



## ARDD NEWS

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### **CITY MAY TAKE OVER OLD DUPERIER STATION**

NEW IBERIA -- The city may retain ownership of the old Timeless Treasures building on Duperier Avenue if the results of an environmental study come back without showing problems, Mayor Hilda Curry asked New Iberia City Council members last week for their ideas on what could become of the corner property if the city accepts ownership of the building and lot.

"The owner will donate it to the city, but we do not want to accept it until we find out what the environmental study determines," said Curry.

William Fullerton, the property's owner, said Tuesday that he would like to donate the building and property because the testing necessary to retain it is costly.

Fullerton said that he had the underground tanks of the former gas station removed more than 10 years ago and that he preferred not to spend any more money correcting the site. Because of the location, he said he believes the property is worth at least \$60,000.

"That was my first and last commercial investment," said Fullerton. "In hindsight, a lot of it was based on inflation, because no matter what you bought, it was going to be worth a little more that next year.

The building originally was owned by Andrew Romero, said Fullerton, who purchased the property in the 1980s, and was built on the art deco visualization of Romero following a trip to New York.

"Andrew took a trip down to the New York World's Fair and came back with these futuristic plans," said Fullerton. "The store used to have a pharmacist and he added a second floor for selling tires.

Mayor Pro Tem Freddie DeCourt said that he tried to purchase the property about 10 years ago and the building at that time was in serious need of repair or possibly beyond repair.

"I've gone through the whole building and it's done nothing but deteriorate since then," said DeCourt. "The building itself is too far gone to save."

Curry said that payment of the study is possible through a grant.

"We perceived a phase one EPA grant to do a site study of this particular gas station," said Curry.

"Our phase two was provided through Acadiana Regional Development grant and we should be getting the results of that grant shortly."

Grayling Hadnott, economic development director of the Acadiana Regional Development District, said that the work being performed at the site is the result of a \$200,000 Brownsfield Environmental Assessment grant that they were recently awarded. The grant, he said, may be used in any of their eight serving parishes.

“The federal grant is specifically to be used to target petroleum sites,” said Hadnott. “We are doing a search for possible contaminants and making sure that the tanks that were present on the site have been removed or filled.”

Hadnott said that the study will check underground wells, take soil samples and test underground water for cross contamination.

Among the council’s suggestions for the property were to change it into a green space or use it to display a sculpture or tribute.

Curry said results of the study are expected at the end of this week and at that time the city will request a grant funding to cover the cost to cleanup any impurities at the site.

LEAAF Environmental has been contracted to perform the studies.