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Posted on: November 2, 2007 | From: ARCHITECT November 2007

superfund365.org

Every day for a year, a reminder that toxic messes remain

By Braulio Agnese



While researching a documentary about how the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) responded to the 9/11 collapse of the World Trade Center, digital media artist Brooke Singer learned about Superfund, the EPA program tasked with cleaning up the nation's toxic-waste sites. (There was a question within the EPA of whether ground zero should have been categorized as a Superfund site.) Last spring, with the documentary's production dragging, she was inspired to create Superfund365. The website, says Singer, was "something I could do quickly. ... [T]he main thrust behind it is education" about the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980, as Superfund is officially known. "It consolidates all the [publicly available] information."

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Each page for a Superfund365 site (such as the Fried Industries manufacturing plant, above) displays similar information.

Superfund365.org—which is hosted by Turbulence, the online division of the nonprofit New Radio and Performing Arts—launched Sept. 1. Through Aug. 31, 2008, it will visit 365 of the worst Superfund sites, one site each day. In addition to Superfund data, the site also contains information of a more intimate nature: a series of video interviews with Lois Marie Gibbs, the woman who founded the Love Canal Homeowners Association and began the chain of events that resulted in Superfund's creation. Interviews with others involved with or affected by the federal program will be added throughout the year.

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Once the year has run its course, Singer hopes to create a print version of the website. "Especially

now that [Superfund] communities are starting to contact me with their stories and information," says Singer, "it would be great to get these stories and photographs into a book that kind of encapsulates the best of Superfund365."

She should expect to hear from more people. Within weeks of launching, the site had already generated web buzz: It was the Yahoo! Pick for Sept. 14 and was noted favorably by TreeHugger and other environmentally minded blogs before the month was over. The EPA, however, has its own opinion about Superfund365. "The [agency] does not care what other people put on their Web sites," wrote a spokesperson in an e-mail.



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