

CITIZEN-TIMES.com

Closed Ecusta paper mill site could see redevelopment

By [Mark Barrett](#)

January 29, 2008 12:15 am

PISGAH FOREST — Government officials and developers said Monday they have signed an agreement that clears the way for the cleanup and redevelopment of about 527 acres that once housed the Ecusta paper mill.

The property northeast of Brevard could become home to residential, office, retail, commercial and light industrial uses and open space, a developer said.

A company that is a partnership between Massachusetts-based Renova Partners, which specializes in redevelopment of environmentally contaminated property, and investor Prudential Real Estate bought the property last week.

Davidson River Village LLC, the state Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the U.S. Environmental Protection and former property owner P.H. Glatfelter Co. signed an agreement that allows development of the property and requires steps to deal with environmental contamination.

The property is south of the Lowe's home improvement store near the U.S. 64/U.S. 276/N.C. 280 intersection.

A paper mill first opened there in 1939. Pennsylvania-based Glatfelter operated the mill there from 1987 until 2001, when it sold the business. The mill closed in 2002 and the property changed hands again the next year.

Sellers in the recent deal operated the property as Ecusta Business Center. An attempt to produce flax pulp using a small portion of the mill proved uneconomical, and only a handful of small businesses lease space there now, said Mark Burrows, Transylvania County's economic development director.

"We anticipate a mixed-use redevelopment of some sort, but the cleanup and demolition are going to be extensive," said Pete Pedersen, managing principal at Renova. "It's safe to measure the cleanup in a small number of years, not months."

The property on the banks of the Davidson River contains about 2 million square feet of space under roof, almost all manufacturing or warehouse space.

Pedersen said it is too early to say whether some buildings will be reused, but it is clear that at least some will be torn down.

It is possible that part of the property will be redeveloped while cleanup continues on others.

Pedersen said he did not have details on what kind of contamination is present on the site.

“It was a big site, and there were a lot of things,” including mercury that contaminated the site, he said.

Despite recent slumps in the local housing market, “The region generally is showing growth, and this is an unusually large piece of land in an attractive area,” Pedersen said. “We’re not in it to get in and get out. The long-term trends are favorable.”

Burrows said he is glad to see signs that more of the site will be returned to productive use.

“It’s a very positive thing for Transylvania County and the city of Brevard,” he said.

Use of this site signifies your agreement to the [Terms of Service](#) and [Privacy Policy](#).
Copyright 2008 Asheville Citizen-Times. All rights reserved.