter left Canton to become Culver-Stockton College ladies head basketball coach.

5 - Kourtnie Geisendorfer, 25, Lewistown died May 15 when she crested a hill on 195th Street near Monticello and drove into a flash flood that covered the road by several feet.

6 - Lewis County C-1 lost an accumulated 239 years of experience with the retirement of seven teachers and two administrators in May.

7 - In August, a revamped ballot issue was passed, making Monticello and Williamstown part of the Canton Fire Department. Unlike the issue that failed in April, less Clark County property was included in August.

8 - A Highland senior dies Nov. 29 from injuries sustained in a wreck the day before. The 18-year old driver of the truck, Mont Lillard Corbin, was arrested for driving while intoxicated, and the charge later was amended to manslaughter. Also arrested was James Cannon, 45, LaBelle, the one who reportedly supplied Corbin with alcohol.

9 - LaBelle firefighter Bill Watters was charged in November 2010 with arson for setting fire to a hog barn



in April 2009, killing at least 50 hogs and doing over \$100,000 in damage. Additional charges were added later for fires in 2009.

10 - Lewis County native Army Sgt. Roger Rathbun received the Distinguished Flying Cross in January for a combat mission in November 2009 where he was hit by a rocket propelled grenade, which didn't detonate.

PROGRESS - Governor Jay Nixon (right) visits with Jim Upchurch (left), a consultant for Ursa Farmer's Cooperative, and Terry Fretwell (center), Mayor of Canton. The top story of 2010 was Nixon's October announcement of a \$1.9 million grant to buy blighted properties in Canton, some of which will be converted to a new grain