

Meriden, Connecticut—North Colony Street Industrial Park

Key Players

City of Meriden

Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development

Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection

Background

Meriden, Connecticut, with a population of about 58,000, is located half-way between New York City and Boston. Meriden is representative of numerous mid-sized cities with a predominant manufacturing legacy that face significant economic development challenges. Meriden Rolling Mills Industries, Inc., operated on a 10.75-acre site for 125 years before shutting down and abandoning the property in 1988. Covered with 220,000 square feet of buildings, the site was heavily contaminated with the residue of more than a century of manufacturing: petroleum hydrocarbons, polychlorinated biphenyls, trichloroethene, metals, lead, volatile organic compounds, garden pesticides, and cleaning fluids.

Project Features

To help promote economic development, Meriden successfully marketed the Meriden Rolling Mills Industries site to a manufacturing operation that needed to expand its production facility. The TI Automotive Corporation is located across the railroad tracks, adjacent to the brownfield site.

The project involved considerable cleanup and site preparation, including demolition of the old factory buildings and the removal of 46,000 tons of contaminated material. Connecticut's Urban Sites Remediation Program paid for most of the soil and groundwater remediation and helped to establish the remediation standards for the site's new manufacturing use. Connecticut also provided a covenant-not-to-sue letter, critical to making this project a reality. The state Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) oversaw building demolition, asbestos abatement, and site development activities. Once the site was clean and shovel-ready, it was transferred to IT Automotive in early 1996, and the new plant was completed before the year's end. The project involved four months of planning, eight months of remediation and demolition, and twelve months of construction.

Financing

The new TI Automotive plant cost \$16.5 million to build, and \$4.6 million to equip. Meriden packaged a diverse array of assistance and incentives to make the project work. State support was critical to the project's success, with the initial \$200,000-site investigation financed by the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (CDEP). Building demolition and asbestos removal for the new manufacturing use—consistent with Meriden's municipal development plan—was financed mainly with \$4.5 million from DECD's Manufacturing Assistance Act funding initiative. Site cleanup cost \$7 million, with \$6 million from CDEP and the other \$1 million from the city of Meriden. DECD provided \$5.4 million in the form of various economic development

incentives, and Meriden contributed an additional \$500,000 of inducements. Overall, the project has leveraged \$ 38.5 million.

Impact

The new TI Automotive facility is a state-of-the-art, 150,000-square-foot building with a workforce of 660 that represents Meriden's demographic diversity—42 percent of the workers are minorities and 39 percent are women. The new plant employs almost double the number of workers it employed before the expansion in research and development, molding and assembly, materials management, and administration. Meriden and the state of Connecticut are seeing substantial benefits from this project and their investments. By 2009, the plant is projected to have a \$38-million total payroll for 900 employees, and generate an additional \$8 million in sales and income taxes and \$10 million in gross real and personal property taxes over the facility's pre-expansion levels.



New TI Automotive plant on the North Colony Street site

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