

# IRON RANGE BROWNFIELDS est 2016

## CITY OF VIRGINIA

**m** DEPARTMENT OF IRON RANGE  
RESOURCES & REHABILITATION



AUGUST 13, 2025  
LUNCH & LEARN-CITY OF VIRGINIA  
NORTHEAST TECHNICAL SERVICES  
526 CHESTNUT STREET | VIRGINIA, MINN



How did we get here?  
&  
What did we discover?

1. Project Proposer
2. Municipal Staff
3. Technical Expert
4. Capital Stack
5. Regulators / Agencies



# IRON RANGE BROWNFIELDS est 2016

(FORMERLY CENTRAL IRON RANGE INITIATIVE est 2003)

CORE CITIES:  
VIRGINIA, EVELETH, ELY

CONSULTING SERVICES:  
NORTHEAST TECHNICAL SERVICES, INC.

Bringing awareness to the Iron Range and its Brownfields



## CITY OF VIRGINIA & NTS



- ❖ City Government – Larry A. Cuffe Jr, Mayor
- ❖ City Staff Contact:
  - Britt See-Benes, City Administrator
  - Jenny Bourbonais, Community Development Coordinator
- ❖ Technical Expert Contact(s) Northeast Technical Services, Inc.
  - Rick Crum, Hydrogeologist
  - Jenny Holmes, Environmental Geologist / Env. Law Professional
- ❖ Case Studies – City & NTS Collaboration:
  - Industrial Site – N 14 ½ Avenue : Example of a private developer seeking a site. No due diligence leads to cancelled project and a listed site needing a developer in order to leverage funding.
  - Public Safety Center – 1004 S 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue: Example of public infrastructure with complete due diligence and planning.
  - NTS Expansion - Example of private developer, committed to a location, using available funding to manage liabilities

# INDUSTRIAL ADDITION

Available for Development



# INDUSTRIAL ADDITION



**2003** — City of Virginia takes ownership 2.55 acres

**2019** — Interested party starts preliminary site prep & discovers buried debris, including concrete, bricks, tires, and a barrel during geotechnical work.

Oh no & quick pivot - environmental call for rush characterization of waste, entry into MPCA programs, backfilling Phase I and process with agency

1972



2017







# INDUSTRIAL ADDITION



## Fun facts about solid waste in Minnesota

**1965:** Federal Solid Waste Disposal Act passed.

**Late 1960s:** Counties designated as responsible for solid waste management.

**1967:** MPCA established and given authority to regulate waste management.

**Early 1970s:** Significant reduction in the number of dumps as sanitary landfills were developed.

**1980s:** Ongoing efforts to address environmental issues at former dump and landfill sites.

**1993:** Saint Louis County Regional Landfill (near Virginia, Minn) opened in November

Subtitle D landfills = non-hazardous waste

Subtitle C landfills = hazardous waste

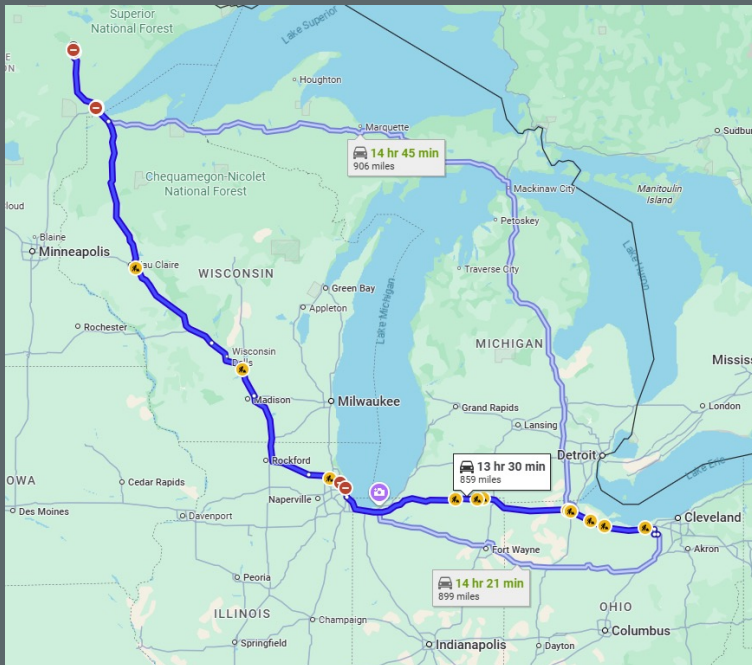


# INDUSTRIAL ADDITION



2020: Incineration Services, Inc in Grafton, Ohio – for hazardous waste disposal

2021 and beyond: property is available for development with need for soil correction(s). Needs a committed developer in order to leverage funding. Example of a private developer seeking a site. No due diligence leads to cancelled project and a listed site needing a developer in order to leverage funding.





# PUBLIC SAFETY CENTER & TRAINING FACILITY

LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNIT UPGRADED SPACE & BROWNFIELDS



# PUBLIC SAFETY CENTER & TRAINING FACILITY



- ❖ Project Proposer: CITY OF VIRGINIA
- ❖ Municipal Staff: Britt See-Benes, City Administrator  
Jenny Bourbonais, Community Development Coordinator
- ❖ Technical Expert: Northeast Technical Services, Inc.





# PUBLIC SAFETY CENTER & TRAINING FACILITY



2016 – Virginia Fire Department Space Needs & Site Selection Study (Five Bugles Design)

2018 – environmental process started for history and identifying suspect areas for potentially problematic soils during development aka Construction Contingency Plan (CCP).

\*\*First platted in the 1890s, and residential homes were constructed as early as 1905. Duluth, Missabe, and Iron Range (DM&IR) Railway by 1915 and serviced open-pit iron ore mining operations, support industries, and a coal gasification plant. Adjoining property concerns: former Staver Foundry and several fueling stations & 100+ year history of residential, commercial, industrial use\*\*

All Sites – Reference Fig 5, Appendix B





# PUBLIC SAFETY CENTER & TRAINING FACILITY



Planning started early (lessons learned)

City knew there would be unexpected hiccups and planned for contingencies – NAD, CCP, Funding Stacks. Example of public infrastructure with complete due diligence and planning.



May 30, 2024









**NORTHEAST TECHNICAL SERVICES, INC**

**SMALL BUSINESS & BROWNFIELD DEVELOPMENT**





## CITY OF VIRGINIA & NTS



- ❖ Project Proposer: ENGINEERING RESOURCE LEASING LLC
- ❖ Municipal Staff: Britt See-Benes, City Administrator  
Jenny Bourbonais, Community Development Coordinator
- ❖ Technical Expert: Northeast Technical Services, Inc.,
- ❖ Capital Stack: Private equity  
State funding used: Commerce Department Petrofund
- ❖ Regulators/Agencies: MPCA



# NTS & ITS GROWING PAINS



Northeast Technical Services, Inc.

315 Chestnut Street (1985)

526 Chestnut Street (March 2002)

114 South 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue (October 2014)

521 1<sup>st</sup> Street South (July 2020)

522 Chestnut Street (February 2023)

## Iron Range Resources & Rehabilitation's post



The environmental science and engineering firm doubled its office space and acquired a new off-road CME-55 drill rig to support geotechnical and environmental drilling in remote locations.

The expansion was supported by multiple grants from Iron Range Resources & Rehabilitation, including a Commercial Redevelopment grant to renovate a former brownfield site in downtown Virginia. The renovated building, previously occupied by Goodwill Industries, now features 18 new offices, a field prep area and a 50-person conference room.

Additional support through Business Energy Retrofit and Downtown Building Rehabilitation grants helped improve energy efficiency and code compliance with new HVAC, windows, doors and insulation.

Congratulations to NTS on this exciting milestone and continued growth on the Iron Range!





# NTS & ITS GROWING PAINS



☺ 526 Chestnut Street (March 2002)

Past Use, photography studio

☺ 521 1<sup>st</sup> Street South (July 2020)

Past Use, dry cleaner ► MPCA and its Programs

Underground tanks, Superfund, Site Assessment,

Petroleum Remediation, Brownfields VIC &

Petroleum Brownfield = 2025 end use is restricted as

parking lot

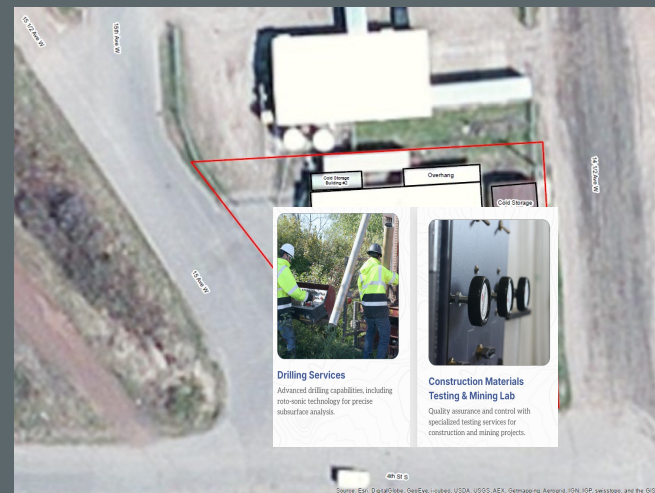


☺ 522 Chestnut Street (February 2023)

Past use ► goodwill industries, and auto repair 1929 to 1954 = 2025 end use 18 new offices, field prep, and conference room

☺ 114 S 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue (October 2014)

Past Use, carpentry; and heating & plumbing







# CITY OF VIRGINIA & NTS



Example of private developer,  
committed to a location, using available  
funding to manage liabilities.

City of Virginia & NTS partnership

Iron Range Resources & Rehabilitation  
Commercial Redevelopment grant

Business Energy Retrofit & Downtown  
Building Rehabilitation grant



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Thank you!

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CITY OF VIRGINIA & NTS



Questions?

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NEXT UP

BROWNFIELDS LUNCH AND LEARN – EVELETH

EVELETH AUDITORIUM | 421 Jackson Street

SEPTEMBER 30, 2025

REGISTRATION UP TO 150 PEOPLE: [Events](#) | [RAMS](#)



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