



Case Study:

WILLOW RUN POWERTRAIN PLANT

2932 ECORSE ROAD, YPSILANTI TOWNSHIP, MI 48198

FACTS

Site ID: 11991/11992

Acres: 16.74

SF at Time of Sale: 144,000

FMV: \$216,000

Congressional District: MI-12

Date Sold: October 30, 2014

Buyer: Yankee Air Museum

End-User(s): Yankee Air Museum

New Use: Reuse of existing 144K SF portion of structure for new aerospace museum

Jobs Pledged: 0

Jobs Actual: 35 temp. construction

Investment Pledged: \$8MM

Investment Actual: \$4.1MM

Est. New Tax Base: 0

Lead Agency: MDEQ

Regulatory Programs: Part 201 of the Michigan Natural Resources and Envir. Protection Act; RCRA Corrective Action

Remedial Activities: Decommissioning and demolition of most site buildings; long-term GW and SW solutions designed and implemented; containment of LNAPL, DRC recorded in 2013 and 2016

Est. Cleanup Cost: \$3,577,9454

BEFORE



AFTER



THE CHALLENGE:

Ford Motor Company built the Willow Run plant in 1941 to manufacture B-24 bombers during World War II. At peak employment, as many as 44,000 people worked at the plant, which consisted of more than 4.5 million square feet. GM bought the Property in 1953 and produced automatic transmissions there until 2010, when the facility closed. The community expressed to RACER a clear preference for the continued use of the building intact for manufacturing, but demand by single-employer manufacturing end-users to buy and operate the Willow Run plant and backfill the GM jobs lost at shutdown was at the time virtually non-existent, and the demand for building was functionally obsolete, and the cost to cure its deficiencies prohibitive vs. greenfield construction. Likewise, demand by industrial landlord prospects to buy, demise and tenant up the Willow Run plant was virtually non-existent, the demand for industrial space in the market was virtually nil. The building slab, which covers more than 80 acres, has to remain in place as an engineered cap as part of the environmental remedy for the Property. Various underground utility infrastructure and easements limit the amount of developable area at the Property.

THE OUTCOME:

RACER aggressively marketed the Property to manufacturing end-user and industrial landlord prospects. After several years and with no viable prospects, RACER consulted with local elected and economic development officials, as well as market experts, and then decided to demolish the plant and market the Property as vacant industrial land for development. All the while, Yankee Air Museum, based locally and devoted to Michigan's aviation history and Willow Run's important role in the "Arsenal of Democracy," appealed to RACER to preserve a portion of the bomber plant. RACER was compelled by terms of the Settlement Agreement to ensure that Yankee Air Museum possessed the resources to not only purchase the Property, but also to meet the expense of renovation and other necessary investments to reuse the space. Yankee Air Museum demonstrated that it was able to raise enough money to purchase a portion of the plant, including nearly 17 acres, and finance the work necessary to develop its new museum. Ultimately, RACER spared from demolition and sold to Yankee Air Museum the 144,000-square-foot portion of the building that was used for final assembly in the manufacture of B-24s at the Willow Run plant. It will become the permanent home for the museum, which is expected to open in 2020.



CONTACT: BRUCE RASHER

Web: racertrust.org | Email: brasher@racertrust.org | Phone: 734-355-2900

Twitter: [BRasher_RACER](https://twitter.com/BRasher_RACER) | [linkedin.com/in/brucerasher/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/brucerasher/)