

**Press Release  
City of Conover  
Wednesday, May 28, 2014**



**Conover Honored  
With Innovation Award**



**Conover NC**, The Alliance for Innovation has selected *Conover Station: A Small Town's Effort to Kick Start Redevelopment* has been selected to receive an Outstanding Achievement in Local Government Innovation Award.

Upon purchasing the former Broyhill property in 2005 the city began analyzing the opportunities for the site. The city enlisted experts in the fields of architecture, civil engineering, structural engineering, environmental remediation and historic analysis. Architects and engineers determined that the factory, which was actually one building with over twenty additions ranging from 1920 till 1994, was structurally deficient in areas and cost prohibitive to redevelop.

Subsequently, the majority of the buildings on the site were demolished, with the exception of the oldest, a 1918 textile mill which was determined to be a good candidate for renovation. Environmental engineers tested the site and found minor soil and ground water contamination. The city pursued and received a Brownfield designation for the site. The aforementioned master plan for the site's redevelopment served as a guide for the direction of the site. This plan built upon the public's vision to provide a new public park and insure that any new development both respect the character of the existing downtown.

Throughout the redevelopment process, a number of risks or liabilities were encountered. At each turn, the City maintained an open-minded approach, never discounting any idea or proposal. Navigating through this complex project provided staff a number of challenges. Though often

daunting and seemingly insurmountable at times, many obstacles became the building blocks for positive outcomes. Many perceived liabilities and risks, ultimately were assets that added to the quality of the project.

Conover believes that this project can serve as an example of how a small community can make a positive change. By gaining citizen and political support along with establishing a community vision a city can transform liabilities into assets and help underutilized properties prosper. The City has gone beyond its customary role of providing basic service and ventured into uncharted territory. Our economy has withstood a devastating blow of job loss over the past decade and waiting to be rescued or simply hoping things will turn around is no longer an option. By taking the proactive approach, we endeavor to change our future economy by encouraging new businesses and manufacturing.

Innovation Awards are chosen from the 90 applications received by a multi-member Selection Committee consisting of City and County Managers from across the US and Alliance staff. The Selection Committee looks for those local governments that have shown their dedication to stretching and improving the boundaries of day-to-day government operations and practices, implementing creative business processes, and improving the civic health of the community. Awards were presented at the 2014 Transforming Local Government Conference (TLG) in Denver, CO, April 23-25. Planning Director Lance Hight accepted the award on behalf of the city.

City Council will recognize Mr. Hight and at Monday's council meeting.

For more information about the City of Conover contact the City Manager's office at (828) 464-1191 or visit the city's website at <http://www.conoverstation.com/>.

1 picture attached

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