

FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
BENCHMARK INDUSTRIES
PELHAM, GRUNDY COUNTY, TENNESSEE
TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY
MAY 2008

Purpose and Need

The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) proposes to administer a \$164,800 Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) grant to Grundy County, Tennessee for the construction of an office addition and other physical improvements to one of their existing occupied industrial buildings. The total project cost is estimated at \$206,000 with local contributions supplying the remainder. The total federal involvement would be approximately 80%.

The building is occupied by Benchmark Industries, which produces small custom manufactured metal components for the automotive industry. Benchmark currently has five computer numerically controlled (CNC) machines (mills, lathe and wire electronic discharge machining) and four welding centers. In order to better deliver their services, the company is required to have an in-house quality-control laboratory to determine that the parts meet dimensional specifications. This requirement creates a need for an appropriate internal building layout that provides these functions. In addition, Benchmark needs an upgrade to the machine shop area and an office front to improve their image and business function as the company grows.

The proposed facility upgrades to be funded by the ARC grant include: 1) Construction of a 250 square foot internal dimensional laboratory, 2) Construction of an approximately 1550 square foot free-standing office space with reception area, meeting rooms, and ADA accessible restrooms, 3) Partitioning off of approximately 12,000 square feet of building space for the machine shop, and 4) Installation of HVAC for all areas.

In conjunction with these leasehold improvements to the current building, Benchmark plans on adding 3 CNC machining centers estimated, add state-of-the-art dimensional equipment, and add office equipment, furniture, and fixtures.

Background

The building is located in the existing Pelham Industrial Park, Pelham, Grundy County, Tennessee. (See the location map, aerial photo map, and topo map, Appendix 1.) The county used financing through the Community Development Block Grant Program to construct the building in the early 1980s and to expand it in the late 1980s. Benchmark leases the building from the county. Prior to Benchmark's move into the building in 2006, the building was occupied by Millenium, which made aluminum lawn chairs.

Benchmark has already met their initial job creation projection of 10 employees and is on track with their sales projections. The average salary including benefits for their employees is \$39,000 annually. In 2007 they added 16 employees and they hope to grow to 80 employees in 2008.

Alternatives and Comparison

There are two feasible alternatives, i.e., the Action Alternative and the No Action Alternative. Under the Action Alternative, TVA would administer ARC grant funds for the building improvements project. Under the No Action Alternative, TVA would not administer the ARC grant. In this event, the company either would seek alternative funding, continue operations at the current level, or move to another location possibly outside the Valley. If the company obtained alternative funding the overall environmental consequences would be similar to the Action Alternative. If the company continued operations at the current level, there would no change in the minor local solid wastes and traffic generation, but the economic benefits of the business would not occur, and the plan to increase local jobs would not be implemented. Given that the company management thinks there is adequate demand for their product, it is likely that the minor impacts of increased production would occur at an existing facility or possibly at a new facility elsewhere in the United States. Expansion of production at an existing facility would most likely have similar impacts, but the impacts of building a new facility for new production cannot be reasonably foreseen.

Affected Environment and Evaluation of Impacts

TVA staff review of the proposed expansion has determined that it would be minor in scope and have little or no potential to have adverse impacts on natural or cultural resources due to the small office addition being located in the existing parking area which has been previously disturbed. (See the office location photo, Appendix 2.) Although the new additional equipment is not part of the scope for financial assistance, the impacts of its installation and operation are expected to be minor and insignificant. The waste streams produced at the plant are ordinary employee paper and plastic waste, sanitary sewage, and scrap metal and shavings. The ordinary employee waste would be discarded in dumpsters and picked up by a licensed waste management company. Sanitary waste for the industrial park is handled by a sand filter and UV disinfection. The system has adequate capacity for more than the existing users including Benchmark's expansion. The scrap metal would be removed by a licensed recycling company. No environmental permits are needed for the operation, and there are no air pollutant emissions or waste water discharges from the manufacturing process.

Incoming and outgoing material due to the expansion would be increased by approximately 6 semi-tractor trucks coming in and going out per week, for a total of about 16 trucks in and out. The facility is less than a mile from I-24 via S.R. 50, which carries other industrial park traffic. The previous industrial tenant of the building generated more truck traffic than this operation would.

The facility does not lie in a 100-year floodplain, as shown in the Flood Insurance Rate Map, Appendix 3.

Cumulative Impacts

Due to the small size of the expansion and lack of potential significant impact on the environment, TVA has concluded that the incremental effect of this project, when added to other past, present and reasonably foreseeable future actions (particularly the current production at the existing facility), would have insignificant cumulative impacts.

Mitigation Measures

TVA has not identified the need for any mitigation measures to further reduce environmental impacts.

Preferred Alternative

TVA's preferred alternative is the Action Alternative.

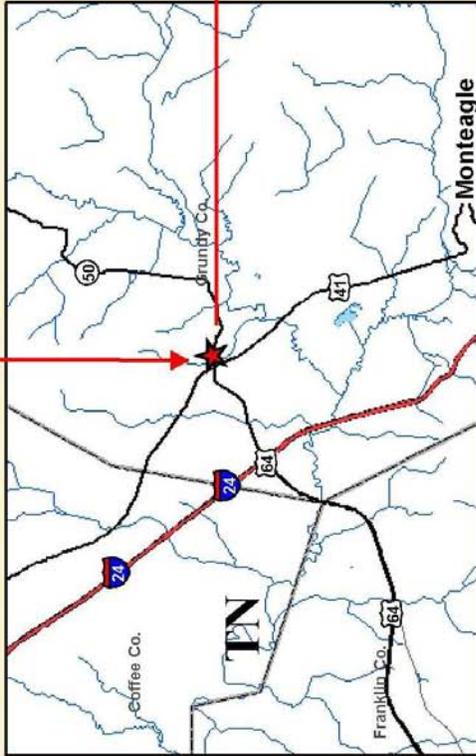
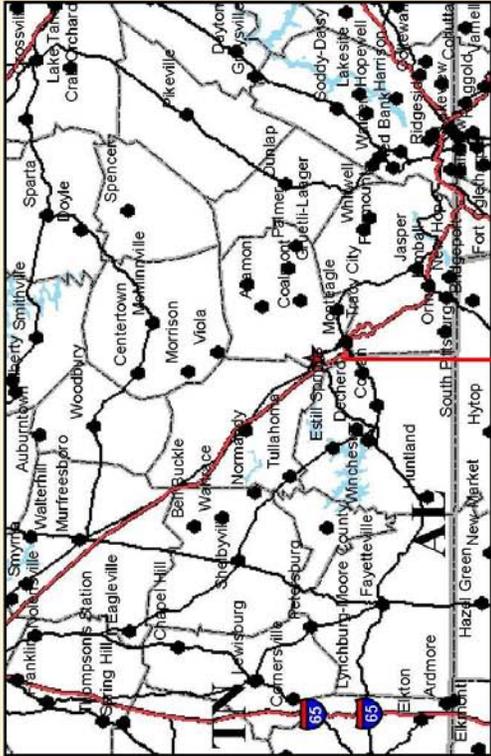
TVA Preparers

This EA was prepared by Peter K. Scheffler, Senior NEPA Specialist.

Agencies/persons consulted:

Bill L. Zotto, Project Control Specialist, Economic Development
Benchmark Industries Department staff

Appendix 1



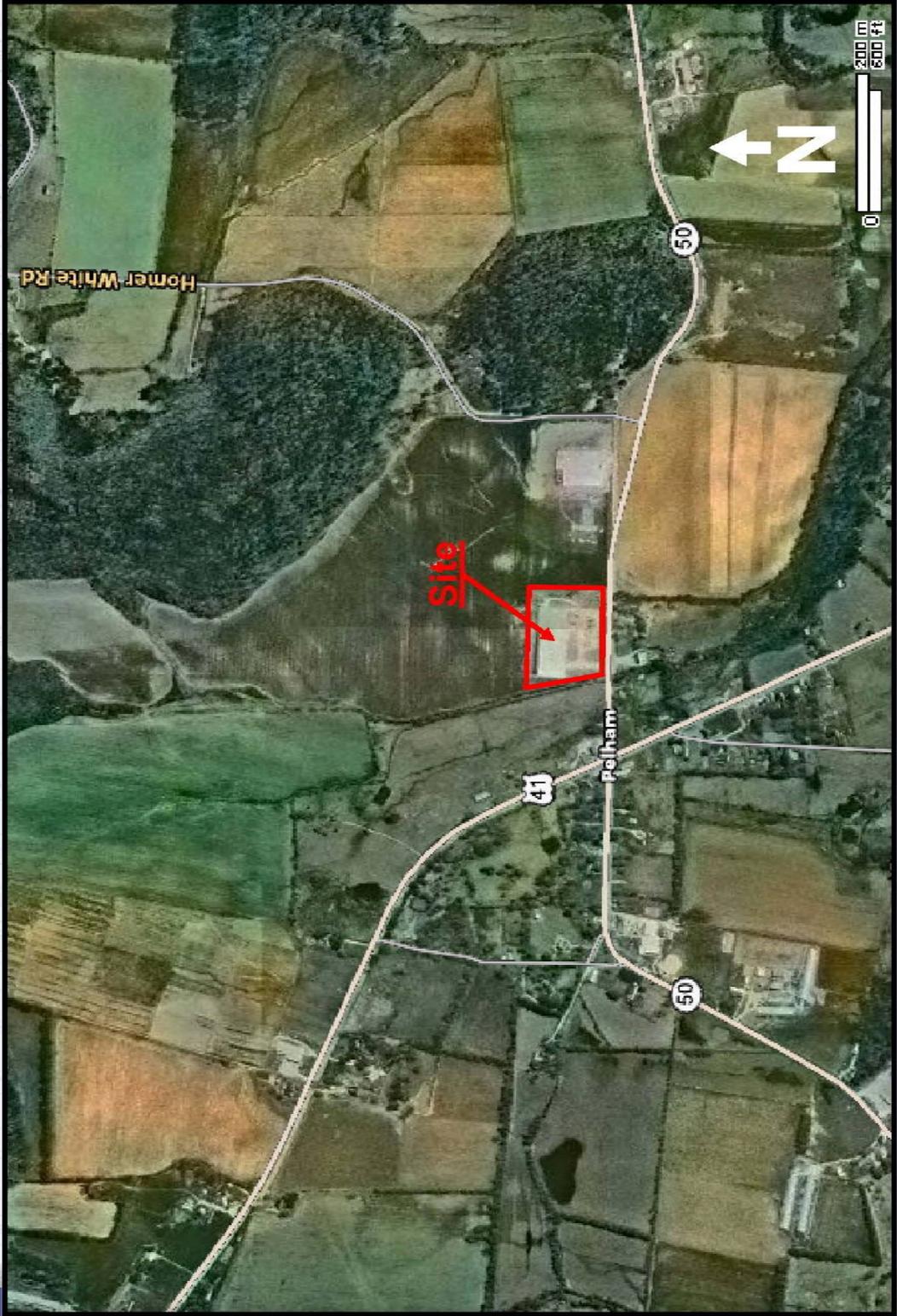
Location Map
Grundy County - Benchmark Industries Project
ARC Grant
2685 SR 50
Pelham, Grundy County, Tennessee

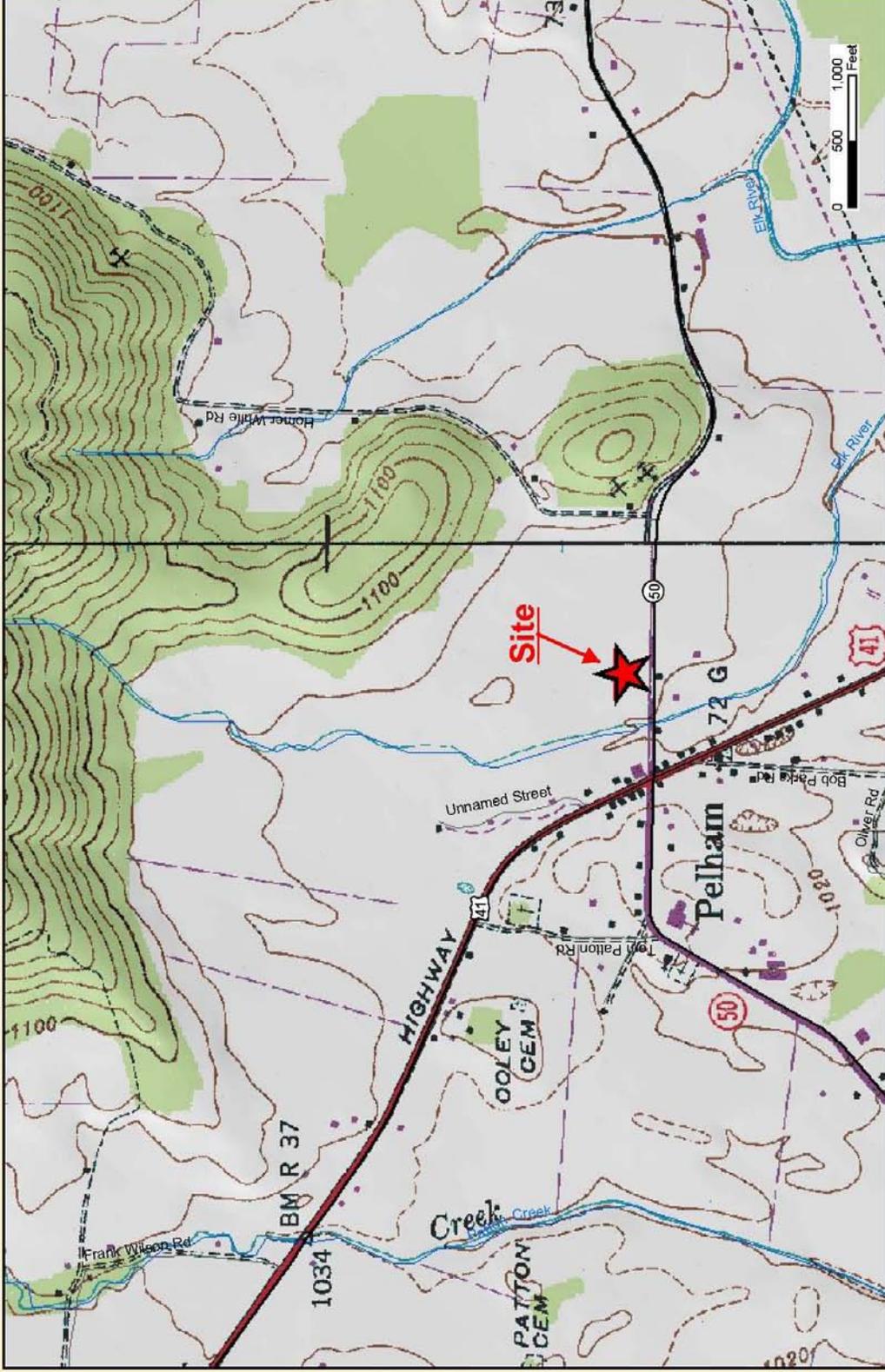
Created in ArcGIS 9 using ArcMap



Prepared Dec. 2007 by:







Topo Map
Grundy County - Benchmark Industries Project
ARC Grant
Pelham, Grundy County, Tennessee

Prepared Dec. 2007 by:

Economic Development
Technical Services

Created in ArcGIS 9 using ArcMap

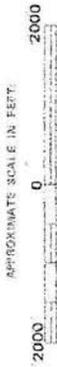
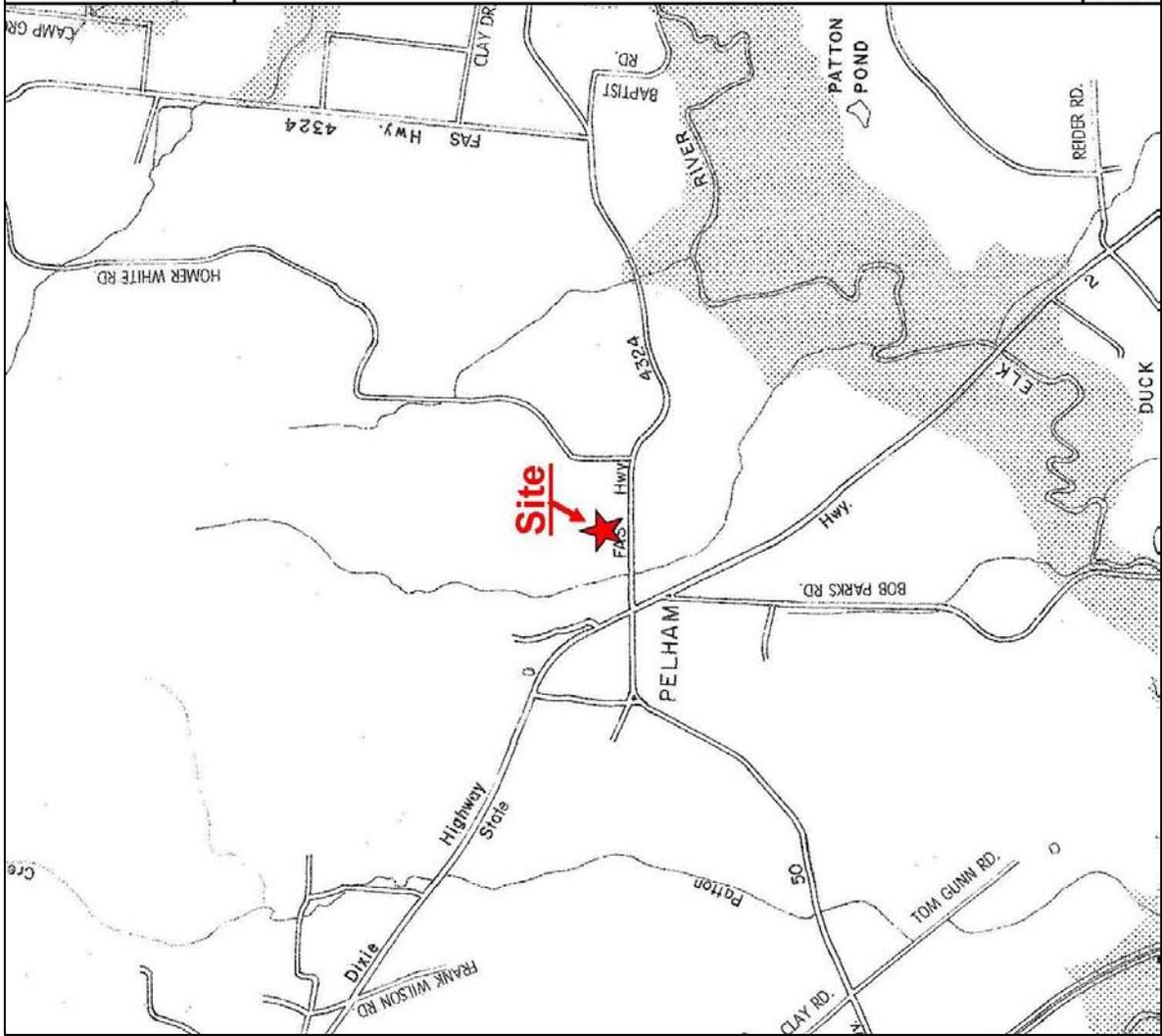
Appendix 2



**Approximate footprint
of the office addition**

**Benchmark Industries – ARC Grant
Pelham, Grundy County, Tennessee**

Appendix 3



FLOOD HAZARD BOUNDARY MAP

**GRUNDY COUNTY
TENNESSEE
UNINC. AREAS**

PAGE 3 OF 5
(SEE MAP INDEX FOR PAGES NOT PRINTED)

EFFECTIVE DATE:
AUGUST 25, 1978

CONVERTED BY LETTER
EFFECTIVE 3/1/95

COMMUNITY—PANEL NUMBER
470250 0003 A



**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING
AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT**
FEDERAL INSURANCE ADMINISTRATION

This is an official copy of a portion of the above referenced flood map. It was extracted using F.M.T. Ch-L-ne. This map does not reflect changes or amendments which may have been made subsequent to the date on the title block. For the latest product information about National Flood Insurance Program flood maps check the FEMA Flood Map Store at www.msc.fema.gov