

Brownfields Success Story

GrandyOats

Hiram, Maine

Hiram, ME is a small town of about 1600 residents in Oxford County, Maine. The town has historically been a center of farming and timber harvesting, while the nearby Saco River provided hydropower for mills. The Hiram Elementary School building was originally constructed in 1979. In 2008, Maine consolidated schools in the southern Maine area and the building was abandoned. The Elementary School building drew interest from GrandyOats because it offered more than 10,000 square feet of single-story space and 8.2 acres of land.

Priming the Property for Redevelopment

GrandyOats, an organic granola and food producer local to Maine, was seeking a larger facility and found the vacated Hiram Elementary School building. The building seemed to fit the needs of GrandyOats' growing business, but the presence of asbestos-containing building materials and underground fuel tanks complicated plans to reuse the building. GrandyOats worked with EPA and our State and local partners to clean up the former elementary school building so it could be repurposed into an asset for the business and the Hiram community.

The Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission allocated about \$25,000 of its EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant funding for the former Hiram Elementary School site. This funding paid for the Phase 1 and Phase 2 Environmental Site Assessments necessary to determine the extent of environmental issues at the site and the cost of cleanup. Based on this information, GrandyOats was able to move ahead with the purchase of the property in 2015 and fund the cleanup and renovation of the former school building.

Funding Details

EPA Assessment Funding	\$24,653
GrandyOats Cleanup Funding	\$40,000
Finance Authority of Maine Redevelopment Loan ..	\$200,000
GrandyOats Redevelopment Funding.....	<u>\$550,000</u>
Total:.....	\$814,653



Figure 1: Aerial View of Solar Panels
Credits: GrandyOats

EPA Grant Recipient:
Southern Maine Planning
Development Commission

Grant Types:
Assessment

Former Uses:
Hiram Elementary School

Current Use:
GrandyOats granola and food
production



Figure 2: Solar Panels Credits: GrandyOats



Figure 3: Granola and Food Production Area
Credits: GrandyOats

Today

After cleanup was completed, GrandyOats expanded their business into their new home in Hiram. In pursuit of a truly sustainable business model, they continued to make improvements at the site. With support from the United States Department of Agriculture's Rural Development program, GrandyOats was able to outfit the new facility with a new warehouse for storing raw and organic materials, and install 288 solar panels on the school's old sports field. The solar panels power everything at the facility including computers and ovens, thus moving GrandyOats toward their goal of being a net-zero carbon emissions facility.

The solar cells at GrandyOats generate more than 95,000 kWh of clean energy per year. Powering the facility with clean energy instead of fossil fuels eliminates the amount of greenhouse gas emissions generated by driving an average passenger vehicle for 160,000 miles. That's the equivalent of driving from Hiram, ME, to San Francisco, CA and back 25 times.

The new expanded facility is serving GrandyOats well, as the company has already grown by over 25% and now employs about 30 people. When they moved into the old elementary school building, they became the largest employer in Hiram. GrandyOats has shown that environmental protection and economic development can go hand-in-hand, as the company has helped make the small rural town of Hiram a healthier and more prosperous community. Based on these positive outcomes, EPA Region 1 honored the company with an Environmental Merit Award in April 2017.

“This project provided great benefit to a small, rural community - reuse of a closed school building, job creation, environmental remediation and a net-zero carbon emission manufacturing facility.”

Chuck Morgan,
Senior Development Director
Southern Maine Planning Development
Commission

For more information:

Visit the EPA Brownfields website at www.epa.gov/brownfields or contact Frank Gardner, 617-918-1278, Gardner.frank@epa.gov