



## News Release

**For Immediate Release**

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### **Cochise County Encourages Property Owners, Developers and Public to Submit Nominations for Properties That Can Benefit from Free Assessments**

**BISBEE, Az. (March 24, 2021)** – The Cochise County Property Reuse and Revitalization Program continues to seek and accept nominations for properties that could benefit from a free environmental assessment. These assessments are typically performed on underutilized and vacant, or abandoned buildings and properties to help speed their potential redevelopment and reuse.

In 2019, Cochise County was awarded a \$600,000 grant through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Brownfields Program. The grant's primary purpose is to aid the transformation of local properties from liabilities into community assets. The grant provides the means for approved sites to have a Phase I and/or Phase II environmental assessment, for asbestos and lead-based paint sampling of buildings, and to develop clean-up plans for future redevelopment opportunities.

When a property has an unknown or poorly documented history, it can be difficult to sell, lease, or receive financing to establish or expand a business. This grant eliminates concerns about unknown environmental liabilities and makes properties more attractive and valuable to investors, buyers and developers. It also makes it easier for owners to secure funding.

To date, eight properties in Cochise County have received a free environmental assessment using grant funding. Last year, the historic Chevrolet dealership building in Willcox was approved for a brownfield site assessment. Since the completion of that work, redevelopment of the property has begun, with the goal of transforming the building into a wine tasting room.

"The old Chevy building is located near the entrance to Historic Downtown Willcox and was the perfect candidate property for the grant," says Dan Coxworth, Director of Development Services. "The grant paid for the necessary environmental assessment to secure the bank loan, saving money to be used on the redevelopment of the property. The grant assistance helped make possible the successful redevelopment of the property, turning a vacant, underutilized building into a community asset."

The Brownfield Assessment Grant funding will be available through September 2022. Since the money is available on a first-come, first-served basis, property owners, developers, and community members are encouraged to nominate local properties for brownfield site assessments as soon as possible.

Community members interested in learning more about the program and nominating a property should visit <https://choosecochise.com/brownfield-sites>.

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### **About Cochise County**

Cochise County provides regional leadership and effective, high-quality services with personal and professional integrity. Located in the southeast corner of Arizona, Cochise County has natural beauty, world famous history, and fascinating culture. Covering 6,219 square miles and with a population of approximately 130,000 people, the County provides vital services to the unincorporated areas of the region. It is home to a diverse range of incorporated cities, including Sierra Vista, Bisbee, Benson, Douglas, Tombstone, Willcox, and Huachuca City. For more information, visit [www.cochise.az.gov](http://www.cochise.az.gov), [facebook.com/CochiseCountyAZ](https://facebook.com/CochiseCountyAZ), or [twitter.com/CochiseCounty](https://twitter.com/CochiseCounty).

### **Public Programs...Personal Service**

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