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# State to fund cleanup of Elm Street site

## Glens Falls | City launching new phase of brownfields effort

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GLENS FALLS ♦ The city has received a \$133,200 state grant to clean up environmental contamination at an Elm Street warehouse that officials hope to convert into a hub for fledgling technology-related businesses, Gov. George Pataki announced Tuesday.

The grant brings officials one step closer to their goal of opening a business incubator program at the site, city Economic Development Director James Martin said later on Tuesday.

"We're almost there," he said at a meeting held to update the public on recent developments in the city's brownfields program.

Money from a previous federal Environmental Protection Agency grant can be used to

meet a requirement that the city match 10 percent of the state grant, Martin said.

The cleanup work is necessary to make the building usable, regardless of whether the incubator program materializes, or someone else ultimately buys and develops the property, Martin said.

The incubator program would provide shared work space, financing and other services to small start-up companies with a goal of fostering new businesses that would prosper and ultimately expand elsewhere in the Glens Falls area.

The Greater Glens Falls Development Corp. has agreed to operate the program, which thus far has been jointly funded by the development group and four other organizations — Warren County Economic Development Corp., Queensbury Economic Development Corp., Adirondack Community College and Adirondack Regional Chambers of Commerce.

The LDC plans to apply later this year for a U.S. Department of Commerce grant to buy and renovate the building.

Mayor Robert Regan and other city officials are close to negotiating an agreement to buy the building, Martin said.

He would not discuss details of the potential sale.

The building at 36 Elm St. is one of four locations that the brownfields program hired consultants to investigate for environmental contamination and, in some cases, recommend a cleanup plan.

A brownfield is a former industrial site that is suspected of containing environmental contamination at a level not serious enough to be designated a Superfund site.

"It's brown, not all the way black, because it has some redevelopment possibilities," Martin explained.

In the case of 36 Elm St., the contamination is minimal, and confined to an area around fuel storage tanks in the basement, said Keith Ziobron of Clough,

Harbour & Associates, a consultant to the city.

The city received a \$200,000 EPA grant in 2000 to begin the local brownfields program, and a subsequent \$200,000 grant last year.

Efforts thus far have focused on the Warren and Elm street areas.

Now officials are turning their attention to properties along the banks of the Hudson River and elsewhere in the downtown area.

Officials have compiled a list of more than 400 properties that might qualify for study, which they plan to narrow to a list of eight that would receive preliminary evaluations.

Officials identified three preferred sites at Tuesday's meeting:

- ♦ a 9.6 acre site at 3-7 Pruyne's Island Drive owned by Claude Charlebois;
- ♦ a 3-acre site at 11 Pruyne's Island owned by Ahlstrom Machinery;
- ♦ a 0.66 acre site at 81 Mohican St. owned by VMJR Properties.

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