

Infrastructure Upgrade Drives Expansion in Food Processing Industry

2016

Project: Existing industry is planning a \$4.5million 50,000 SF distribution warehouse to store peanut butter based therapeutic food that not only supports their growth yet complements one of their suppliers who is also an existing employer in the community.

Problem: Initial testing of the municipal water line in this portion of the industrial park shows water line will not provide adequate volume of water to supply the new ESFR fire suppression resulting in the company contacting the Fitzgerald and Ben Hill County Development Authority for assistance in solving an issue that puts the project in peril.

Solution: Upon the Development Authority meeting with the company's general contractor and sprinkler contractor, it was determined that a 100,000 gallon above ground water tank with pump was the most cost effective solution. The cost is estimated at \$300,000.

Course of Action: Within 30 days of receiving the cost estimate of the tank and pump, the Development Authority board approves the construction of a 150,000 gallon above ground water tank and pump that will service the existing expansion and future growth of existing employer and future opportunities. The project moved forward with no further issues.

Outcome: The installation of the tank and pump not only influenced the completion of the 50,000 SF warehouse, yet it was also influential in the community winning a \$12Million expansion project from the complementary food processing company previously mentioned. To date, the community attributes an additional \$30,000/yr in property taxes from each of these expansions and by the end of 2020 will see the user of the tank and pump invest another \$5Million in their Fitzgerald facility.

Quick Decision Making Opens the Door for Furniture Manufacturer

2019

Project: Expanding hotel furniture manufacturer has 225,000 SF former textile facility in Federal Opportunity Zone under contract with plans to start up 2nd southeastern US operation. The initial investment will be \$5Million+ and create 35 jobs with plans for future capital investment and employment growth with an estimated economic impact of \$26Million in the first 5 years of operation

Problem: On the last day of the due diligence period, the ALTA survey shows “forgotten” utility easement traversing through previously added wing of the facility. The prospect calls Fitzgerald and Ben Hill County Development Authority to report the issue stating that unless easement can be terminated, that he can not purchase the facility and will have to look at other locations for the project.

Solution: Collaborate with Fitzgerald Utilities to terminate the easement and free the property of the encumbrance.

Course of Action: Within 5 minutes of receiving the initial call, FBHCDA director was on the phone with our utility authority director. After hearing an explanation of the issue, the utility director immediately dispatches one of his crews to inspect the easement and determines it is free of infrastructure. In less than 1 hour, the FBHCDA director is able to report back to the prospect that the utility authority will terminate the easement at no cost allowing the prospect to allow his due diligence period to expire and move forward with closing on the building.

Outcome: Despite the effects COVID has had on the hospitality industry, Millex has completed renovations of the facility and is moving forward with its plans to have the most advanced furniture manufacturing facility in the southeastern US producing their products in the 4th quarter of 2020.

Collaboration Brings New Manufacturing Jobs to Brownfield Site

2016-2018

Project: Reinvent, add value, and bring jobs back to a 168 acre Brownfield site that formerly housed a Delphi Automotive battery production plant. The site was a former hub of middle to high income manufacturing jobs and contained a 250,000 SF manufacturing facility.

Problem: Although the site was remediated and only an isolated portion of the site was ever contaminated, it's prior use and environmental covenant left a cloud of doubt over the property resulting in opportunity loss, fear of investment, and continued lack of development.

Solution: Partner with the state of Georgia's GRAD (Georgia Ready for Accelerated Development) committee to enroll the site into the GRAD program thus becoming the first Brownfield site to become GRAD certified.

Course of Action: Over a 9 month period, the Development Authority and its engineers worked to obtain all due diligence necessary for the site to be deemed "shovel ready". Additionally, we worked with the Georgia EPD to obtain further documentation that the property was able to be redeveloped for industrial uses. Through our efforts, the site was granted GRAD certification in September 2017.

Outcome: Within 6 months of receiving GRAD certification, the site was contracted by Modern Dispersions South, an existing manufacturer with a successful 30 year history in Fitzgerald. Upon completing further due diligence and believing in the GRAD certification process, MDSI purchased the property in 2018 with plans to add an additional 360,000 SF in manufacturing facilities, additional rail and support infrastructure, and create up to 120 new jobs.

The Delphi departure had long been viewed as one of Fitzgerald's darkest days. Now, the property's redevelopment is being viewed as one of our more significant economic development projects.

Redevelopment of Blighted Property Solves Safety Issue for Existing Employer

2019-2020

Project: Acquire 12 acre blighted property adjoining existing employer's facility from absentee owner.

Problem: The existing employer was in need of distancing employee parking from the main production facilities and in turn improve the aesthetics surrounding their facility. Doing so, would allow the employer to have additional acreage for future expansions, create a safer work zone, and most importantly, allow the company to isolate employee parking to a defined area to prevent any issues with their food safety audits.

Solution: Acquire adjoining property, remove blight issues and transfer to existing employer.

Course of Action: The FBHC Development Authority agreed to acquire the blighted and functionally obsolete mobile home park, remove all trash, wells, septic tanks, debris, and assist in relocation of the few remaining tenants.

Outcome: Over a six month period, the Development Authority in collaboration with local partners was able to acquire the property, remove all the blight issues, and transfer to the industry a 12 acre tract free of any environmental issues. To date, plans have been made for the new parking lot, the property is fenced and well maintained, and the company's executives are well pleased with the outcome of the project.