

A Welcome Development: Northwest Gateway to Generate Jobs, Income



David Nikoloff, President, Economic Development Company of Lancaster County

“Without two organizations that have such a strong community interest, redevelopment like this could not happen.”

With a flurry of redevelopment already underway, Lancaster City’s northwest quadrant is getting a significant boost through the Northwest Gateway/Armstrong Project. A 47-acre site that once housed more than 200 manufacturing buildings for Armstrong World Industries is being redeveloped by EDC Finance Corporation for use by Lancaster General and Franklin & Marshall College.

After 13 months of demolition, environmental cleanup began in late 2007 and will continue until later this spring. Construction of the site’s infrastructure—water, sewer, electric, streets, sidewalks and curbs—will follow. Then, EDC will sell two-thirds of the property to F&M for development of athletic fields, facilities and walking trails scheduled for completion by early 2009, and one-third of the property to Lancaster General.

The health system is still considering plans for its portion of the site which will likely support future advancements in medical education and research. Lancaster General anticipates construction of new facilities to begin in 2010. To date, the health system, F&M and Armstrong have each contributed \$6 million toward demolition and clean-up.

“Without two organizations that have such a strong community interest, redevelopment like this could not happen,” explains David Nikoloff, president of the EDC. “No private party would have undertaken this project because of the upfront cost.”

Nikoloff explains that there are many vacant, deteriorating industrial sites throughout the Northeastern United States. The cost to redevelop these sites is often prohibitive, so they are left idle creating a drain on the surrounding community through their appearance and failure to generate tax revenue.

The commitment by Lancaster General and F&M to redevelop the Armstrong property supports revitalization efforts already underway in the surrounding community. Their investment helped initiate grants for millions of dollars in state and local funds to support site redevelopment. The result will be a pleasing entry to the city that creates jobs and stimulates the local economy.

Lancaster General will continue to pay property taxes on its new facility, an amount far exceeding what an abandoned site would generate. The addition of an educational/research resource in the community will likely generate thousands of jobs as well. Nikoloff says the project is also making the surrounding area more attractive for other investors.



Lancaster General continues to consider future uses for the 47-acre site that once housed more than 200 manufacturing buildings for Armstrong World Industries in Lancaster City's northwest. Lancaster General anticipates construction of new facilities to begin in 2010. To date, the health system, F&M and Armstrong have each contributed \$6 million toward demolition and clean-up.