

Learn more

Harney County will continue to keep the community up to date on the progress of this project. Updates will be shared through the project website, listerv, and community meetings. For more information and to sign up to receive updates, please visit the county's website.

For More Information



<https://harneycountyor.gov/lincoln-cleanup-project/>

Contact us

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State of Oregon
Department of
Environmental
Quality

Lincoln School Cleanup Project



Project Overview

Harney County was awarded a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Brownfield Cleanup Grant (CA# 4B-02J52001-0) in November 2023. The County will be using funds from this grant to clean up the former Lincoln School site in Burns, Oregon.

The County, which acquired the property in 2022, selected the former school site to be redeveloped into a Justice Center for the county. Previous investigations of the site identified hazardous building materials inside the building that would impact future renovations, including asbestos-containing materials and lead-based paint. An aboveground storage tank used for heating oil is also present within the building. These items will need to be removed from the site before the building can be renovated to safeguard the health of site contractors and the surrounding community. The County has partnered with Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and their contractor, Maul Foster & Alongi, to create and implement a plan to clean up the site in accordance with applicable laws. Appropriately licensed environmental contractors will perform physical removal of the hazardous building materials and decommission the aboveground storage tank.

Creating Beneficial Reuse for the Community

The County's use of the EPA grant funds to clean up the site is important for minimizing potential risk to both the community and the environment and is necessary for safely redeveloping the building. Repurposing the vacant building into a Justice Center will not only bring extra county services but also stimulate economic activity for the area. The community will benefit from a centrally located municipal facility that adds jobs, overall community safety, tax revenue, and revitalizes an economically depressed area of downtown Burns.

What to Expect During the Cleanup

Before the work begins, members of the project team will prepare the site for cleanup activities. Preparation activities may include installation of fencing, barriers or other security measures to prevent unauthorized access during cleanup work. Once the cleanup activities begin, you can expect to see many members of the project team working on the site. You may also notice project and/or safety signage, dumpsters, heavy equipment, and large vehicles and trailers. Site contractors will be completing cleanup work with oversight from DEQ’s environmental contractor to ensure that (1) all regulations are followed and (2) no releases of hazardous materials to the neighborhood or environment result from the cleanup work. Cleanup activities may result in loud or disruptive noises during the daytime. Work hours will generally occur between 8:00 a.m. and 5 p.m. Additional people and vehicles will be present in the neighborhood during the cleanup project. Neighborhood concerns can be reported to the project team via phone or email.

The project team will be wearing safety gear throughout the cleanup process to protect themselves from exposure to hazardous building materials. To ensure the safety of the community as well as the project team, we ask that members of the public stay out of the work area. Air monitoring will be conducted during periods of hazardous material removals to ensure that there are no hazards to the community or site workers. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the cleanup process, please don't hesitate to contact our project representatives listed under “Contact us.”



Workers in typical safety equipment for asbestos and lead paint projects. Left photo by Oregon Department of Transportation, 2011.

Project Site



Aerial photo obtained from Google Earth.

Project Schedule

The project team finalized the work plan that will describe the approach and methods that will be used to conduct the cleanup activities. Cleanup activities are expected to occur in spring 2025. Below is a timeline outlining completed activities and what you can expect in the future:

SPRING 2024

- Site cleanup plan is finalized
- Project team selection begins
- First in-person community meeting

FALL 2024

- Selection of project team is finalized
- Cleanup Work Plan is finalized

SPRING 2025

- Site cleanup begins and is completed
- Second in-person community meeting