



# Superfund Job Training Initiative

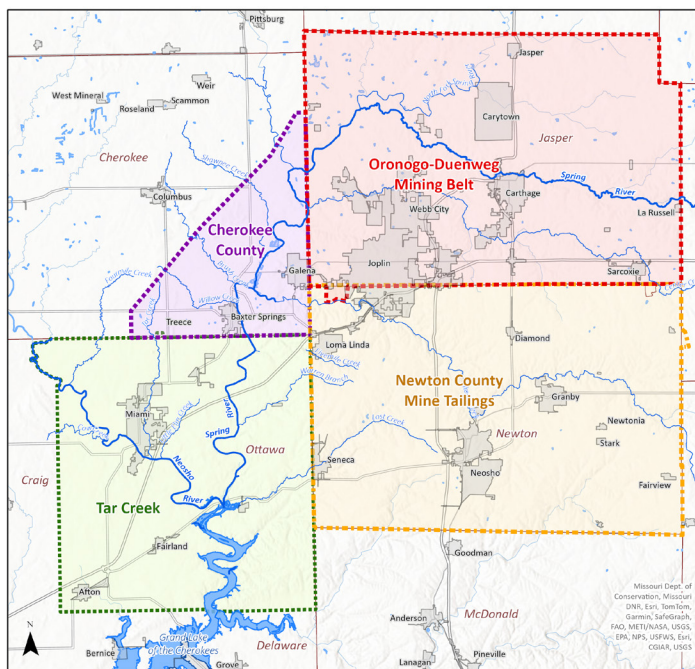
## MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE TRI-STATE MINING DISTRICT

### Introduction

The Tri-State Mining District Superfund Job Training Initiative (SuperJTI) is an environmental remediation job readiness program that provided career development opportunities for 10 trainees living on or near the Tri-State Mining District in Joplin and Carthage, Missouri.

Through a partnership between the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), local partner Pastor Wilford Portillo, and site cleanup contractors A&M Engineering and Tetra Tech, Tri-State Mining District SuperJTI provided local job seekers with new skills, certifications and hands-on training linked to construction and cleanup.

EPA's goal is to help identify employment opportunities available for affected communities during the cleanup and redevelopment process, and to provide workforce development skills needed to take advantage of those opportunities.

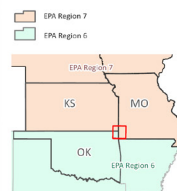


### Tri-State Mining District National Priority List (NPL) Superfund Sites

- Small lakes
- Grand Lake of the Cherokees
- Neosho & Spring River tributaries
- Neosho & Spring Rivers
- Cities & towns
- County boundaries

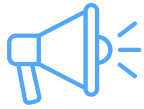
#### Tri-State NPL Superfund Sites

- Cherokee County
- Newton County Mine Tailings
- Oronogo-Duenweg Mining Belt
- Tar Creek



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*The Tri-State Mining District encompasses parts of Missouri, Kansas and Oklahoma. Mining industries operated on the site since the mid-1800s, contaminating soil and groundwater.*



## Outreach and Screening: April - May 2024

Tri-State Mining District SuperJTI and EPA Region 7 reached out to the community through local and regional stakeholders, unemployment offices and non-profits, and by advertising on area radio stations, local newspapers and social media. Local partner Pastor Wilford Portillo helped publicize the program to attract interested candidates. SuperJTI staff and Pastor Portillo hosted information sessions about the program in Joplin and Carthage. In April and May 2024, over 25 people attended the program's 19 information sessions. After these sessions, 12 people returned, submitted required documents and were welcomed into the program. The first day of training featured a program kickoff event that included leadership, team building and role-playing activities, and a physical fitness component facilitated by a team of evaluators from the program's partners. Ten trainees went on to complete the program.



## Training and Job Placement: May 2024

The 1.5-week Tri-State Mining District SuperJTI training program was held at Alfa Y Omega Covenant Church in Carthage, Missouri. EPA contractor Skeo provided the Work Readiness training. Mid-America Safety & Environmental provided the 40-Hour Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response (HAZWOPER), OSHA 10-hour Construction Safety and Health, EPA Lead Renovator, and First Aid/CPR. Courses consisted of:

**Work Readiness Training:** Trainees learned and honed skills in interpersonal communication, interview preparation, resume building, finance management and effective work habits.

**40-Hour Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response (HAZWOPER):** Trainees earned their HAZWOPER certification and learned about cleanup and safety topics such as environmental legislation and standards, toxicology, hazardous material site/spill control and containment, decontamination and isolation. Trainees participated in hands-on training scenarios using actual equipment and protective gear.

**OSHA 10-hour Construction Safety and Health:** Trainees earned their OSHA-10 certification and learned about topics such as hazard communication, personal protective equipment, electrical safety and excavation process safety management.

**EPA Lead Renovator:** Trainees earned their Lead Renovator certification and learned about topics such as lead-safe work practices, containment, work-area cleaning, maintaining containment barriers, inspection and risk assessment, exterior dust cleanup, and disposal.



## Site Background

Spanning nearly 2,500 square miles across Missouri, Kansas, and Oklahoma, the historic Tri-State Mining District was once one of the world's largest zinc and lead mining areas. Mining produced over 400 million tons of crude ore from about 1850 to 1970. Mining-related activities contaminated soil, sediments, surface water, and groundwater with high concentrations of metals such as lead, zinc and cadmium. These substances pose significant risks to human health and the environment, prompting the need for state and federal involvement.

Under EPA's Superfund program, EPA has led short-term removal actions and longer-term remedial actions to clean up contamination in impacted communities across the area. Over the past four decades, EPA has cleaned up millions of cubic yards of mining waste and contaminated soil across the following Superfund sites:

- The Cherokee County site in the southeast part of Cherokee County, Kansas.
- The Newton County Mine Tailings site covering Newton County, Missouri.
- The Oronogo-Duenweg Mining Belt site covering Jasper County, Missouri.
- The Tar Creek site covering Ottawa County, Oklahoma.

**CPR/First Aid:** Trainees earned their CPR/First Aid certification and learned about topics such as soft tissue injuries, burns, shock, rescue breaths, methods to stop bleeding, bloodborne pathogens, poisoning, CPR, and injuries to muscles, bones and joints.

After completion of the program, SuperJTI provided the graduates' information to site cleanup contractors A&M Engineering and Tetra Tech to assist with job placement efforts. Through SuperJTI, trainees are provided with the marketable skills needed to begin a successful career in environmental remediation, helping empower communities affected by Superfund sites.



## GRADUATE PROFILES



### Lawrence Haflich

Lawrence was working as a grain truck driver and looking for new opportunities. He had worked as a farmer until his land was remediated by EPA. His son, Newton County Commissioner David Osborn, had heard of the SuperJTI program and forwarded Lawrence a flyer. Lawrence signed up for an information session and, following the initial steps of the SuperJTI process, was welcomed as one of the program's trainees. Lawrence's grandson, Daniel Garren, also participated in the program. Lawrence's favorite parts of the SuperJTI training were learning about different chemical hazards in the HAZWOPER training and networking with the site contractors, noting that the process "gave contractors a chance to see us and provided an opportunity we would not have gotten if we had just sent in a resume." At the end of the program, Lawrence said he felt "excited about the potential." After completing the program, Lawrence interviewed with site contractor A&M Engineering and was offered a position. Lawrence works on-site as a water truck driver, bringing water to newly-remediated land, as well as hauling equipment. Lawrence is grateful for the opportunities SuperJTI brought him.



### Randy Tolman

Randy had been working as a school bus driver since 1996 when he heard about SuperJTI. He had finished work for the summer when he came across a SuperJTI flyer on Facebook and thought the program would be "a good chance for some additional training." Following the initial steps of the SuperJTI process, Randy was welcomed as one of the program's trainees. Randy enjoyed being around his fellow trainees and said, "it felt like we were back in school." His favorite part of the program was understanding and learning about the environmental concerns in the area. At the end of the program Randy recounted that it "felt like I had accomplished something and having these additional trainings under my belt might help me in the future."



### Joe Lair

Joe was a retired railroad safety inspector who spent his free time working around his house. He came across a SuperJTI flyer while visiting the Joplin Public Library. He attended one of the information sessions and decided to apply for the program. After submitting the required documents, Joe was welcomed as one of the program's trainees. Joe found the curriculum helpful, noting that the OSHA 10-hour training was especially beneficial. He also recalled learning valuable information about lead in his community and enjoying his fellow trainees, saying "they were a great group of people." At the end of the program, Joe felt happy to have acquired new information and skills. Since graduating, Joe has used his training to work again as a railroad safety inspector, where he ensures everyone follows company safety regulations.



### Steven Schiernbeck

Steven first came across the SuperJTI program thanks to a flyer his wife received from the EPA's community involvement coordinator. Intrigued by the opportunity, he signed up for one of the information sessions. Steven liked the program's recruitment experience, noting that he especially enjoyed the team-building exercises. Once onboard as one of the program's trainees, Steven said he enjoyed the training generally, and the HAZWOPER training in particular, because of "the knowledge I gained and the opportunity to don a hazmat suit." At the end of the program, Steven felt a renewed sense of purpose – "I have been driving ever since then trying to do better." Since graduating from SuperJTI, Steven has worked as an environmental scientist with site contractor Tetra Tech, evaluating soil samples for lead content. For people thinking about participating in SuperJTI, Steven says, "do it if you have the chance. It not only gave me a job, but a career."



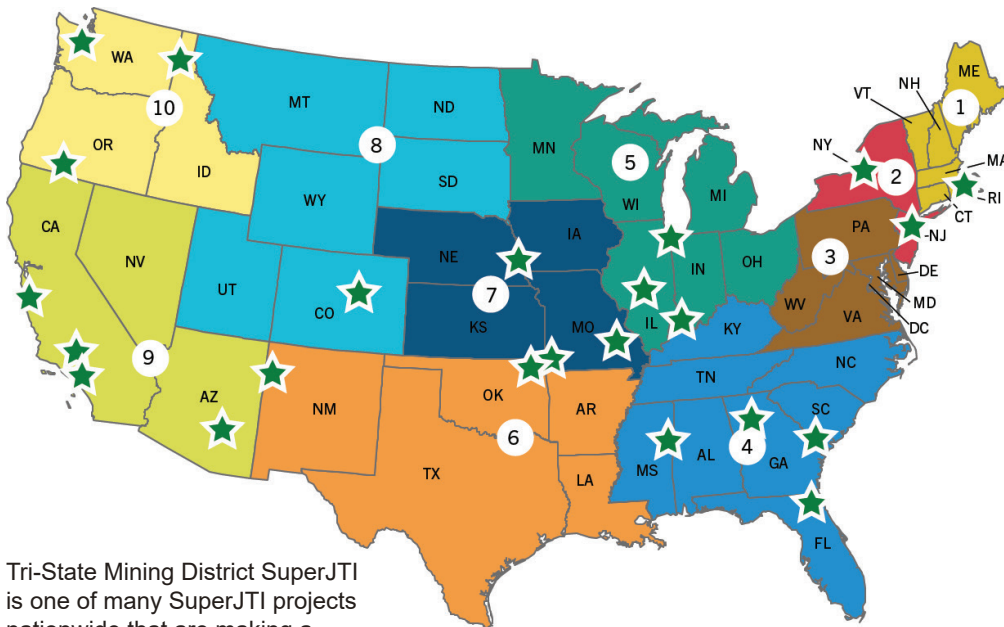
Graduation for the program's 10 trainees took place at the Joplin Elks Lodge in June 2024. EPA Region 7 Regional Administrator Meg McCollister attended and spoke at the ceremony. EPA Region 7 Community Involvement Coordinator Elizabeth Kramer handed out certificates to the graduates. The ceremony included remarks from program partners as well as the graduates.

## TRI-STATE MINING DISTRICT SUPERJTI TRAINEES:

**Live on or near the Tri-State Mining District site:** 80% of the trainees (8 people) live in the Tri-State Mining District. 20% of the trainees (2 people) live in neighboring areas.

**Include a wide range of ages:** Trainees ranged from people in their late teens to people in their 60s.

# What is the SuperJTI Program?



The Superfund Job Training Initiative, or SuperJTI, supports job readiness programs in communities affected by nearby Superfund sites and encourages the employment of trainees at local site cleanups. The SuperJTI program combines extensive classroom instruction with hands-on exercises for each participant. Upon completion of the program, each participant possesses the marketable skills required to become a valuable member of the community's workforce. EPA offers SuperJTI training at no cost to training participants.

Tri-State Mining District SuperJTI is one of many SuperJTI projects nationwide that are making a difference for people living in communities affected by Superfund sites.



**FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT:**  
[www.epa.gov/superfund/superfund-job-training-initiative](http://www.epa.gov/superfund/superfund-job-training-initiative)

Or contact SuperJTI's National Program Managers:

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