



ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES OF THE FUTURE

By Daniel R. Holte, PG

CURRENT INDUSTRY DRIVERS

Like most businesses, environmental firms have reacted to, and will continue to react to, ever changing business environments. Although major regulatory changes are unlikely, we can anticipate our state and federal government will make enough incremental changes to force responsible businesses to get assistance from environmental firms. Pre-acquisition due diligence by investors, insurers and lenders are a major industry driver today and will likely remain so.

Future drivers of the industry will also include:

- Higher disposal costs at landfills.
- More scrutiny by regulators and property owners of the origin and disposition of soil moved from site to site.
- Insurance considerations because of the increased availability and acceptance of environmental insurance.
- Faster delivery of services to clients by firms.

EMERGING AND FUTURE ISSUES

Decreasing land supply will result in land prices increasing which means two things: the need for more creativity in redeveloping less than perfect sites and the need to factor site soil conditions into pre-purchase and redevelopment strategies. The likelihood of a redevelopment site in-town having poor geotechnical soils (e.g., peat, urban fill or rubble) and/or environmental contamination issues is about one in two. How to mitigate and make lemonade out of these lemons is the subject for a different article.

Other environmental issues that have emerged and may be significant to those involved in the development or redevelopment of property in the future include:

- **VAPOR INTRUSION**
- **MERCURY AND MERCURY VAPORS**
- **INSTITUTIONAL CONTROLS ON REDEVELOPED SITES**
- **STORM WATER MANAGEMENT**

VAPOR INTRUSION

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and state environmental regulators have focused recently on the potential harmful health impacts of people being exposed to vapors from buried contamination. Vapors tend to travel upward through tiny spaces within soil or rock. Vapor travel is complex and not completely understood. Environmental regulators currently do not have considerable experience with vapor intrusion issues. From a site acquisition or redevelopment perspective, this means the potential for more expense (e.g., investigation, vapor barriers beneath buildings or installation of ventilation systems) or more uncertainty due to regulators requiring vapor surveys when they do not really know what to do with the results.

MERCURY

Mercury is found in many thermometers, industrial equipment and laboratories. It is also found in current and former hospitals and clinics because glass thermometers tend to break on occasion. Mercury is also found in coal and therefore everywhere because it travels up the stack and into the atmosphere. Unlike some environmental threats where there is uncertainty about the actual threat to humans, there is no uncertainty about the threat from mercury vapor. Mercury is a neurotoxin and is particularly harmful to the young and those in the womb. Because of this, it is very likely environmental regulators will ramp up their attention to mercury contamination issues in the next several years.

STORM WATER MANAGEMENT

Storm water runoff harms lakes and streams. With development creating more hard surfaces impervious to water infiltration, storm water runoff can overload natural flood control features. Currently, excavation sites of one acre or more require a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) be prepared and implemented. This year the City of Minneapolis has changed the method of calculating storm water run-off fees. The new fees are based on the amount of impervious surfaces rather than water usage that can increase fees for a site by an order of magnitude. Credits for storm water mitigation measures (e.g., creating a retention pond, a green roof or a rain garden) can reduce storm water fees dramatically. Governments and environmental regulators will likely continue the trend of imposing new and more expensive ways to help control flooding and improve lake and stream quality.

Successful environmental firms have the capability and staff experience to help you to turn environmental threats into opportunities to create value.

For more information, contact Bret Borth at 952.995.2434 or bborth@braunintertec.com.

Lifeworks

Lifeworks is a nonprofit organization that helps people with disabilities live fuller lives that

are integrated into the flow of community experience. Through employment at area businesses, customized support services, and social enrichment opportunities, Lifeworks provides the tools clients need to build the lives they want to live. I have been fortunate to work with Lifeworks, and I am amazed by the dedication of the people with whom I work. If you would like to learn more about Lifeworks please visit www.lifeworks.org.

“Quotes”

- When they call the roll in the Senate, the Senators do not know whether to answer 'Present' or 'Not guilty' •
- **Patriotism means to stand by the country. It does not mean to stand by the President** •
- A vote is like a rifle: its usefulness depends on the character of the user. Theodore Roosevelt (1858 – 1919) •



HIGHLIGHTED PROPERTIES

Armstrong Business Center I & II – For Lease
Eagan, MN

- Excellent location, easy access to I-35E & I-494
- 16’ & 20’ clear height, office/warehouse property
- Vacancies from 9,200 – 30,000 sf
- Dock and drive-in loading, end-cap spaces
- Low operating expenses, available now



5500 Cottonwood Building – For Sale or Lease
Prior Lake, MN

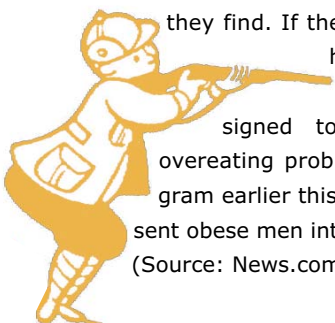
- 32,230 square feet on approx. 5 acres
- Dock & Drive-in loading, 16’ clear
- Visibility from County Road 21
- Multi-tenant
- Space from 1,200 - 15,000 sf



PENALTY BOX AWARD

Fat Kids Can't Hunt

From the “I’m not making this up” file: “A British reality television program to be filmed in Australia this winter will force fat children to hunt for food with Aborigines. In *Fat Kids Can't Hunt*, 10 fat youngsters will live with Aboriginal tribesmen in Australia for a month. If the children want to eat, they must follow the strict rules of the Aborigines, eating plants, grasses and fruits as well as trapping, killing and cooking any animals or insects they find. If they do not eat the bush chow, they go hungry. Made by *Big Brother* producer Endemol, *Fat Kids Can't Hunt* is designed to help overweight children tackle overeating problems. It follows a similar BBC3 program earlier this year called *Fat Men Can't Hunt* which sent obese men into the desert in Namibia.”
 (Source: News.com.au)



Meow - a Big Cat

Utah Mountain Lion Hunt

The latest hunting adventure goes down in the books as one of the best ever. I traveled to Delta, UT to chase cougars with the Myers brothers & Youren family. These guys are absolute professionals – hard working and knowledgeable (much like real estate brokers). We cut a two-day old track on the first morning, and the dogs were off. On day one, the dogs traveled 15+ miles and closed to within 18 hours of the cougar. On the morning of day two, we cut the track fresh and the heatseeking dog missiles were launched, homing in on the cat. The result was excellent – a very large, 147 lb. tom with an empty stomach – 20 feet up in a tree.

