

Environment & Conservation Department Intranet

UST Involved in Historic Train Depot Transformation

Eric Ward | September 01, 2015

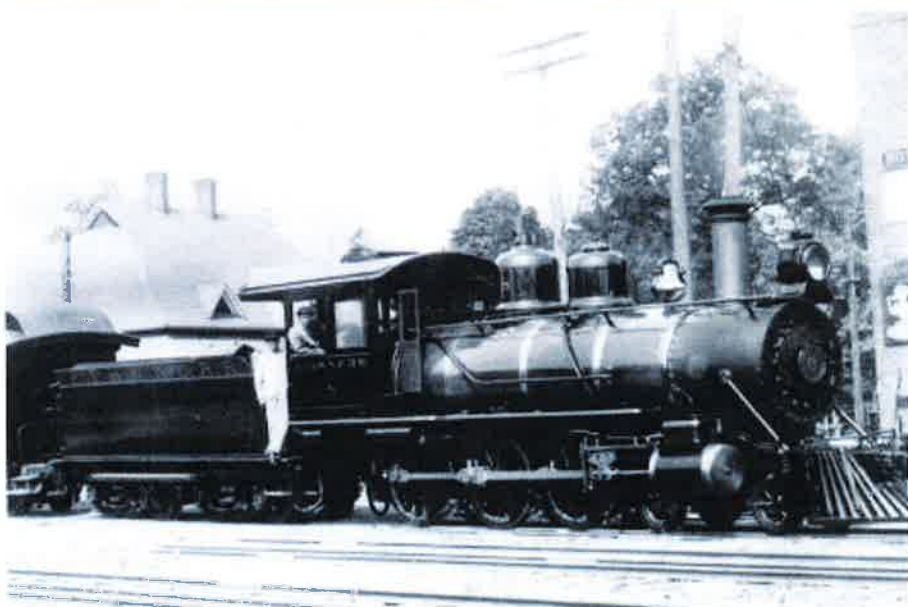
The Division of Underground Storage Tanks has been involved in the transformation of a historic Washington County property that previously served as a train depot in the 1800s and an auto center in the 1960s. Today, the Yee-Haw Brewing Company Taproom and White Duck Taco Shop occupy the refurbished location.

The East Tennessee and Western North Carolina "Tweetsie" Railroad Company constructed the Tweetsie Railroad Depot in Johnson City in 1891 to transport passengers, iron ore and timber from the mountains of Northeast Tennessee and Western North Carolina. The depot was utilized for passenger train service up until the 1940s, when the mountainous portions of the narrow gauge rail line were damaged by flooding. In the 1960s, the Tweetsie Depot was acquired by the Wexler family, where it was transformed into a full-service auto center. Four petroleum underground storage tanks were operated at this facility from 1965 until 1988, when the tanks were taken out of service permanently and filled with foam.

Ten years later in 1988, the property was being considered for condemnation and possible demolition for commercial development. A Phase II Environmental Assessment was conducted on the property, which indicated petroleum contaminant concentrations in soil which exceeded the most stringent of cleanup levels at that time. The UST Division required a soil/groundwater classification by the property owner and subsequently determined that due to the date which the tanks were taken out of service, continued remediation activities would fall under the authority of the Division of Solid Waste Management's State Remediation Section (now part of the Division of Remediation). Subsequent activities by TDEC and the property owner determined no additional action was required.

In 2014, the City of Johnson City collaborated with the Yee-Haw Brewing Company to assist with building renovation through grants, as well as utility relocation, site assessment and development consultation with the Washington County Economic Development Council (WCEDC). In addition, the historic Tweetsie rail line from Johnson City to Elizabethton has been recently converted into a 10-mile linear trail (<http://www.tweetsietrail.com/>), which parallels existing trails at Sycamore Shoals State Park in Elizabethton.

Due to UST's historical involvement with the property and its regional historical relevance, division personnel monitored construction activity throughout the renovation process. Congratulations to staff from UST involved in the redevelopment of this historic Tennessee location! See the photos below for a look at how the property has transformed over the years.





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Great story about revitalization and great effort by our divisions to make it happen.

Posted about 10 months, 2 weeks, and 3 days ago by Brenda Apple on September 02, 2015 at 9:11am