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Development authority seeking public input for two potential redevelopment plans in Rome

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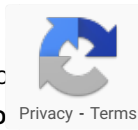




John Bailey, File

One of the county's most notable brownfield sites is the former

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Looking at a former manufacturing site that nature has nearly taken back, it appears overgrown and rundown — but to some it looks like an industrial recruitment tool.

The Rome Floyd County Development Authority will present its plans on Wednesday for two sites in Rome they feel are ripe for business. The purpose is to provide to the community an overview of a \$500,000 federal environmental assessment grant given to start addressing hazardous materials on the former Northwest Georgia Regional Hospital site.

At this point, the authority is primarily looking at two sites: The Battey Business Complex, formerly known as the NWGRH, and the former O’Neill Manufacturing Co. in North Rome.

At the top of the list is the newly dubbed Battey Business Complex off Division Street. The development authority purchased the vacant 132.5-acre hospital complex from the state with \$2.25 million approved by voters in the 2013 and 2017 SPLOST packages. The Rome City Commission rezoned the site for Heavy Industrial use and plans are to raze all but a few buildings and offer the land for economic development projects.

However there’s an amount of asbestos mitigation that needs to be done, among other possible preparations at the site.

The former O’Neill Manufacturing location has long been at the top of the list in Rome for redevelopment. But the 7-acre tract off Anderson Street in North Rome has been tied up in bankruptcy proceedings for decades.

The company treated and manufactured custom wood products until it closed in 2000 following the death of Sean O’Neill, its last chief executive officer.

The family-owned company was founded in 1878 in Atlanta and moved to its 102 Anderson St. address in Rome around the turn of that century.

The property came under scrutiny the year O’Neill died after a site assessment by S&ME, a private engineering firm. It turned up two 500-gallon containers of Wood Life, a wood treatment preservative known to contain significant amounts of the probable carcinogen pentachlorophenol.

Now, the development authority wants to give the public a chance to see, and comment on, their plans for the sites. As part of the presentation, they'll overview project goals, the sites themselves and the envisioned economic and environmental benefits to the community.

“We strongly encourage participation from residents, business owners, and community advocates,” RFCDA President Missy Kendrick said. “Your voice is crucial as we work towards building a prosperous and environmentally sustainable future for our community.”

The assessment grant will also stairstep to a larger, \$5.1 million, congressional appropriation set aside to clean up sites in Floyd County.

The meeting will be held from noon to 1:30 p.m. in a hybrid format. The in-person meeting option will be at the Rome Floyd County Development Authority Office, 800 Broad St, Suite 102. For those preferring to attend virtually, the meeting will be accessible via Zoom through this link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81690978908?pwd=qvjxvvgrrwtwse9aqvjjaur3blpyqt09>.
Use Meeting ID: 816 9097 8908 and Passcode: 412441.

For further information, visit the project webpage at Brsinc.com/romefloyd, or contact Kendrick at missykendrick@developromefloyd.com or 706-413-4213.

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