



Clean bill of health in brownfield studies

- The Environmental Protection Agency in 2014 awarded the City of Montrose \$400,000
- Grant's first phase was recently completed
- Jan. 19 open house planned

By KATHARHYNN HEIDELBERG

MONTROSE DAILY PRESS SENIOR WRITER

The rusting, dilapidated Bullock Power Plant building hulked as an eyesore within view of the Uncompahgre River for years.

Like other locations, it suffers from the perception that it is contaminated, but, as a grant-funded assessment program has revealed, that reputation is undeserved.

The Environmental Protection Agency in 2014 awarded the City of Montrose \$400,000 to assess so-called "brownfield" areas like the former power plant site.

Initial assessments of participating properties revealed no contaminants, City of Montrose Program Coordinator Erica Weeks said Dec. 29.

"It's freeing up these properties that appeared to be untouchable because of the fear that there is contamination on the property," Weeks said.

A brownfield is property that has had adverse effects from hazardous chemicals, or oil and gas, she said.

The city's grant was for the purpose of assessing possible brownfield sites with the voluntary participation of interested property owners, the city can work with property owners to locate additional money to be used for cleanup.

"It's important to note the EPA assessments are voluntary. A



The Chamber of Commerce building on East Main Street is under contract to be sold after two years on the market. (Richard Reeder/Montrose Daily Press)

Chamber building under sale's contract

- Building has been for sale for two years
- Renfrow unable to disclose buyer
- Business market on the upturn

By RICHARD REEDER

MONTROSE DAILY PRESS SPORTS EDITOR

After two years on the market, the Chamber of Commerce building is under contract to be sold. The building on East Main Street will soon house new occupants.

"The contract has just been entered into,"

John Renfrow of Renfrow Realty said. "Now they are going through due diligence to ensure everything is correct."

Renfrow said a future closing date has been arranged. Renfrow said the buyer has asked to remain anonymous.

"We have a confidentiality clause in the deal, so I can't release the buyer's name," he said. "But after two years I am excited to have this property under contract."

needed a lot of the congestion in that area," he said. "So we haven't had as many accidents there as we have in the past."

Two other intersections Lillard identified as a concern are on the San Juan Bypass.

"The intersection of San Juan and Park Avenue is troublesome. We have had one major accident there in the summer," he said. "Then the intersection of San Juan and 6450 Road has had some accidents."

The configuration of those two intersections creates the issues, Lillard said, because it's hard to see traffic coming east and west on San Juan Road when trying to turn from those two streets.

Police encourage better practices

Lillard said there are steps people can take to avoid car accidents.

"We try to tell people that even if they are approaching a green light they need to be checking both ways at the intersection," he said.

tion or warning."

Lillard added issuing a citation isn't MPD's first priority, though.

"We aren't issuing that many citations," he said. "We issue warnings and people are cautious when they see a police car."

What else can be done?

City Engineer Scott Murphy said the issues on South Townsend Avenue aren't easy to alleviate due to two factors.

"The intersection at South Townsend and 12th Street is a major concern because it is misaligned," he said. "The Colorado Department of Transportation sought funding for that intersection, but it wasn't a high priority and didn't get the funding needed."

Murphy said South Townsend Avenue is a result of growth and improper planning for access points to a residential area.

"There are more intersections and that has increased the potential for accidents," he said. "But now we can't close off access

ability to change things.

"We are doing something at Miami and Hillcrest because we have had petitions from residents to get something done there," he said. "But we have no control over the access points on Townsend Avenue. We have to partner with CDOT for anything done along that corridor."

Parking lot problems

Intersections aren't the only problem, though, as Lillard said parking lots also cause issues.

Lillard indicated the parking lots of major retailers along Townsend Avenue are seeing high amounts of accidents.

"We have had about 35 accidents in the Walmart parking lot. It can be a dangerous place. We have had many fender benders and door dings there," he said of 2016. "The parking lots of City Market at both ends have a lot of accidents as well."

Lillard said the MPD may not be

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Renfrow said this is a sign that the Montrose market is making a rebound.

"We are seeing good activity in the business real estate market. We are the last market in Colorado to finally see a turn around," he said. "The building across the street from the Chamber building has been bought by Coffee Trader, so things are moving."

Renfrow said there are many factors causing the Montrose market to begin to be active.

"The new Mayfly development has played a

part in it," he said. "And the residential market's good recovery helps the business environment."

Renfrow added the commercial leasing market has been on the upswing.

"I have almost no space to lease because there are many Telluride builders leasing space down here," he said. "So to be out of warehouse space is a good indicator of a healthy market."

Incoming Chamber President Brad Oberto did not return calls for comment and other Chamber board members declined to comment.