



CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
Department of Toxic Substances Control

News Release

T – 22 – 09
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 9, 2009

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California Department of Toxic Substance Control Clears the Way for New Civic Center in Visalia

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – The California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) has launched a cleanup effort that will ultimately result in a new civic center in Visalia, and revitalize a portion of the city’s downtown. When completed, the project will include municipal buildings, landscape areas, parking, and road improvements.

The cleanup work, which began on Nov. 2, typifies brownfields redevelopment – where contaminated and consequently underutilized properties are prepared for productive reuse.

“Redeveloping urban brownfields properties makes the best use of infrastructure that is already in place and protects existing resources,” said DTSC Acting Director Maziar Movassaghi. “Promoting brownfields reuse, if feasible, has increasingly become a part of our work. Under the leadership of Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, DTSC is committed to using these brownfields to create green jobs, invigorate local economics, and convert significant land areas into vibrant local communities.”

The 11.23-acre site is located on Burke Street and north of East Center Street. Soil investigations determined the site was contaminated with lead and arsenic from past uses of the property. From 1913 to 1976 the site was used as a former auto wrecking and dismantler operation, railroad-associated loading docks and as warehouse storage, and a rail house. DTSC’s excavation and removal of contaminated soil will take about two weeks to complete, leaving the site “shovel ready” for the civic center’s redevelopment.

The City of Visalia acquired these parcels from the Union Pacific Railroad in 2004 to build the proposed civic center. In 2006, the Visalia Community Development Department and the Redevelopment Agency were awarded two brownfields grants to plan and implement cleanup of the former railroad properties. DTSC will provide regulatory oversight for the Voluntary Cleanup Agreement. As required by the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970, DTSC issued a Notice of Exemption that the cleanup will not have a negative impact on human health or the environment.

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FOR GENERAL INQUIRIES: Contact the Department of Toxic Substances Control by phone at (800) 728-6942 or visit www.dtsc.ca.gov. To report illegal handling, discharge, or disposal of hazardous waste, call the Waste Alert Hotline at (800) 698-6942.

The mission of the Department of Toxic Substances Control is to provide the highest level of safety, and to protect public health and the environment from toxic harm.