

# Community engagement key to remediation of former textile and electronics manufacturing facility

Darlington, South Carolina



**Client Vishay Intertechnology, Inc.**

**Date 2003/present**

**WSP Contact**

Jim Sobieraj

781 933 7340

jim.sobieraj@wspgroup.com

## Overview

We are proud of our pragmatic and community inclusive approach to characterizing and remediating a legacy site in Darlington, South Carolina, recognized by an industry award in 2010. The facility was developed in the 1880s as a cotton mill and repurposed for manufacturing electronic component from 1958 to 2005.

Our client, Vishay Intertechnology, Inc., the corporate successor to a company that briefly owned the facility in mid-1960's, is voluntarily addressing environmental issues at the vacant site

## Our client's challenge

Prolonged use of chlorinated solvents and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) had contaminated soil and ground water at this 10 acre historic textile mill and electronics manufacturing site.

Additionally, contaminants migrated to a drainage ditch and into a receiving creek and surrounding wetlands.

Although a visual blight and unsafe, the property has historical ties for local residents whose family members had been employees at the plant for several generations. An empathetic approach to remediation was important in getting the community to accept and embrace the clean-up program.

## Our approach/services

A review of past environmental work on the site revealed the need to conduct a focused feasibility study to collect additional site characterization data. The findings called for the division of the project into three operable units to better manage the sources of contaminants and prioritize the remedial actions.

As an interim measure, we first recommended demolition of site structures to eliminate safety concerns for the surrounding community, address potential conveyance of contaminants from storm sewers to the nearby creek and to access underlying contaminated soil.

## Outcome

Our approach to explaining the reasons and importance of demolishing the structures resulted in community acceptance of the work and gratitude that the site was being responsibly addressed by our client.

We facilitated a final tour of the facility and provided keep-sakes from the plant for the local community.

Demolition of the structures on the property has been completed and on-going remedial efforts continue.