

# Brownfield authority gives Clare tax break incentives

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Hoping to spur economic development, officials in Clare County learned of the various incentives available through their Brownfield Redevelopment Authority in Harrison Thursday.

Representatives of AKT Peerless Environmental Services of Saginaw, and Kate Johnson, an environmental analyst for Consumers Energy, spoke to a group of county and municipal officials and others, outlining tax break options to lure development to areas in the county that have been deemed contaminated.

Brian Eggers of AKT Peerless said because the

county established a Brownfield Redevelopment Authority in January, the county is eligible to offer developers such incentives as tax increment financing and single business tax credits to entice businesses to locate in Clare County.

Brownfield areas – properties that are contaminated with either petroleum or industrial wastes – are eligible for tax breaks, Eggers said.

Eggers, Johnson and county officials have worked toward going forward with the redevelopment authority since August.

Promoting and overseeing the redevelopment authority is the Middle Michigan

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Development Corp. of Clare. Its director, George Dunn, was impressed with the information Eggers and Johnson presented Thursday.

“The panel of speakers brought expertise,” Dunn said. “The next step is when someone steps forward and says they want to redevelop a contaminated site, we look into the benefits.”

Many brownfield sites exist in Clare County because each of its 16 townships in the past had its own garbage dump. Johnson called the redevelopment authority a “great tool” in getting sites cleaned and bringing more businesses to the county.

Other sites include properties that were once used as gasoline stations, mechanic’s shops and dry cleaning businesses, Johnson said.

While Eggers said the state has identified many brownfield sites in the county, local residents could identify some other sites.

Having the MMDC oversee the redevelopment authority encourages local input on contaminated sites, Johnson said.

“The MMDC is a good source for regional planning,” she said. “They’re a good local source for knowledge.”

Farwell Village President Steve Grim, who attended Thursday’s meeting, thinks the redevelopment authority will benefit both the county and its municipalities.

“The window’s open a little wider now,” Grim said. “It gives the local communities a lot more power.”

Others attending the meeting included county commissioners John Parker, Al Bransdorfer, Karen Lipovsky and Commission Chair Mike Haskin, Harrison Mayor Brook Wood, Harrison City Clerk Jack McNutt, County Administrator Lynn Grim and Enterprise Community Executive Director Ed Kerr.