

H.M. Quackenbush
Herkimer, New York

Liability Management
Community Advisors

Property History

H.M. Quackenbush (Quackenbush), a leading nutcracker manufacturer and one of Herkimer's oldest industrial businesses, filed for bankruptcy in March 2005. The manufacture of nutcrackers requires a metal electroplating process, the byproduct of which includes a number of dangerous chemicals. As a result of the plant shutdown and accumulated chemical wastes from decades of poor industrial practices, the City of Herkimer was faced with an imminent and substantial environmental health threat in the midst of its downtown area.

Challenge

After over a century of heavy industrial use, the Quackenbush facility was burdened by significant levels of environmental contamination that presented a public health threat to the Herkimer community in the short-term and created an impediment to reuse opportunities for the property over the long-term. Local newspapers picked up on the discovery of contamination at Quackenbush, compounding the urgency with which Herkimer needed to respond. Most smaller cities and villages lack the environmental expertise to address the complexities of heavily contaminated sites such as this one. The City of Herkimer needed assistance in responding quickly to an environmental threat in its downtown community.

Solution

The Deputy Mayor of Herkimer reached out to Synapse to assist the City in its response to the Quackenbush shutdown. Synapse worked with the Deputy Mayor to bring the Quackenbush site to the US Environmental Protection Agency's (USEPA) attention, helping secure over \$1.2 million of USEPA emergency response funding for immediate cleanup of the most dangerous contamination. The coordinated efforts of Herkimer's Deputy Mayor, Synapse, and USEPA officials effectively eliminated the short-term threat posed by the Quackenbush facility



Synapse, on a pro-bono basis, then worked with the City of Herkimer and the Herkimer County Industrial Development Agency to position the property for potential redevelopment opportunities over the long-term.