

# LOCAL

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## EPA grant could help link trails

Funds will be combined to remove tar well at former Richmond Gas Co. building

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The city of Richmond has taken another step toward resolving the environmental contamination at the former Richmond Gas Co. building near the Whitewater Valley Gorge.

And, in doing so, city officials could be moving closer to linking the Cardinal Greenway and Whitewater Gorge trails in the city.

Tony Foster, city director of Metropolitan Development,

said last week that the city received a \$200,000 brownfields grant from U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to remove a brick tar well that is buried beneath the building at 16 E. Main St.

The tar well had to be removed before the city can proceed with cleaning up the rest of the property.

"It's very, very important because the well is toxic and it has to be removed," Foster said. "We have a site that is unusable until

- Richmond was one of 56 communities or organizations in the Midwest to get an Environmental Protection Agency brownfields grant.
- The grant, coupled with a \$150,000 Indiana Finance Authority grant and a contribution from a

private donor, will allow workers to remove about 14,000 cubic yards of subsurface soil and an old tar well to be replaced by 14,000 cubic yards of clean soil.

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Brownfields are abandoned former industrial areas in which development might or might not be complicated by the presence of contamination.

The EPA grant will be paired with a \$150,000 grant from the Indiana Finance Authority that

### AT A GLANCE

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the city received in 2007. City officials are also negotiating with Vectren to help pay for the cleanup.

The property was originally donated to the city in 1978 by a group of community leaders who purchased the property from Richmond Gas Co. for

\$25,000. The building on the property was built in the mid-1850s.

Foster said he hopes the excavation would be late this year.

Some hope to use the land to link the two hiking/biking trails in the city.

"It's something that has to be done to develop that area, including under the bridge and into the Gorge," said Jeff Plasterer, a board member of the Wayne County Cardinal Greenway Association. "The tar well is a hindrance and it's good to see this move forward."

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