

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



Sites in Reuse

Boise Cascade/Onan Corp/Medtronics Inc. Superfund Site

1400 73rd Avenue, NE, Fridley, Minnesota 55432



From left to right: The Murphy Warehouse Company building; The Cummins Power Generation company in the Onan Corporation building; trucks entering and leaving.

Site size: 183 acres

Site Reuses: Three companies currently operate on the site: Onan Corporation, Medtronic Inc., and Murphy Warehouse Company.



INTRODUCTION

The Boise Cascade/Onan Corporation/Medtronics Inc. site is located in Fridley, Anoka County, Minnesota. Fridley is approximately 17 miles from St. Paul, the state capital, and is part of the Twin Cities Metropolitan area. The site is in a largely residential area, with two elementary schools and two parks located nearby. The 183-acre site is divided into two main sections. The Cummins Power Generation Company uses a 133-acre portion of the site to operate a manufacturing facility where it builds Onan Corporation (Onan) brand power generators. Medtronic Inc. (Medtronic) operates a medical technology facility on a 50-acre portion of the site. The site's short history is worth noting because the site was cleaned up and redeveloped not once, but twice, in a 20-year period. Despite its eventful past, the entire site is now successfully in reuse.

THE FIRST CLEANUP

When Onan began construction to expand its facility in 1979, officials discovered soil contaminated with creosote residue and pentachlorophenol (PCP, a wood preservative used during the wood treating process) on the site where Onan was ready to build. Medtronic was also looking to construct new facilities on its portion of the site at the time, and officials also found similar contaminants on portions of Medtronic's property. Beginning in 1984, sludges, wastes from lagoons, and contaminated soils were excavated from the Medtronic property and a cap and slurry wall were placed over a portion of

the Onan property. The site was added to the National Priorities List (NPL) in September of 1984. In December of 1984, a Minnesota State district court issued the first Injunctive Order for a Superfund site in the State of Minnesota. The Injunctive Order required and dictated the terms for the cleanup process, procedures, and remedy for the Onan portion of the site. The Order effectively ensured that the Onan portion of the site was cleaned by Onan, Boise Cascade, Soo Line Railroad Company, and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA). Boise Cascade was financially responsible for cleaning up the creosote contamination. Onan paid for the sampling and removal of paint wastes. Medtronic and Boise Cascade signed an agreement to clean up the Medtronic portion of the site. After the site was cleaned up, both Onan and Medtronic resumed building their new facilities and continued to operate their businesses on the site. The site was deleted from the NPL in 1995. Ground water monitoring is continuing at the site to demonstrate the effectiveness of the remedial actions.

PLANNING FOR ADDITIONAL REUSE

In 1999, Onan and Murphy Warehouse Company (Murphy) teamed to create a new 400,000 square foot warehouse and distribution center on a vacant piece of property within the boundary of the former Superfund site. According to Mac Hyde of site redeveloper Real Estate Recycling, LLC (RER), the location was ideal for Murphy because the company was a client of Onan and shipped many of Onan's finished

products. The warehouse would benefit Onan by giving the company more space to store products and parts for the power generators that are manufactured by the Cummins Group. The new warehouse would come at an opportunistic time since both companies were trying to expand their businesses. In order to make this vacant portion of the site safe for reuse as a warehouse, Onan and Murphy retained RER to prepare and implement a site remediation and redevelopment plan. Both Onan and Murphy saw the benefit of performing the additional remediation needed, beyond what the responsible parties had been required to do, in order to reap the future benefits of the warehouse and distribution center.

THE SECOND CLEANUP

RER knew that the site's Superfund history would present unique challenges to its development project, and that close coordination with the MPCA would be necessary throughout the process. As planned with MPCA, RER submitted a remedial action plan in November 1998 to the MPCA for approval; this plan included cleaning contaminated soils left behind at the site after the Superfund cleanup in the 1980s. Soon after groundbreaking at the site, over 100 55-gallon drums filled with paint wastes were unexpectedly discovered. Investigations revealed that Onan disposed of the barrels after the first cleanup, and it was named the responsible party.

Mac Hyde of RER says the surprise unearthing of the drums was the main obstacle to reuse in an otherwise smooth redevelopment process. For many developers, the startling discovery of contaminated drums might have posed an insurmountable obstacle. But RER has substantial experience in redeveloping formerly contaminated properties, and the company had developed a contingency plan for situations of this type before the project began. The plan accommodated extra expenses and work stoppages in the face of unexpected incidents; as a result, resources and time were not wasted due to discovery of the drums. Another complication was an engineered capped area that held contaminated soil from the first site cleanup. When building the warehouse, RER had to take the capped area into consideration because it was located close to the warehouse site. The redevelopers had to be sure that they built the warehouse without compromising the integrity of the cap.

In order to address lenders' concerns about the site, Murphy requested that part of the site be de-listed from MPCA's Permanent List of Priorities, the Minnesota State Superfund list. According to Steve Schoff, the MPCA project manager



Loading docks at the Cummins Power Generation facility

for the site, a partial de-listing gave the lenders the extra comfort they needed to continue financing construction of the warehouse.

A SMOOTH REUSE PROCESS

Even though Murphy was concerned about contaminants at the site, Mac Hyde believes reuse planning helped to alleviate the company's concerns. "Without the ability to assess and explain environmental conditions, provide a plan, and get funding for the project," he says, "the whole redevelopment would not have happened." The extremely efficient reuse process lasted one year from the time that RER submitted the remedial action plan to the MPCA in November of 1998. The remediation of the 30-acre warehouse site was performed in the spring and summer of 1999 and the building was completed and occupied by November 1, 1999.

In addition to the extra space and convenience provided by the new warehouse, the project helped to increase real estate values of surrounding properties. The project also significantly increased the value of the once vacant parcel of the Onan property, which was previously valued at \$0.00. Steve Schoff says that the site offers a lesson about redevelopment at former Superfund sites. "It makes sense to reuse land that would otherwise go to waste," he says, "if there's a lesson to be learned: It can be done."

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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Site Summary: <http://www.epa.gov/region5/superfund/npl/minnesota/MND053417515.htm>