

## Waterfront development takes on many forms

By ALISON HAWKES

Bucks County Courier Times

Chattanooga, Tenn., was once so dirty that drivers had to use headlights in the middle of the day.

Bend, Ore., turned belly up when the sawmill that gave the town life closed.

Bristol, R.I., was blemished by manufacturing plants, disused and contaminated.

Yet with vision, cooperation, and a bit of good fortune, these communities became successes. Last week, their inspiring stories were showcased to a consortium of six Bucks towns, from the Philadelphia line to Morrisville, seeking to revitalize along the Delaware River.

Thursday night's panel discussion at the Bucks County Conference and Visitors Bureau in Bensalem was designed to give Bucks words of wisdom and hope as it faces the daunting task of turning around 25 miles of shoreline. The riverfront is pocked with disused industrial buildings, warehouses, rotting docks and fenced-off lots, but the Bucks consortium wants to see a checkerboard of parks, walking trails and commercial and residential redevelopment.

The experts advised the local towns - including Bensalem, Bristol, Bristol Township, Falls, Morrisville and Tullytown - to find their collective niche, the theme that will bring together diverse interests and, eventually, mark the waterfront with distinction.

we have - the location of the river," said Holland resident Terri Smith, redevelopment coordinator for the Princeton consultant group Environmental Liability Management. "This gives us a unique opportunity to reinvent ourselves."

riverfront study, that when the time comes to start work; it should throw away all the detailed plans and maps and focus on broad-minded goals. Be flexible toward marketplace opportunities that surface, they advised.

here and there,' " said Michael Freimuth. He led a revitalization effort in Bridgeport, Conn. that unexpectedly attracted a shipbuilding company and stadium, among other projects.

t comes along that we can capitalize on, we're going to run with it,' " Freimuth said.

contaminated industrial lots called brownfields, cannot get too specific about what it wants and where, Freimuth said, because "the market economy is going to race by you."



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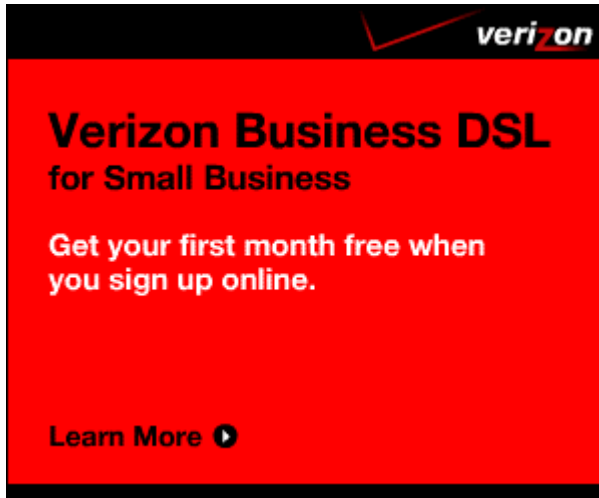
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Within the last decade, the redevelopment of old, abandoned areas - especially along waterways - has picked up steam. Significant challenges face these communities as they try to interest businesses, including high

cleanup costs, stigmas associated with blighted areas, and liability issues, the panelists said.

Bartsch, the director of brownfields studies at the Washington-based public policy group Northeast-Midwest Institute. "It's often cheaper to go to new spots than these old ones. Lack of financing is one of the most critical issues."

agencies have begun to loosen up funds. And recent legislation offered liability relief to potential purchasers and innocent landowners.

rejuvenation. County redevelopment authority Director Robert White said later that he sees himself as a ring-bearer in the process.

noting the new office complex moving into the Dial soap factory in Bristol

Bucks residents listening to the discussion wondered aloud how all the townships

"Is there going to be a unifying factor or a hodgepodge, with each town doing

Public river access along the heavily privatized shoreline was also mentioned as a problem, particularly in Falls, where Pennsbury Manor, the Waste Management

"One of the things I think residents in Falls Township desperately want is access to

Noting all the waterfront studies and development plans elsewhere along the Delaware, on the New Jersey side and in Philadelphia, some worried how Bucks would stand out in the end. That's a good question that deserves thorough

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