

# Brownfields

## Success Story

### Giving Credit Where It's Due

#### Roanoke, Virginia

Villa Sorrento was a well-known Italian restaurant that opened in Roanoke, Virginia in 1959. After temporarily closing its doors to relocate from its Patterson Avenue address in 2000, the restaurant briefly reopened in 2001 before closing for good in 2004. But while Villa Sorrento closed, the original restaurant site remained, as did environmental contaminants on the property.

#### The Cleanup

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) awarded the City of Roanoke a \$200,000 Brownfield Assessment Grant, which funded Phase I and II Environmental Site Assessments and cleanup planning. The Phase II environmental sampling revealed high concentrations of lead and asbestos on the property. Roanoke then used a Brownfield Cleanup Grant to remediate existing environmental hazards and demolish the old structure.

The project subsequently received an \$850,000 Community Development Financial Institution Grant from the U.S. Department of the Treasury and a \$350,000 Community Development Block Grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

#### The Benefits

After completing all remediation, the Freedom First Credit Union West Branch opened its doors in 2014. The branch employs five full-time workers and makes use of nearly all the half-acre site. In what is a traditionally underserved area of Roanoke, the Credit Union offers educational meeting space for financial and healthy living seminars, a pavilion for the West End Community Market, a community kitchen and a neighborhood garden. The Credit Union also partnered with Local Environmental Agriculture Project (LEAP) to hire a manager for the community kitchen and to employ two individuals to run the market.



Villa Sorrento, shown here in 1962.

**EPA Grant Recipient:**  
City of Roanoke, Virginia

**EPA Grant Types:**  
Brownfield Assessment,  
Brownfield Cleanup

**Former Use:** Restaurant

**Current Use:** Federal Credit Union

“ Every vacant building that is stabilized helps to expand the boundaries of the traditional downtown core and benefits the market. ”

*Clay Taylor, Agent,  
Waldvogel Commercial Properties*

#### For more information:

Visit the EPA Brownfields website at [www.epa.gov/brownfields](http://www.epa.gov/brownfields) or contact Felicia Fred at [Fred.Felicia@epa.gov](mailto:Fred.Felicia@epa.gov).

