

# **BROWNFIELDS IN SMALL AND RURAL COMMUNITIES WORKSHOP EVALUATION REPORT DECEMBER 1, 2003**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Historically, brownfields funding has been awarded to urban communities, despite the fact that small and rural communities are eligible. During Summer 2003, a series of interactive workshops were offered to give small and rural communities in Kansas an opportunity to learn how to identify a brownfield; what assistance programs are available; and how properties are assessed for potential contaminants and cleaned up, if needed. In addition, the workshop discussed liability and financial issues.

Technical Assistance to Brownfields (TAB) staff from Kansas State University partnered with the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE), Terracon, Inc., and several economic development organizations throughout Kansas to hold workshops for small and rural Kansas communities. Day long workshops were held in Jewell, Hiawatha, El Dorado, and Dodge City. Additional sponsors included Butler County Economic Development, Dodge City/Ford County Development Corporation, Glacial Hills Resource Conservation & Development, North Central Kansas Rural Development Council, South Central Kansas Economic Development District, Western Kansas Rural Economic Development Alliance, and the Environmental Protection Agency Region 7.

## **EVALUATION METHODOLOGY**

Workshop sponsors wished to evaluate the effectiveness of the workshop series on the participants' knowledge acquisition and changes in attitude/perception related to brownfield redevelopment issues. Sponsors also wanted to learn what participants perceived as existing and needed resources, and barriers to brownfield redevelopment in small and rural communities.

Sponsors used a variety of methods to collect evaluation data including tools to measure perception change, pre- and post-surveys, and a strategy session. Results below are based on the responses of 48 participants in pre-surveys and 33 participants in post-surveys.

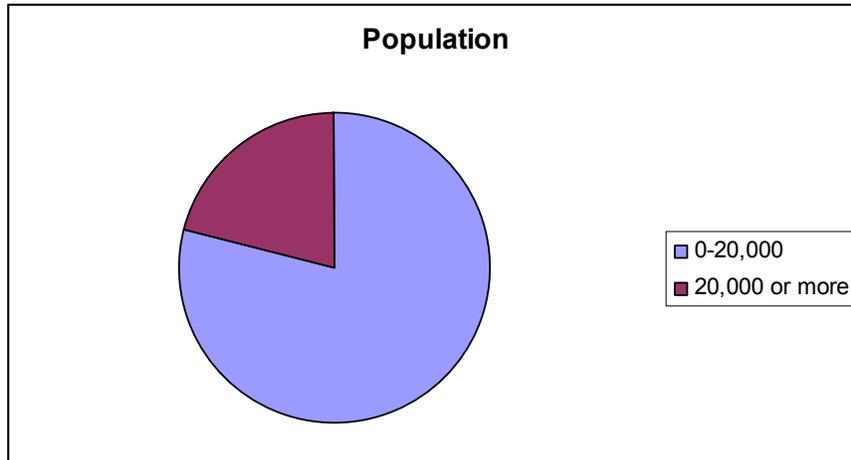
## **THE PARTICIPANTS**

### **Population**

EPA's definition of a small or rural community is a population of 100,000 or less. In Kansas, the definition of a small community is different. There are 628 cities in Kansas; 573 have populations of less than 5,000<sup>1</sup>. Workshop participants reflected this, as 47% were from towns of 5,000 or less. As Figure 1 below shows, a significant majority (78%) were from cities with populations of 20,000 or less.

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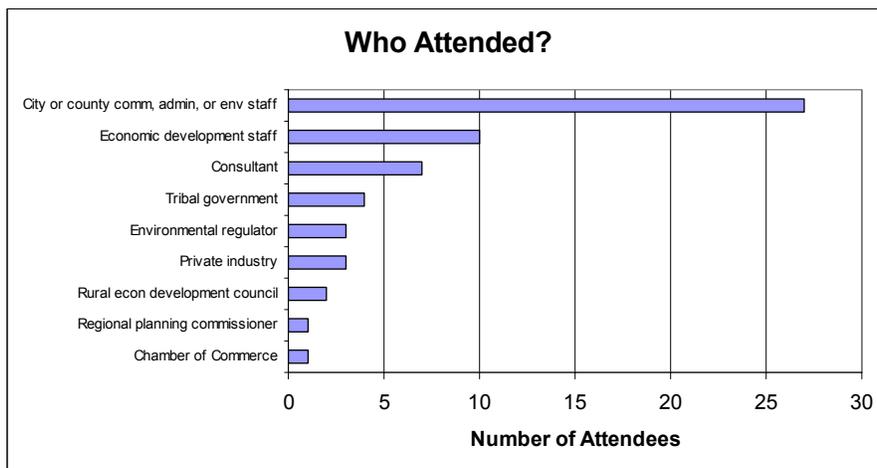
<sup>1</sup> Wong, J.D., Durkes, A.H. *The Governor's Economic and Demographic Report*. Topeka, Kansas: Kansas Division of the Budget.2003



**Figure 1.** Population of participant's city.

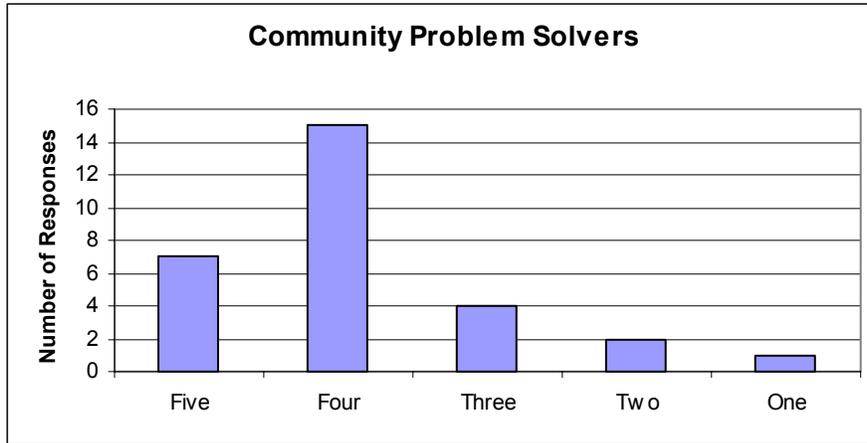
### Who attended?

Workshop participants represented problem solvers and decision-makers in their communities. The majority of participants identified themselves as economic development staff, city or county commissioners or administrators, or environmental staff.



**Figure 2.** Attendees represented a variety of stakeholders in brownfield redevelopment.

Participants were asked to rate themselves as problem solvers in their city's brownfield issues. 67% rated themselves as four or higher, on a five point scale, with five being the highest.



**Figure 3.** Workshop attendees identified themselves as problem solvers  
Five = a very high degree One = a very small degree.

Participants were asked why they chose to attend the workshop. Responses included:

- wanting knowledge or information about brownfield redevelopment in rural areas,
- seeking assistance and resources for brownfield redevelopment,
- the possibility of sites in their city,
- involved in brownfield redevelopment,
- received an invitation from the workshop sponsors,
- close location,
- CDBG credits, and
- part of job duties.

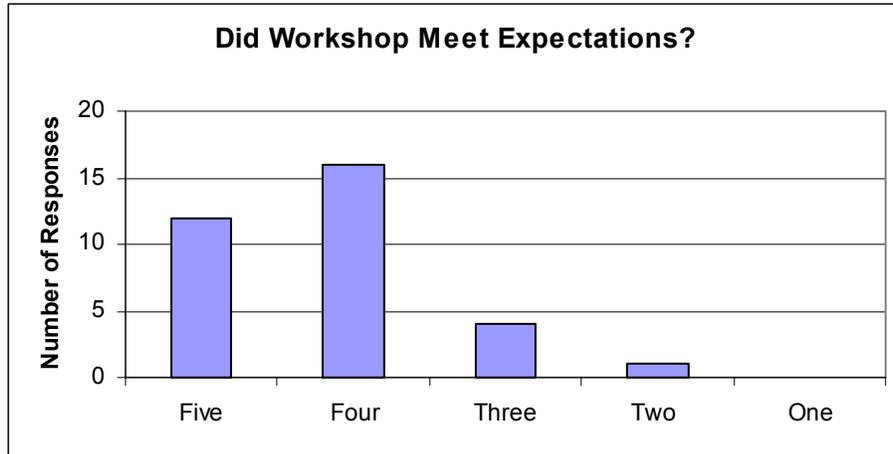
## PARTICIPANT EXPECTATIONS AND PERCEPTIONS

### Expectations

Prior to the start of the workshop, participants were asked what expectations they had for this workshop. Participants could check as many responses as were applicable.

Number of responses	Response choices
37	curious to learn about brownfields
38	to understand brownfield remediation process
9	to build trust
13	to participate in making decisions about remediation of this site
21	to learn how the community can be involved in the decision-making process
29	to help my community
36	to learn how to find funds to help with this issue/problem
19	to make sure this problem gets “fixed” right
10	to make sure the voice of the average citizen is listened to
4	other: to learn about concerns and problems encountered by applicants/advice as well as funds/how to apply program to rural areas/CDBG credit

In the post-workshop survey, participants were asked if their expectations were met. On a 5-1 scale, where 5= expectations most met and 1= expectations least met, 84% chose 4 or higher.



**Figure 4.** The workshop met participant expectations.  
5= expectations most met and 1= expectations least met.

Reasons for their choices fell into three main categories: praise or helpful feedback, suggestions for improvement, and path forward statements.

*Praise or helpful feedback*

- the workshop provided a lot of great information and understanding of what to do when working with a potential brownfield site,
- interesting and enjoyable program,
- candid presentation,
- increased understanding of brownfields,
- resources were spelled out,
- good handouts.

*Suggestions for improvement*

- presenters should give a general overview of the whole process before discussing details;
- some information was confusing, but the handouts are helpful;
- too much to learn so fast, good meeting, needed more time;
- too much material gets confusing after a while; and
- the sequence of the presentations was disjointed for someone with little knowledge of the subject.

*Path forward statements*

- satisfied brownfield program will work in small communities.

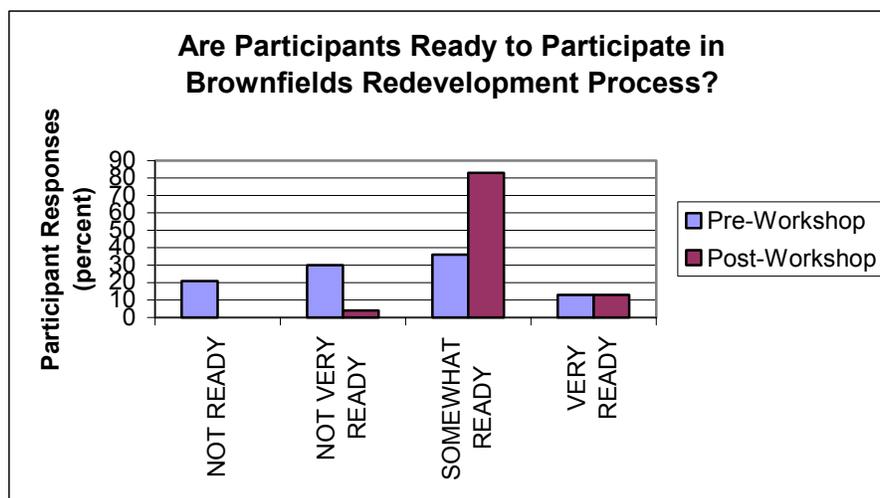
## Barriers

Participants were asked to share their perceptions of what barriers prevent their city from being involved in brownfield redevelopment projects. This question was asked on both the pre- and post-survey forms.

Pre-survey responses	Post-survey responses
<b>Matching responses</b>	
Money (17 responses)	Money (12 responses)
Staff time (3 responses)	Staff time (5 responses)
Knowledge (12 responses)	Lack of knowledge/information (12 responses)
Lack of interest – local/developer	Lack of interest
Lender fear	Local resistance or fear of government involvement (4 responses)/Perception/Fear
Industry has been heavily regulated by state and feds with closure plan in place	Possible overlap with state/federal actions/ RCRA site
<b>Non-matching responses</b>	
Land is currently outside of city	Politics
Resistance on part of property owner (2 responses)	Closed to new ideas/no foresight
Haven't encountered it yet/No potential projects	Community support
Expertise	Lack of leadership (2 responses)
Liability (3 responses)	Lack of instant gratification
	Local resources

## Perception Change

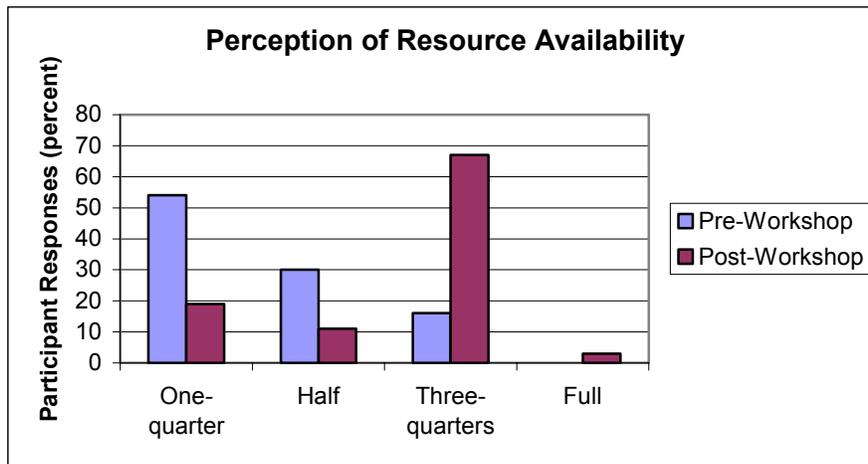
Participants were asked how ready they were to participate in a brownfield redevelopment process before and after attending the workshop. Prior to the workshop 49% felt somewhat ready to very ready. After the workshop, 96% were somewhat ready to very ready.



**Figure 5.** Readiness to participate in brownfields redevelopment prior to and after attending the workshop.

Participants were asked about the resources available to them to help them address brownfields issues in their city. Using a measure of a cup, prior to the workshop, 16% of the participants

indicated they felt their cup of resources was  $\frac{3}{4}$  to full. After the workshop, 70% of participants felt their cups were  $\frac{3}{4}$  to full.



**Figure 6.** Perceptions of resources available for brownfield redevelopment prior to and after the workshop.

## STRATEGY SESSION

Each workshop concluded with a strategy session designed to guide participants toward thinking about how brownfield programs could be applied and used in their communities. Several common themes emerged throughout this session. Among them were:

- More education is needed, particularly for city and county councils and commissions.
- Connections with peer communities who have successfully redeveloped brownfield sites are essential in stimulating brownfield development in small and rural communities.
- Fear of change, losing the town’s traditional feel, outsider bias and other “small town” issues are obstacles to brownfield redevelopment.
- There is a negative perception of EPA and other governmental agencies, which participants felt was an obstacle to redeveloping brownfields.

1A. What tools, resources, and information do you currently have to use in addressing brownfield redevelopment issues?

### *Tools*

- Equipment
- Comprehensive plan
- Media
- KDHE programs

### *Resources*

- Communities, cities, counties, state and federal agencies (KDHE, EPA)
- Developers with vision

- Grant writers on staff/local grant writer
- Partnerships with industry, responsible parties
- Enterprises facilitation – department of commerce (Matt Jordan 296-2151)
- Regional Summits
- Kansas Commerce and Housing – one stop questions
-

*Resources, cont.*

- Small Business Development Centers
- International City Managers Association
- Sources for leveraging
- Funding sources
- Networking

*Information*

- Contacts, information, and resources from workshop
- ASTM info
- Knowledge of what brownfields are
- Real, specific examples
- Targeted for small communities

1B. What additional tools, resources, or information are needed for your city to be involved in brownfield redevelopment?

*Resources*

- Money
- Technical redevelopment planning
- Contacts/Mentors
- Active citizens to demand that something be done to redevelop the area.
- Professional/technical resources to explain/educate
- Connections with peer communities with successful projects
- Connection to local support agencies
- Time/assistance with grant writing (staff spread too thin)

*Information*

- Tools, resources, and assistance on redevelopment, not an assessment of contamination
- Identification and assessment of sites that have potential presence of hazardous substances
- More education to commissioners and council members
- Local success story examples
- Real life examples of brownfield site
- Copies of successful grants
- Real, hands on experiences
- Tour of brownfield site
- “How to” information or training

2. What are the obstacles to brownfield redevelopment in your city?

*Resources/ Economic/Real Estate Issues*

- Staff and time
- Funding for reuse, design and development planning
- Money
- Recalcitrant property owners
- Legal issues with property owners
- We are 100 miles from anywhere – no riverfronts, no nearby universities, etc.
- Inexpensive property values
- Need to make program more attractive/incentives to redevelop old

property instead of plentiful greenspace

- Market issues

*Information/Education*

- Knowledge and awareness

*Community Development/Values/Social Issues*

- Citizen involvement
- Lack of a “larger vision”
- Initiative, groups not working together

*Community Development/Values/Social Issues, cont.*

- Lack of leadership (need education)
- Lack of concern about what's most needed
- Societal value of instant gratification
- Image perception – hard to get peoples attention
- Slow process
- Small town perceptions – division in communities, outsider bias, resistance to change, community involvement

*Fear*

- Fear of losing town's "feel" to redevelopment
- Fear of the unknown
- Fear of EPA, environmental issues (need KDHE and TAB staff to attend and address city council meetings)
- Negative perception of EPA – success stories could help/pr campaign – you're not out to get us.

3A. What relationships or partners do you currently have that could assist you in pursuing brownfield redevelopment opportunities?

*Local*

- City staff and commissioners
- Neighbors/community groups
- Local lenders/professionals

*State*

- KDHE
- KS Association of City Managers

*Regional*

- Regional Economic Development Councils
- Regional Manufacturer's roundtable
- Regional Planning and Development
- Western Kansas Regional Economic Development Alliance
- Northcentral Kansas planning commission

*Federal*

- EPA

*University*

- TAB – technical outreach
- Pollution Prevention Institute
- Community colleges
- PRIDE program at KSU extension program (community betterment program)

*Private*

- Terracon
- Consultants
- Industry
- Chamber of commerce
- Commercial development agencies
- Viable project developers
- Economic development groups
- Non-profit groups

*Other*

- None before today
- Government agencies at all levels
- Elected officials

3B. What additional partnerships do you need to pursue BF redevelopment opportunities?

- Community
- Players are there, but not networked

- Think about a state conference on Brownfields – award for best success story of the year
- People with knowledge and experience/technical partners
- KDHE local office
- Faces – one to one interaction
- Develop a regional alliance

4. What is the role of your city’s communities (neighborhoods, etc) in the brownfield redevelopment process?

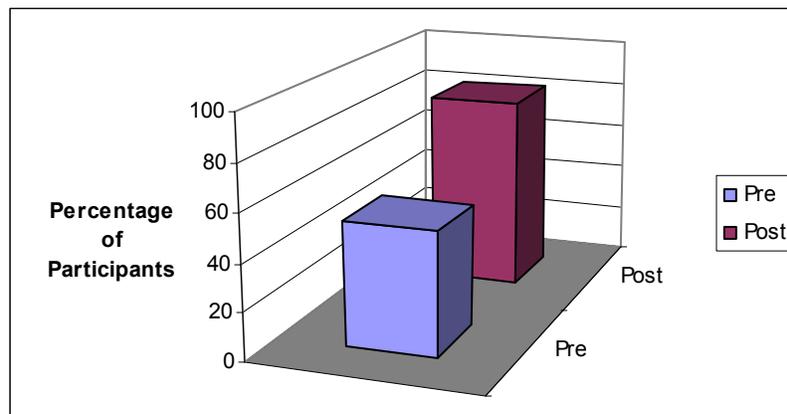
- Partnering for clear goal/vision
- Initiate and sustain interest
- Pressure to clean up sites
- Provide an educational forum/leadership/public hearings
- Leadership
- Resource
- Accountability/oversight
- Youth activities/education
- Be involved
- Liaison between all parties

## KNOWLEDGE CHANGE AND WORKSHOP EFFECTIVENESS

### Knowledge change

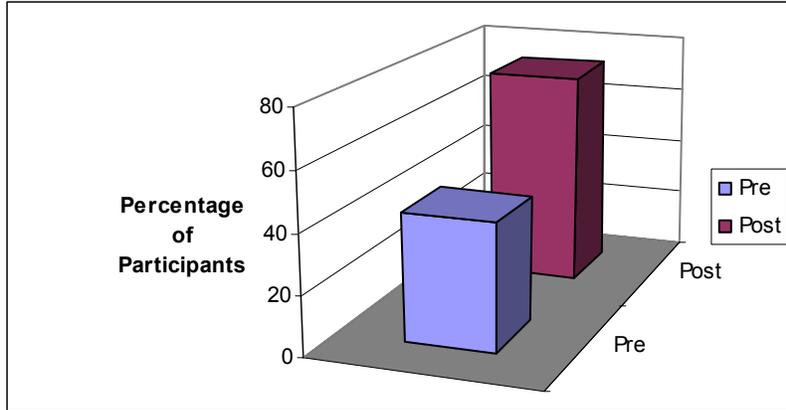
Participants were asked a series of questions on the pre- and post-surveys to measure their change in knowledge about brownfield redevelopment issues. Results are expressed as percentages.

Participants were asked to name one example of a possible brownfield property in their city. 52% of participants could respond correctly on the pre-survey. 82% of participants could respond correctly on the post-survey.



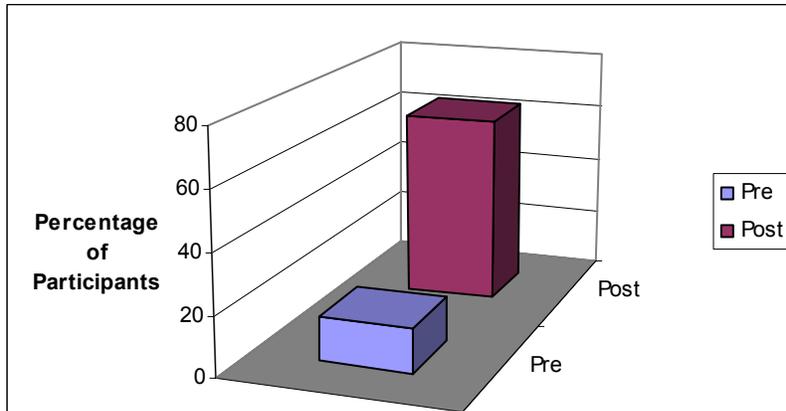
**Figure 7.** Percentage of participants who could give one example of a local brownfield.

Participants were asked to list two characteristics of a brownfield property. 43% responded correctly on the pre-survey. 73% were able to respond correctly on the post-survey.



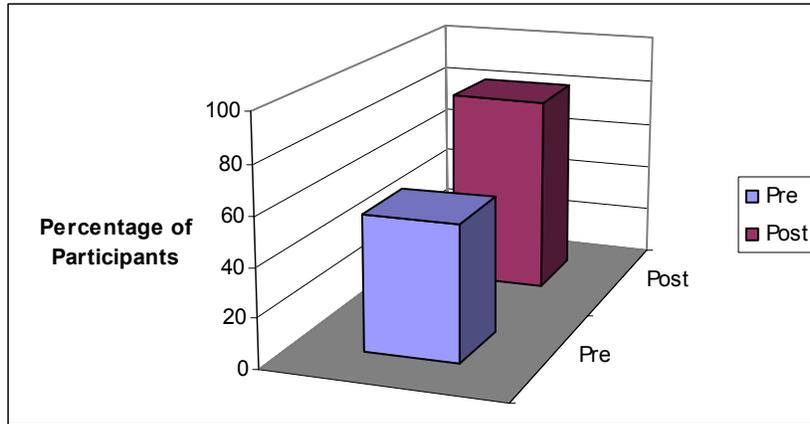
**Figure 8.** Percentage of participants who could list two characteristics of a brownfield property.

Participants were asked to name three state or federal programs available to assist in brownfield redevelopment projects. 15% were able to respond correctly on the pre-survey. 64% were able to respond correctly on the post-survey.



**Figure 9.** Percentage of participants who could name three state or federal programs to assist in brownfield redevelopment projects.

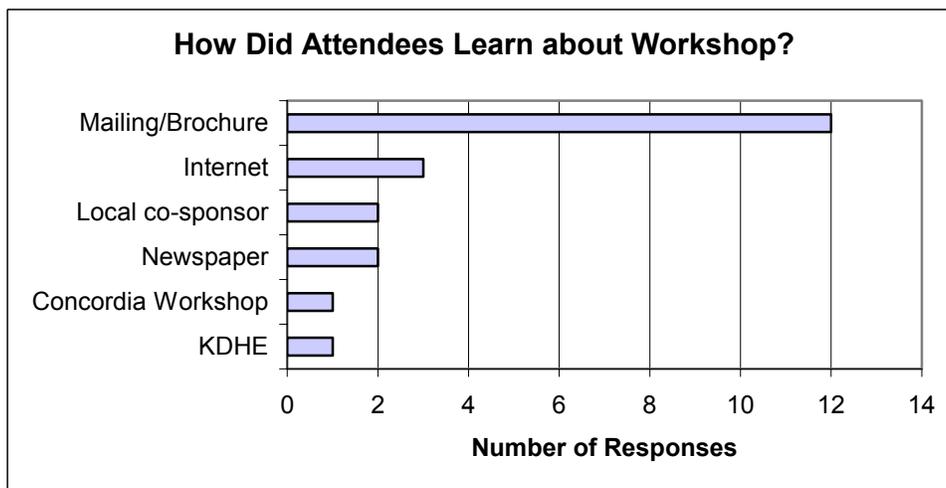
Participants were asked to name three possible stakeholders in the brownfield redevelopment process. 56% of participants were able to respond correctly on the pre-survey. 82% of participants were able to respond correctly on the post-survey.



**Figure 10.** Percentage of participants who were able to name three stakeholders in the brownfield redevelopment process.

### Effectiveness of advertising and promotion

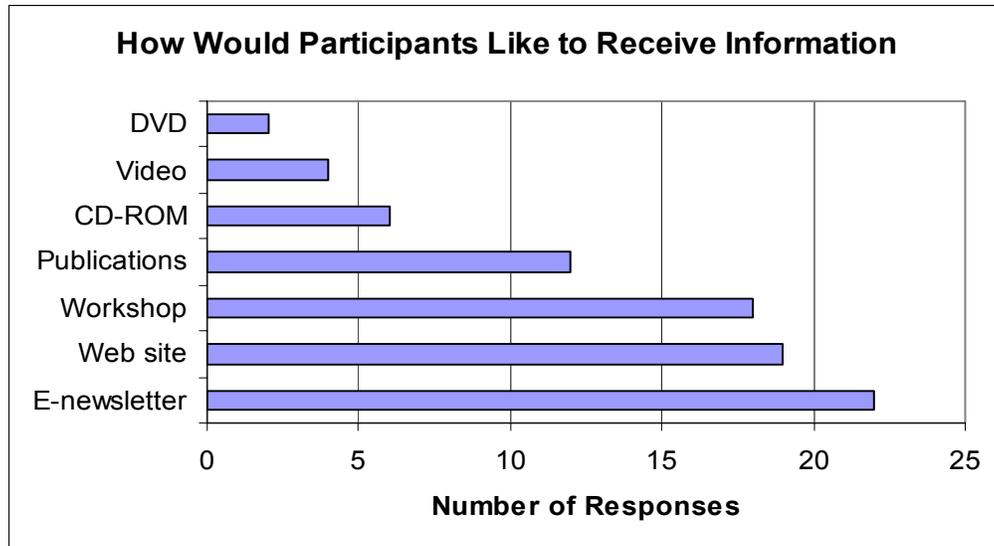
Participants were asked how they learned about the workshop. Data was only collected at El Dorado and Dodge City workshops. This data was collected as an open ended question, not a forced choice.



**Figure 11.** Advertising pathways and their effectiveness.

### Future information pathways

Participants were asked in what formats they would like to receive future information on brownfields. Figure 12 lists the categories offered to participants and their responses. An electronic newsletter, additional workshops, and a Web site, were the top rated information dissemination pathways.



**Figure 12.** How participants would like to receive future information on brownfields.

### Suggestions for improvement

Participants made several comments and suggestions for improvement. Some suggestions were implemented in successive workshops and improved delivery. Participants were responding to two questions below.

If you were designing this workshop, what other topics or activities would you include?

- How to put together a team of people to work on this or how a community actually gets started.
- A local representative from Kansas that has gone through this process to discuss their experiences, whether it be a city or county official. This could help us relate to our communities and ways they overcame some of the “local” obstacles. **(3 similar responses)**
- The case studies were very helpful.
- Brownfields 101.
- More group activities.
- Look at possible tax credits that will draw economic development partners and private industry.
- How to find money and resources for actual redevelopment. Most of the workshop was spent on assessment.
- Local government ordinances.
- Step by step process of a real example.
- Grant writing tips.

Is there anything else you would like to tell us?

- Totally lost during legal presentation/ Liability wasn't that helpful for me, may be useful for those with more experience.

- Grant administration CEU are big help in getting authorization to attend.
- Possible order change:
  - Barb's intro to brownfields
  - Dave's not just for big cities
  - Bridget's Redevelopment Initiative
  - Barb's Brownfield redevelopment
- The final sharing time and test I would question the value of. After seven hours we are ready to go. Let those who want to stay and talk do so, the others send away happy.
- This was a great workshop with lots of good information.
- You all did a good job a explaining a program that has a lot of ramifications and scenarios tied to each project. As you noted each project seems to have a lot of different needs to be evaluated before proceeding with a redevelopment.
- Thoroughly enjoyed program. Great KDHE people and Dave did a wonderful job.
- Well done. Try to find some way to follow-up to keep momentum going.
- Enjoyed this convening. It was well done and I wish you good success.
- It is great that you recognize that communities under 100,000 are important, too.

## **NEXT STEPS**

TAB will follow up with workshop participants by conducting a mailed survey in January 2004. The focus of this follow up evaluation will be to assess the impact of the workshop on the ability of small communities to be involved in brownfield redevelopment.

TAB routinely sends workshop participants and others information on funding possibilities for rural brownfield development. TAB is also partnering with workshop participants from Neodesha, Kansas, to submit a proposal to EPA's Brownfield Assessment grant program. Results from the summer workshop were presented during the poster session at EPA's 2003 Brownfields Conference in Portland, Oregon.

TAB will continue its mission to educate decision-makers in small and rural Kansas communities about brownfield redevelopment issues by making presentations at economic development and county/city commission meeting or conferences.