

### COLORADO BROWNFIELDS PARTNERSHIP

# ANNUAL REPORT

### 2023 - 2024



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#### March 2024

#### Dear Reader:

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act continues to bring an unprecedented amount of funding into EPA and state brownfield programs. Brownfields exist in almost every community, and often sit vacant due to potential or perceived contamination. Yet Brownfields also offer the opportunity to contribute benefits to communities through redevelopment and revitalization.

With renewed and growing interest, this funding source is being put to work for the betterment of our communities. Communities throughout Colorado are using brownfields funding to pursue economic development, improve environmental health, and provide space for housing, businesses, and amenities.

The Colorado Brownfields Partnership (CBP), a collaboration between the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) and Community Builders, works closely with communities, local governments, property owners, and nonprofits across the state to facilitate the cleanup and revitalization of brownfields sites. We are equipped to support communities at every stage of the brownfields reuse process, assisting with not only the financial resources to take on brownfields revitalization projects, but also the planning and technical assistance needed to get projects off the ground and prepared for redevelopment.

Rural and urban communities across Colorado continue to experience growth challenges, an increasingly high cost of living, housing demand that exceeds production, and economic transitions in need of new approaches. Furthermore, lack of capacity to address these challenges can limit progress, especially in rural areas. Increased brownfields funding across the state has allowed CBP to increase the range and amount of services we are able to provide, and as such, municipalities are better positioned to address these challenges by turning their abandoned, underused, and unsightly properties into economic and community assets. Absent brownfields resources, it is uncertain how communities would address these issues.

While prior years focused on laying the groundwork for communities to take advantage of increased funding, 2023 responded to greater awareness of, and demand for, brownfields resources. Through multiple channels, including the Colorado Brownfields Conference, regional workshops, and other networking and partner events, CBP responded to a high demand for education and information on current brownfield opportunities. We also provided coaching to guide communities through their brownfields inquiries, and capacity assistance to access these resources. In addition to financial resources, we also provided planning and technical assistance to rural Colorado communities, helping them take their brownfields opportunities from community vision to redevelopment. We have continued to update our web resources, approve cleanup plans, and disperse tax credits for a variety of successful brownfields projects. Results of CBP's work in 2023 include 55 approved voluntary cleanup plans, nearly \$2.5M in projected Brownfield Tax Credits to be awarded, and over \$541K in grant funds. Additional grant awards totaling over \$244K are already planned for 2024.

We are proud of the broad program success in 2023 and look forward to continued opportunities to assist and revitalize Colorado communities in the coming year.

Sincerely,

Mark Rudolph Superfund/Brownfields Unit

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Doug Jamison Superfund/Brownfields Unit Leader



**COLORADO** Department of Public Health & Environment

### CONTENTS

01.	OVERALL IMPACT	1
02.	ABOUT US	2
03.	2023 IMPACT + FOCUS	4
04.	COMMUNICATIONS + EVENTS	8
05.	PROJECT SUCCESS SNAPSHOTS	9

## OVERALL IMPACT



APPROVED VOLUNTARY CLEANUP AND REDEVELOPMENT PLANS SINCE 1994



\$95,310,198 FUNDING ALLOCATED TO PROJECTS FOR THE PAST 30 YEARS

Tax Credits: **\$22,873,021** 

Grants: **\$3,365,976** 

Revolving Loan Fund: \$25,841,184

# **ABOUT US**

The Colorado Brownfields Partnership (CBP) is the outreach organization for the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment's (CDPHE) brownfields program. Funded by CDPHE, the Partnership works to distribute state brownfields resources across Colorado communities, while also assisting in education, visioning, planning, and on-call coaching for communities remediating their brownfield sites.

Every community has brownfield properties that are vacant or underutilized. When these properties are perceived to have environmental issues, they become easier to ignore rather than address head-on. The result? Properties that could be real assets to the community become a liability and sit stagnant. However, these sites offer great potential and provide unique opportunities for revitalization efforts such as economic development, housing, community services, and much more. At CBP we address brownfields by starting with a vision that is designed by the community, stakeholders, and property owners with a shared understanding of local needs and opportunities. We work collaboratively to identify potential brownfield properties and determine how redevelopment can meet community goals. Finally we support communities with resources and funding to identify and address environmental concerns that might complicate property redevelopment. Communities across Colorado have created affordable housing, job opportunities, event centers, and parks by revitalizing brownfields, which creates a chain reaction for more economic development.

Through the Colorado Brownfields Partnership, communities are provided with the necessary tools, support, remediation and redevelopment expertise to move from vision to implementation to create transformative projects.

### SERVICES

Our goal is to provide brownfields education and technical assistance to protect human health and the environment, enable redevelopment, and deliver catalytic impact across Colorado. We provide a simple process, with a 1-step application to receive most of our cleanup support and financial resources.



- Targeted Brownfields Assessments evaluate past site use and if necessary gather environmental data to determine if contamination is present. The information collected can assist with site planning and decision making. Assessments also provide liability protection and eligibility for brownfields cleanup funding.
- Voluntary Cleanup and Redevelopment Program (VCUP) provides a roadmap to cleanup and access to financial resources such as tax credits and brownfields loans. VCUP also supports liability management, real estate transfers, cleanup approval, and assurances for investing and lending.



- Workshops provide brownfields information, explain how to access financial resources, and help communities solve challenges.
- Hands-On Assistance supports visioning and planning, ultimately resulting in actionable strategies for brownfields sites.
- **On-Call Coaching** offers risk management support and assistance in moving brownfield projects toward implementation.



- Brownfields Tax Credits are available on a firstcome-first-serve basis and assist in cleanup costs.
- Revolving Loan Fund
  gives access to lowinterest, flexible loans for
  brownfields cleanup.
- Colorado Brownfields
   Cleanup Grants are
   designed to help local
   governments support
   brownfield redevelopment
   and community
   revitalization.



### HISTORY

#### In the early 1990's, the

EPA started a nation wide brownfields program that provided seed money to local governments. Since then, each state has founded its own program to distribute federal EPA funding at the state level. The Brownfields Program was created to provide property owners with resources to facilitate cleanup at contaminated properties. **But as time and the program progressed**, brownfields revitalization became a more extensive process and it was critical to provide additional expertise and resources to strengthen the program. **2015.** CBP, a collaboration between CDPHE and Community Builders, is formed to provide support in distributing financial resources and educating communities about the role of brownfields in local economic development.

present

### 2000s

2010s

### **1990**s

**1994.** Through the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE), the state of Colorado launched the Brownfields Program. The Program was the first to be funded by EPA and had the first VCUP program in the U.S. **2003.** The State works with the Colorado Brownfields Foundation to design a process that supports environmental cleanup and creates strategies to turn brownfields into assets. Many communities had success through this support, and as a result, CDPHE saw an increasing need for expanded redevelopment expertise and services for communities. CBP provides ongoing cleanup assistance, planning, and financial support to communities throughout the state.





Community Builders is a non-profit organization based in Glenwood Springs that works to inform, enable, and inspire local leaders with the resources and assistance they need to build strong, prosperous, and livable communities. Community Builders serves as the primary outreach organization for the Colorado Brownfields Partnership.



### COLORADO Hazardous Materials

& Waste Management Division Department of Public Health & Environment

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) provides resources to facilitate brownfield site cleanups in Colorado. CDPHE contributes the financial assistance to the Colorado Brownfields Partnership, and executes the application and review process for the program.

# 2023 IMPACT + FOCUS

For the Colorado Brownfields Partnership, 2023 represented a year of responding to increased demand for brownfields resources. To ensure rural communities, local municipalities, and nonprofits had the information they needed and capacity to take advantage of the expanded funding, CBP facilitated ten community workshops to educate local leaders about brownfields resources and presented brownfields opportunities at three conferences. CBP continued to provide coaching, reaching more than 24 communities across the state. To help communities identify and remediate environmental concerns, CDPHE deployed over \$8.8M towards cleanup, remediation, and tax credits; and approved 55 applications for the Voluntary Cleanup and Redevelopment Program (VCUP). This year's impact included remediation of 703 acres of land, construction of 3,372 new residences, and creation of 2,452 new jobs.

# SOURCE & RECIPIENT BREAKOUT

### **BROWNFIELDS CLEANUP GRANT (1306) - \$178,505**

- » Clear Creek School District \$32,645
- » Las Animas County Fairgrounds **\$34,660**
- » Perry-Stokes Airport \$78,200
- » Ordway Properties \$33,000

### 128(A) SUBGRANT - \$362,860

» Clear Creek School District - \$362,860

### **REVOLVING LOAN FUND - \$5,824,028**

- » Red Tail Ranch **\$2,447,000**
- » Bonanza Boy **\$1,500,000**
- » Archway Communities \$1,277,028
- » Acequia (San Luis Market) \$200,000 subgrant
- » Loveland Sugar Mill \$400,000 subgrant

### **BROWNFIELDS TAX CREDITS - \$2,484,771**

» Projected to issue across 9 projects









### HIGHLIGHTS





#### **CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS**

CBP attended a variety of conferences around the state to continue spreading the word about current brownfields resources. These conferences have been an excellent means of educating municipalities about the tools and assistance at their disposal.

#### Conferences presented at include:

- » Downtown Colorado Inc, April 2023
- » Colorado Municipal League, June 2023
- » Colorado Environmental Managers Society, September 2023

### WORKSHOPS

Heightened interest in brownfields resources gave rise to a greater demand for workshops, further expanding our reach to communities. In 2023, the Partnership held seven in-person workshops and three virtual workshops which included participants from 65 different jurisdictions, private companies, and non-profit organizations. Through in-person and virtual workshops attendees were provided with education, resources, case studies, hands on activities, and brownfields Q&A discussions, as well as planned site visits to identified brownfield sites. The in-person workshops also included an EPA Grant Writing Workshop, wherein the Partnership collaborated with the Kansas State University Technical Assistance to Brownfields program (KSU TAB) to plan and deliver a full day workshop focused on information for those entities interested in applying for U.S. EPA Brownfield Grants. The workshop included a breakdown of grant guidelines, tips on how to approach each of the grant sections, interactive exercises, and helpful resources to prepare communities to write competitive applications.



### HIGHLIGHTS

#### ASSESSMENTS AND CLEANUP

Increased funding for Targeted Brownfield Assessments (TBAs) and cleanup funding was met with increased demand for these resources. In 2022, CDPHE completed two Targeted Brownfield Assessments (TBAs), and in 2023 saw a significant increase with 13 TBAs. Similarly, while CDPHE provided just over \$279K in grant funding in 2022, over \$541K was provided in grant funding in 2023.



### **EPA AWARDS TO COLORADO**

EPA Brownfield Grants, made possible through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, help communities clean up and reuse their brownfields sites to create new opportunities for economic growth, jobs, and other community goals such as affordable housing. Of the more than \$17.5 million awarded in Brownfields Multipurpose, Assessment, Revolving Loan Fund, and Cleanup (MARC) Grant funding from EPA Region 8 in 2023, over \$6.3 million, or about 36% of the total awarded in Region 8, has been awarded to Colorado communities. This is a 20% increase in EPA MARC funding flowing into Colorado communities compared to 2022. Through outreach, coaching, and assistance efforts, CBP has worked to spread awareness about the opportunities that brownfields sites can offer to communities, and has provided critical resources to assist communities in accessing the funding needed to achieve their redevelopment goals.

### **COACHING & APPLICATION ASSISTANCE**

With awareness of brownfields resources high, communities reached out to CBP with ever more new inquiries, seeking ongoing coaching assistance to quide their brownfields projects. In 2023, CBP provided continued coaching and application assistance to more than 24 different Colorado communities and regional organizations, and fielded new inquiries from communities, non-profits, and private developers just beginning their brownfields journeys. Our assistance helped communities navigate the process of obtaining funding for assessment of their brownfields projects, resulting in increased Targeted Brownfields Assessment applications to both CDPHE and EPA Region 8. CBP also partnered with Kansas State University Technical Assistance to Brownfields (KSU TAB) program to provide coaching support at the Perfect Pitch National Competition during the National Brownfields Conference, enabling three competitively selected communities across the country to develop robust redevelopment plans, identify hidden opportunities, overcome potential roadblocks to revitalization, and crowdsource additional project funding and industry-best technical insights.



#### **PLANNING ASSISTANCE**

To assist with moving challenging brownfields projects from concept to revitalization, CBP provided focused planning assistance in two communities, including the City of Alamosa and the Town of Kersey. In Alamosa, handson assistance with community engagement, market analysis, and re-use planning for the site provided detailed next steps for redevelopment and enabled the City to access EPA Emergency Removal Funds to revitalize the site. In the Town of Kersey, CBP provided a deeper understanding of potential reuse options, through assistance with community engagement, in-depth market analysis, and a tool for the Town to attract and communicate with developers. The Town of Kersey used these supports to strengthen their application for EPA cleanup resources. CBP planning assistance, grounded in market data and informed by public input, was essential to these communities' efforts to develop concrete

plans for the reuse and redevelopment of brownfields sites, and provided the capacity support needed to pursue and access additional brownfield cleanup resources.





#### **TESTIMONIALS**

#### DEACON ASPINWALL

City of Alamosa

"Without the collaboration, guidance, and assistance of the Colorado Brownfields Partnership, the site would almost certainly remain a hazard to health and a blight on the City of Alamosa's downtown revitalization today. It can be intimidating and difficult for small communities to navigate the complexities of abating a brownfield site, not to mention finding the funding and planning for the future of a remediated property. The Colorado Brownfields Partnership's expertise was the critical asset for charting a way forward and opening up an opportunity for our community to thrive. "

#### GILLIAN LAYCOCK

#### Town of Hugo

"As a Municipal leader in Colorado, I've had the privilege of receiving collaborative support from the Colorado Brownfields Partnership, including the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE). Their invaluable technical assistance and support have been instrumental in achieving tangible outcomes through successful abatement projects in our community. This work has been essential in revitalizing areas of our small rural town and fostering community wellbeing and economic growth. "

# COMMUNICATIONS + EVENTS

A major component of the Colorado Brownfields Partnership ongoing work is education and outreach. This requires the creation and distribution of educational resources such as videos, flyers, infographics, tools, and presentations to help communities learn about brownfields and the resources available to them. Our primary methods of outreach include quarterly newsletters, the <u>CBP website</u>, workshops and events across the state, and conference presentations. This range of channels and methods allows the Partnership to reach a variety of audiences and spread the word about brownfields assistance as widely as possible.

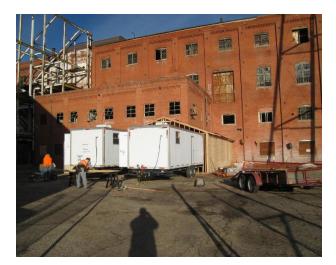
### 2023 COLORADO BROWNFIELDS CONFERENCE

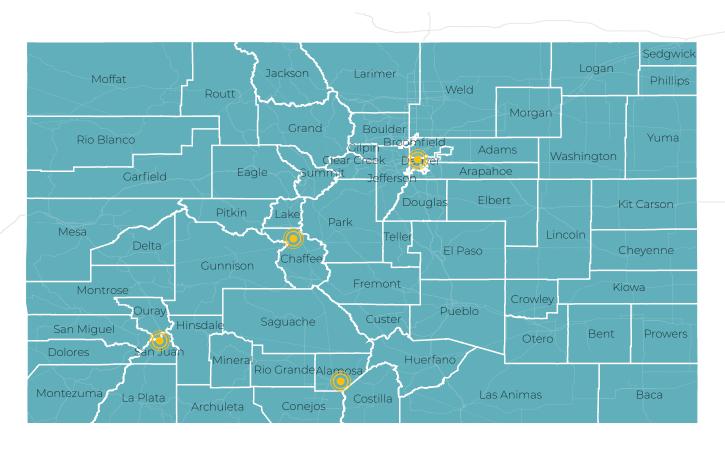
In 2023, CPB brought back the popular Colorado Brownfields Conference, which had been on hiatus since 2017. The 2023 Colorado Brownfields Conference brought together nearly 200 industry leaders, experts, and professionals from diverse backgrounds, creating a vibrant platform for knowledge sharing and networking. The full-day event showcased expert panel discussions and interactive sessions aligned with three learning tracks including How-To, Technical, and Funding and Financing. The keynote speaker, KC Becker – EPA's Regional Administrator for Region 8, provided an engaging presentation to inspire continued momentum in brownfields revitalization. The event was sponsored by 22 related professional industry organizations that filled the exhibitor space to full capacity.



# SUCCESS SNAPSHOTS

As in previous years, the Colorado Brownfields Partnership had the opportunity to provide support and assistance to communities across the state in 2023. This included ongoing coaching, planning support, and cleanup support for brownfields sites in a variety of communities. Much of the support to communities in 2023 was a continuation of work initiated in previous years, ensuring the Partnership stays committed to the implementation of brownfields projects from initial visioning to final construction. Updates and successes from several of these projects are included in this section.





### BUENA VISTA MCGINNIS GYMNASIUM

The McGinnis Gymnasium is a 5,500 sf gymnasium and stage constructed in 1936 by the Buena Vista School District with federal funds from the New Deal, Public Works Administration. From 1936 until 2008, the gym provided indoor space for recreation, performing arts, pre-k education, and assembly use until it was deemed by the Colorado Department of Public Safety to be unsafe for any use but storage.

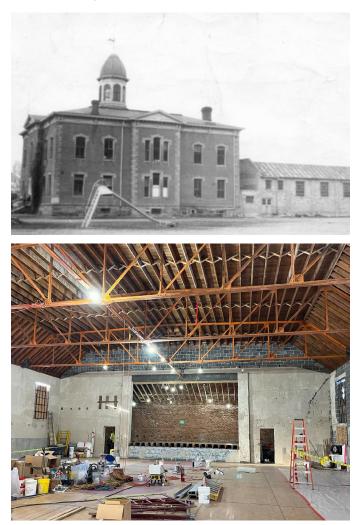
In 2022, the US EPA Brownfields program fully characterized the building, which contained over 14,000 sf of asbestos-containing material deteriorating in the roof and interior, as well as over 2,000 linear feet of lead-based paint. The EPA determined that despite a history of underground storage tanks adjacent to the site, the groundwater was not contaminated.

In fall 2022, Watershed Inc., a preservationfocused 501(c)(3) nonprofit, acquired McGinnis Gymnasium from the Buena Vista School District, and worked with local partners to develop a vision for restoring the gym to its original use as a prime recreational, educational, and performing arts space. By



layering funding from a \$979K EPA Brownfields Cleanup Grant and tax credits from CDPHE, Watershed, Inc. was able to fully remediate the gym from July to December 2023.

Looking ahead, Watershed, Inc. anticipates receiving a No Further Action determination from CDPHE's Voluntary Cleanup Program in 2024. The remaining restoration work to bring McGinnis Gymnasium back into productive use is underway, and is on track to be completed by the start of the 2024 school year.



### SILVERTON COMPASS PROJECT

### | Project | Update

The Colorado Brownfields Partnership began working with the Town of Silverton in 2019 on what started as a brownfields project, but soon blossomed into something much larger. In 2019, at the invitation of the Town of Silverton, the Colorado Brownfields Partnership hosted a Brownfields Redevelopment and Revitalization Workshop. Attendees considered approaches to economic development, and discussed how brownfields sites could help to address challenges and opportunities such as affordability, good jobs, balancing the benefits and impacts of tourism, recreation, and preserving the town's unique character and identity.

In early 2021, the CBP partnered with the Town of Silverton over a multi-year process to facilitate a transparent, community-driven process to update Silverton's master plan, also known as The Compass Project, resulting in a unified community vision for the future of the Town of Silverton. The Compass Master Plan resulted in dozens of strategies and actions



to guide Silverton as it embarks on the next 10 years of redevelopment and reinvestment. Many of the strategies and actions relate directly to the clean up and redevelopment of Brownfields sites.

Ongoing planning assistance from CBP over the next few years enabled the small community of Silverton, population 827, to position themselves to successfully apply for an \$800K Multipurpose Brownfield Grant from the EPA to clean-up and revitalize brownfields within the town limits. The grant award was announced in 2023, and Silverton is now in the early stages of implementation. Additionally in 2023, the Compass Master Plan was selected to receive the 2023 Merit Award in the category of Community Engagement from the Colorado Chapter of the American Planning Association (APA Colorado).

New successes are sure to be on the horizon as Silverton begins to implement their EPA Brownfield Grant and recognize the catalytic potential of revitalized brownfields.





### ALAMOSA PLANNING ASSISTANCE & EMERGENCY REMOVAL

The Walsh Hotel, located on the southern edge of Alamosa's Downtown Core, was once a bustling hotel and restaurant with office spaces, and served visitors and employees of the nearby railroad. Later, the hotel rooms were turned into apartment units to provide affordable housing. However, the building eventually fell into disrepair, and a fire in 2020 rendered the building uninhabitable. The property changed hands, and the building continued to deteriorate until the City took ownership in late 2022 to pursue funding and assistance to remediate and demolish the building, and redevelop the property.

The City of Alamosa connected with the Colorado Brownfields Partnership for assistance with the building. Because the site presented a serious and imminent threat to human health and the environment, the CBP coordinated with the EPA for inclusion in the Emergency





Removal program to abate and demolish the building. The approximately \$1.3 million project would not have been possible for the City of Alamosa without this assistance from the EPA.

In the months preceding demolition, the CBP worked closely with the City of Alamosa to develop a reuse plan for the site, including market analysis and community engagement and visioning to identify feasible uses for the site. The team drafted and released an Action Plan for the site, laying out preferred community uses and next steps for redevelopment. This effort sparked renewed interest in the site from a local developer for a new downtown hotel, a redevelopment scenario consistent with community values.

Demolition and cleanup of the Walsh Hotel has been completed, and the site is ready for redevelopment. In October 2023, City Council approved the conditions of a development agreement for the former Walsh Hotel site



### DENVER - 29TH AVENUE CLEANERS

The 29th Avenue Dry Cleaners operated for many years in a unit of a 3-plex commercial building in Denver. While the building had been home to a corner grocery store with an attached apartment and other neighborhood businesses, dry cleaning operations in the building dated to as early as 1936. In 1983, the property was purchased by a new private owner. The new owners operated an interior design and floor covering businesses from the property, and later turned it into "The Creative Farm," which operated as a co-working space.

Later, contamination of soil and groundwater was discovered at the site due to the previous dry cleaning operations. Several years, a lot of money, an attempt at the Voluntary Cleanup and Remediation Program (VCUP), and numerous remediation efforts were expended, but the owners were unable to get the property fully remediated. The property was referred to Adaapta, who eventually reached an agreement to buy the property and take on the environmental liability associated with the site.

Adaapta re-enrolled the site in the VCUP and secured a loan from the Colorado Department



of Public Health and Environment's Revolving Loan Fund to support the cleanup. Adaapta worked closely with Advanced Environmental Technologies (AET) to apply their E-Redox remedial technology towards the cleanup. This successfully remediated the contamination to a level that qualified the property for a No Action Determination.

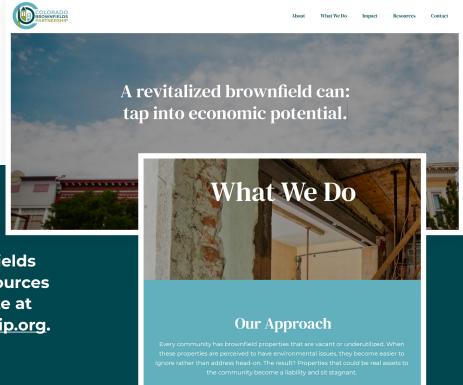
Adaapta later secured a construction loan for the vertical construction of the 42-unit "29X Apartments" and broke ground in 2021. The site is nearing completion and pre-leasing of the units is expected to begin in 2024.



# IN CLOSING

As the familiar challenges of growth pressures continue across Colorado, so too does the challenge to address a shifting economic landscape, diminishing affordability, and lack of housing options. Fortunately, current historic levels of funding for brownfields revitalization presents an opportune moment for Colorado communities to address these issues with a fresh look at the reuse potential offered through brownfields sites. Over the past 30 years, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment has been committed to supporting brownfields revitalization and ensuring communities throughout Colorado can access these increased resources. With continued dedication, the Colorado Brownfields Partnership looks forward to continuing the many successes of 2023, and accomplishing new milestones in the coming year.

As always, we could not do this without the help of our partners, including KSU-TAB, the Colorado Department of Local Affairs, the Colorado Division of Oil and Public Safety, the Colorado Main Street Program, 9th Path Advisors, Downtown Colorado Inc., the Environmental Protection Agency, and of course the dedicated local government and nonprofit owners of brownfields sites. We will continue to work side-by-side with these organizations to bring assistance, resources, and revitalization to Colorado communities in 2024.



For more information on the Colorado Brownfields Partnership and the resources we offer, visit our website at cobrownfieldspartnership.org.







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# APPENDIX A: FORMAL OUTREACH

During the course of the 2023 year CBP hosted and attended a variety of workshops, events, and conference presentations. The following is a complete list of the formal outreach that was undertaken during this program year,

### WORKSHOPS & EVENTS

- » Rocky Ford In-Person Workshop, January 2023
- » Region 10 In-Person Workshop, February 2023
- » East Central Colorado Brownfields 101 Webinar, May 2023
- » Region 9 in-person workshop, May 2023
- » Western San Luis Valley Regional In-Person Workshop, May 2023
- » KSU TAB Grant Writing Workshop, September 2023
- » Region 5 Brownfields 101 Webinar, September 2022
- » Southern Colorado Economic Development District In-Person Workshop, October 2023

### CONFERENCES

- » Downtown Colorado Inc, April 2023
- » Colorado Brownfields Conference, June 2023
- » Colorado Municipal League, June 2023
- » Colorado Environmental Managers Society (CDPHE sponsor), August 2023
- » National Brownfields Conference, August 2023

# **APPENDIX B: COMMUNITIES REACHED**

Much of the Colorado Brownfields Partnership ongoing work is coaching, assistance, and responding to community inquiries and questions. Many of these inquiries are addressed with a handful of meetings and occasional follow-up, while others evolve into larger assistance processes. While it would be impossible to highlight every community or entity we've had the pleasure of working with in this Annual Report, the following list provides a picture of the many that CBP was able to provide some level of coaching or assistance to in the 2023 program year.

- » Town of Hugo
- » Town of Silverton
- » Town of Eads
- » Town of Mancos
- » Town of Kersey
- » Town of Nucla
- » Town of Norwood
- » Town of Limon
- » Town of Springfield
- » Town of Flagler
- » Town of Otis
- » Town of Firestone
- » Town of Ignacio
- » Town of Dolores
- » City of Alamosa
- » City of Monte Vista
- » City of Evans
- » City of Lamar
- » City of Rifle
- » City of Thornton

- » City of Delta
- » City of Montrose
- » City of Rocky Ford
- » Routt County
- » Clear Creek County
- » Kiowa County
- » Delta County
- » Lincoln County
- » Prowers County
- » Las Animas County
- » Montezuma County
- » Cheyenne County
- » Baca County
- » Southeast Business Retention and Expansion Association
- » Southern Colorado Economic Development District
- » East Central Colorado Region
- » Economic Development Region 10
- » Economic Development Region 9