

Heritage Center continues transformation, serves as a national model for 'green' reindustrialization

Since the Community Reuse Organization of East Tennessee's (CROET) creation nearly two decades ago, the award-winning program to revitalize former Department of Energy properties in Oak Ridge has resulted in the creation of hundreds of jobs, millions of dollars in capital investment, and increased tax revenue for the city of Oak Ridge. With an impressive portfolio that has saved the government millions of dollars by transferring underutilized government assets to the private sector, one of the most remarkable feats of CROET has been the way it has approached its mission.

"To put it simply, CROET was given the task of revitalizing and marketing an aging gaseous diffusion plant to the private sector," said Lawrence Young, CROET's president and CEO. "Today, we manage the only private industrial park on a national laboratory campus, and the brown-field site, now known as Heritage Center, and the greenfield site, Horizon Center, are national models for 'green' redevelopment."

Young said that once



Heritage Center includes public trails, open space, public art, a Certified Wildlife Habitat, and it continues to evolve — building upon Oak Ridge's energy history with green energy resources on-site.

CROET realized the 'greenfield' vision at Horizon Center, they knew this was the way to best revitalize Heritage Center, save money and make the property attractive for the community and potential businesses.

Today, Heritage Center includes public trails, open space, public art, a Certified Wildlife Habitat™, and it continues to evolve — building upon Oak Ridge's energy history with green energy resources on-site.

One of the property's most prominent features includes

approximately 100 acres of meadows that are landscaped with native plants, wildflowers and grasses.

Now, instead of mowing the land several times each month for most of the year, the native grasses are allowed to grow and stand. This not only saves costs in fuel, maintenance and labor, the pollution associated with mowing is eliminated. Addi-

tionally, the type of grass that was planted, NWSG, can be a commercial crop, which provided the opportunity to

participate in the Tennessee Biofuels Initiative Program, or the possibility of using it as a cash crop to help fund future meadow expansion or other reindustrialization projects.

The National Wildlife Federation (NWF) also named a Certified Wildlife

Habitat™ site at Heritage Center last year. The 26-acre areas is part of the Heritage Center Greenway, which includes trails, ponds and close-by rivers, and public access to meadow and wildlife habitat areas with more than 200 species of birds

and water fowl — including nesting pairs of bald eagles and osprey.

The Greenway trails cover approximately 15 acres, or two miles of public walking paths, including a closed, paved road, a walking trail along the pond lined with bird houses, and

a loop trail along one edge of the pond. There are trail markers and brochure holders at strategic points throughout the trail.

The green site also includes two prominent solar projects — a 200 kilowatt solar photovoltaic array by RSI, which is the first phase of the company's "Brownfields to Brightfields" initiative, as well as a 50 kilowatt photovoltaic solar array by Vis Solis, which is the first American/German Solar location in the worldwide "dena Solar Roofs Program."

CROET also partnered with LED North America to put the latest technology in LED lighting at two of its speculative buildings at Heritage Center. The special lighting burns brighter and lasts longer than traditional lighting, which will provide environmental and monetary benefits.

"It didn't happen by accident. It took vision, collaboration, patience and planning," said Young.

"We are looking forward to continuing this legacy of innovation as the parks evolve and new businesses come to Oak Ridge."

For more information about CROET, please visit www.croet.com.

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