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SOUTH PLAINFIELD

## Communities Recover With Army Corps Stimulus Money

by [staff report](#) • October 1, 2010 • [0 Comments](#)

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By JoAnne Castagna, Ed.D.

STATE — Last year, Donald Applegate, a Middlesex County resident, was unemployed and heard that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was using American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds or stimulus

<http://njtoday.net/2010/10/01/communities-recover-with-army-corps-stimulus-money/>

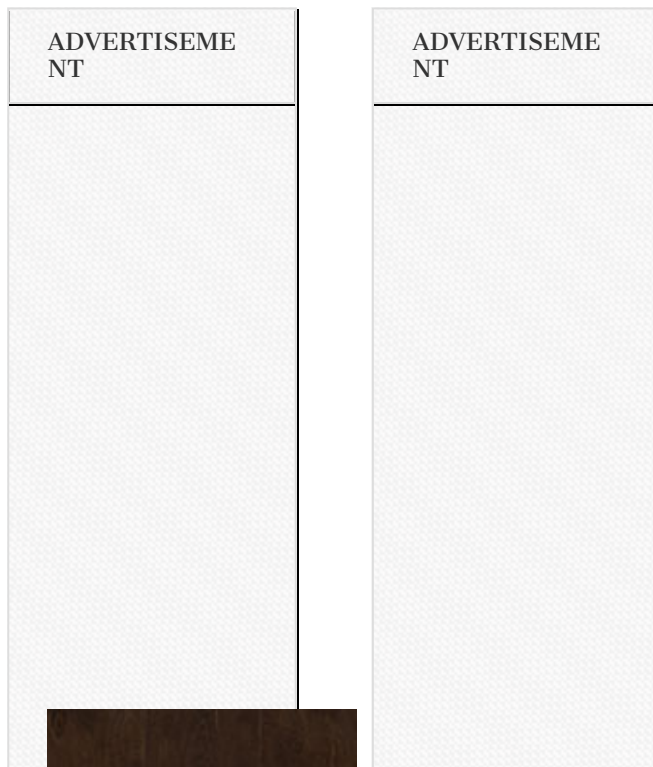
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received last year from the Obama Administration  
under "The Recovery Act."



under the Recovery Act.

The administration distributed the money to many federal agencies with the purpose of stimulating the economy, creating and retaining jobs, and addressing long neglected challenges including environmental protection, transportation and infrastructure.

The Army Corps’ New York District has been using the stimulus money successfully for these purposes through their FUSRAP and in support of the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) Region 2 Superfund Program.

The district received the largest amount of stimulus funding in the nation for use on FUSRAP and Superfund Programs. The district’s programs are responsible for many hazardous waste sites throughout the Northeast, which is home to the most sites in the United States.

“New Jersey has the most Superfund sites in the nation with 111,” said Richard Gajdek, project manager, Cornell-Dubilier Electronics Superfund Site, New York District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Out of the district’s sites, there are two in particular that are proving to be stimulus success stories — The Cornell-Dubilier Electronics Superfund Site in South Plainfield and the FUSRAP Maywood Superfund Site in Bergen County.

Both projects are considered highly contaminated and are listed on the EPA’s National Priorities List that documents the most contaminated sites in the United States.

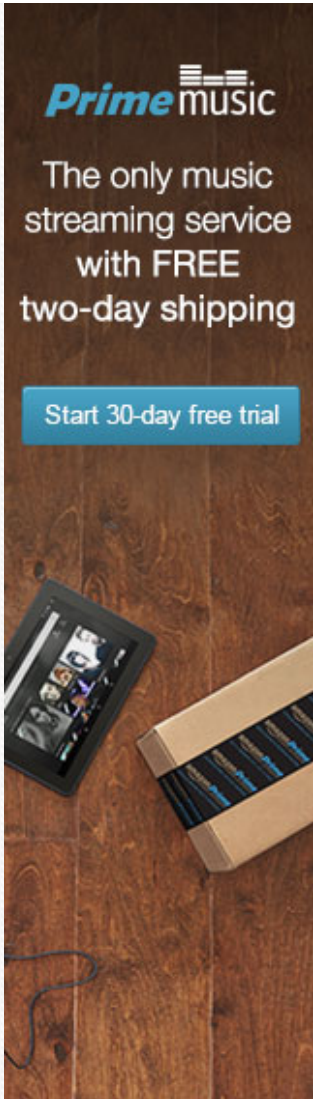
The Cornell-Dubilier Electronics Superfund Site is located on a 26-acre piece of property in the Borough of South Plainfield. From the early to mid 20th Century, the site was used by Cornell Dubilier Electronics, Inc., a global maker of capacitors for electronic and electrical equipment.

During the production of these devices, polychlorinated biphenyls – or PCBs, 23 metals and


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19 pesticides were disposed of on the site.

These probable human carcinogens posed a potential health threat to near-by residents. It's estimated that 8,700 residents live within a mile of the site, 500 live within a quarter-mile of the site and some live as close as 200 feet from the site.

The contamination was also a threat to the fish and wildlife at the near-by Bound Brook and to the public's water supply.

The EPA Region 2 hired the district to remove dilapidated buildings on the site and remove or remediate approximately 195,000 tons of contaminated soil and debris. The project is expected to be completed by the end of 2011.


The FUSRAP Maywood Superfund Site is comprised of 88 properties covering a total of 153-acres located in the communities of Maywood, Lodi, and Rochelle Park in Bergen County. From the early to mid 20th Century, the site was used by Maywood Chemical Works to process thorium.

The company disposed processed waste into pits, piles and manmade lagoons. Since these wastes are radioactive, the disposal of them in the soil posed a potential health threat to the public.

Army Corps personnel are removing this contaminated soil and addressing contaminated groundwater. So far, 306,000 cubic yards of contaminated soil has been removed from the properties, which is enough dirt to cover 143 standard football fields to a depth of 1 foot. The project is expected to be completed in 2021.


The contamination that took place on both the Cornell and Maywood sites occurred before there were federal regulations in place to monitor the waste disposal.

On both projects, the district is using the stimulus money for the purpose it was given including – creating and retaining jobs and accelerating progress on projects to improve infrastructure, transportation and the environment.




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## Creating & Retaining Jobs

Both projects hired local people and employed or retained a total of 136 full-time employees, also providing them full health and retirement benefits. These positions include equipment operators, carpenters, laborers, truck drivers, construction and engineering management, safety technicians and administrative support personnel.

The work has also trickled down to many local subcontractors that are providing services such as fence installation, tree clearing and clean backfill.

## Accelerating Projects

Both projects are moving along much faster than if they didn't receive the stimulus money.

"At Maywood, the property clean-up work we're performing now, was not planned to be done this year, but receiving the stimulus money allowed us to address these contaminated properties ahead of schedule," said Jim Moore, project manager, FUSRAP Maywood Superfund Site, New York District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

He continued, "It's safe to say that the stimulus money decreased our project schedule by two years."

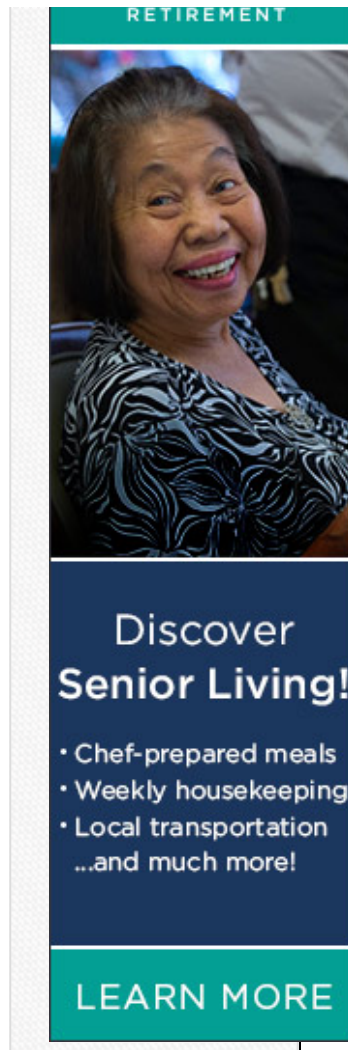
## Building Infrastructure

Once both projects are fully completed, the clean land will be returned to the communities and property owners for them to use beneficially.

At Cornell, the community is considering using the restored land for small office space, light industrial space (warehouses), and retail space that will include shops and small stores.

Gajdek said, "This new infrastructure will stimulate the local economy and add local jobs."

At Maywood, the community has its own redevelopment proposal that includes using several properties in a variety of ways.



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## Improving Transportation

Restoring these lands faster is also providing community's space that they need to improve their roadways.

The stimulus sped up clean-up efforts at Cornell and as a result the Borough of South Plainfield was able to construct an auxiliary public road through the superfund site which is helping the borough alleviate truck traffic congestion on nearby residential roads.

At Maywood, the stimulus money accelerated work, allowing Bergen County to perform improvements to its Route 17, one of the county's major transportation corridors.

## Restoring Environment

Besides improving the land and making it safe for residents, there are plans at the Cornell site to create and restore wetlands, improve fish and bird habitats and enhance recreational fishing opportunities in the Raritan River Watershed.

"At Maywood, our clean-up of property along Coles Brook will improve drainage and reduce flooding conditions that currently occur in Lodi and Maywood," said Moore.

Restoring the environment is the goal of the EPA that has been partnering successfully with the Army Corp on hazardous clean-up projects for years, "The Army Corps provides us their technical expertise for many complicated hazardous clean-up projects, which allows for redevelopment that benefits the entire community," said Peter Mannino, project manager, EPA Region 2, who is working with the district on the Cornell site.

The Army Corps and EPA's success in effectively using the stimulus money is being recognized by the Obama Administration. This summer, the White House announced that they've selected the Cornell-Dubilier Electronics Superfund Site as one of their "Top 100 most successful stimulus projects." Cornell is in the top 7 out of these 100 projects and is considered a

"great stimulus success story."

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Stimulus hire Donald Applegate inspecting an air monitoring station at the Cornell Dubilier Electronics Superfund Site in South Plainfield, New Jersey. Credit: Patrick Nejand, USACE, New York District.



Aerial image of the Cornell Dubilier Electronics Superfund Site in South Plainfield, New Jersey. Credit: USACE.







Stimulus funded excavation work is well underway at the FUSRAP Maywood Superfund Site in Bergen County, New Jersey. Credit: Shaw Environmental & Infrastructure Group.



Stimulus hire Marie Casciano performing administrative work in the field office of the FUSRAP Maywood Superfund Site in Bergen County, New Jersey. Credit: Shaw Environmental & Infrastructure Group.

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