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Ohio brownfield remediation funding allowing Licking County property owner to decontaminate and sell



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By [Owen Milnes](#) – Staff reporter , Columbus Business First
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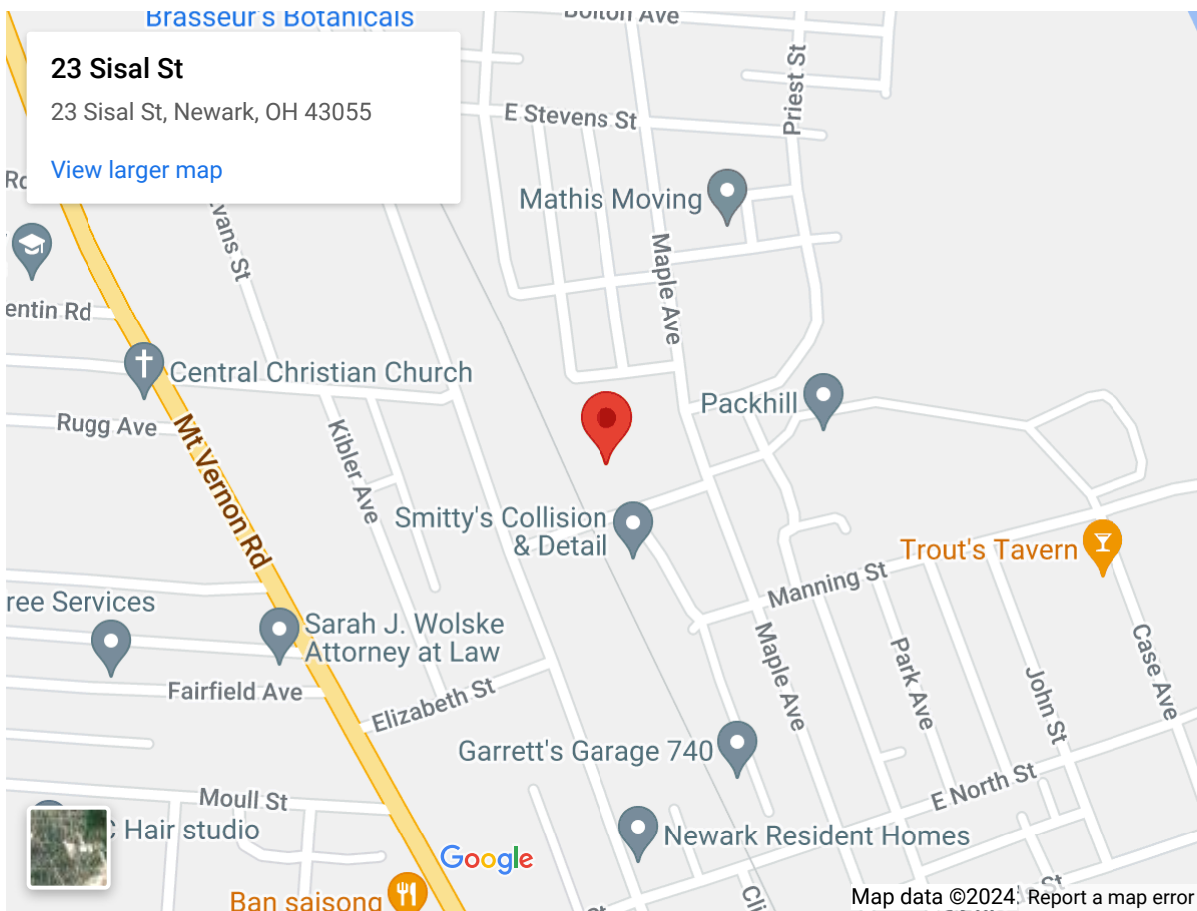
The only Central Ohio applicant [awarded state brownfield remediation funding](#) is chipping away at the environmental issues that have plagued it for years.

Licking County's Reho Inc. was awarded \$300,000 to assess a site, located at 23 Sisal St. in Newark, that was historically used for stove works, rope manufacturing and lawn mower manufacturing. The property now hosts a number of hazardous chemicals that pose a risk to the site and nearby homes. Reho President Ashley Dickson said the contamination has been an issue since the 1990s, and the company has been working to clean the property since 2016.

Dickson said several buyers have expressed interest in the property after remediation. The site has a variety of functional end uses if it is remediated, but she said the majority of buyers are looking at warehousing and manufacturing.

Some remediation work, involving a bacteria emulsion designed to clean up groundwater, has already begun, Dickson told *Columbus Business First*. The bacteria will eat away at the chemicals and break them down so they are no longer harmful.

The state funding is will help the property owner assess if its efforts are working, Dickson said.



“In theory, when we’re done it’ll be all cleaned up, but we have to take samples periodically to make sure that it’s going in the direction we’re expecting,” Dickson said.

The state's operating budget, adopted in July 2021, includes \$500 million to support brownfield remediation, building demolition and site renovation grants to revitalize neighborhoods and improve sites for future development.

The program will distribute \$1 million to each county in Ohio; the remaining funds will be competitive.

Reho bought the 2.03-acre Sisal Street site for \$75,000 in 2000, according to the Licking County Auditor.

The site is listed on LoopNet as containing a 121,000-square-foot warehouse. Granville-based Shai Hess is the listing brokerage.

Brandon Hess, partner at Shai Hess, said once the environmental issues are taken care of, the site holds great potential because of its location, square footage and accessibility. This, mixed with the region's continued record low industrial vacancy rates, bodes well for the property.

"The lack of inventory right now in warehousing allows it to be in demand," Hess said.

Over the years, Licking County has had an active industrial market, Benjamin Johnson, executive vice president at Colliers Columbus, said. In particular, the areas of Hebron and Heath have seen a lot of action, and the existing manufacturing base and labor force make it attractive to potential buyers – and that’s before factoring in [New Albany’s incoming \\$20 billion Intel complex](#).

“With the Intel announcement, there is increased activity and interest in Licking County and surrounding submarkets close to New Albany,” Johnson said.

Recent increased activity in the area includes California-based Prudential Cleanroom Services' [\\$35 million investment](#) in an industrial facility in Heath and California-based energy investor Eolian's plans [to build a 15-acre rechargeable energy](#) storage site in Johnstown.

For Dickson's Newark property, the remediation funds could not have come at a better time.

“This money is really going to go far toward getting us across the finish line,” she said.