



Figure 1: Fisk Coal Plant  
The shuttered Fisk coal plant in Chicago is slated for redevelopment by the Chicago Transportation Authority as a bus garage.

# EMPOWERING COAL COMMUNITIES TO TRANSITION FROM FOSSIL FUELS

## A NATION IN TRANSITION

Due to a changing energy market and mounting regulatory and community pressure, coal-fired power plants are shutting down across the country.

One of the tensions in the country's transition away from coal is the potentially destructive impact that coal plant closures can have on local communities. Plant closures threaten a community's economic stability due to a loss of jobs and tax base, and may result in changes in infrastructure as other sources of energy needs to be created. The effects of a closure ripple through the fabric of the community, often in unanticipated ways.

A community's ability to make a successful transition is increased when planning begins early in the process, even before a coal plant closes, coal shipments cease, or the coal ash pond is capped. Communities that proactively plan for the financial, employment, and physical changes that will happen not only improve the economic and social outcome, but they may also expedite the closure and transition process. An effective transition planning process will result in local stakeholders feeling empowered, engaged, and invested in a successful outcome.

## OUR APPROACH

Delta Institute helps communities plan for the closure and potential reuse of their coal plants in a way that promotes environmentally sustainable and socially equitable economic development. We understand the entire landscape of change, the stakeholders, the environmental and economic issues, possible solutions, and the tasks necessary to move forward.

Delta views broad-based partnerships as a key ingredient in successful transitions. Stakeholders typically involved in this process include:

- community-based organizations
- environmental justice organizations
- coal plant owners
- electric utilities
- private foundations
- local government agencies
- elected officials
- federal agencies
- labor organizations
- community based philanthropy

Delta Institute works with and among these partners as a neutral, third-party facilitator that helps communities stabilize their local economy as they prepare for or react to power plant closures, navigating the path toward a changed energy landscape.

Delta provides a comprehensive set of services to communities including:

- Planning for the loss of direct and indirect jobs
- Quantifying the tax base change and impact
- Grant and loan writing assistance
- Stakeholder engagement
- Coal plant land use and reuse planning
- On-site consultation

## OUR EXPERIENCE

Delta Institute is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that works to build a resilient environment and economy through sustainable solutions.

Delta Institute has been assisting coal plant communities in transition since 2012. We facilitated the Mayor of Chicago's Fisk and Crawford Task Force, helping stakeholders come to consensus on guiding principles for redevelopment of two urban coal plants.

After participating in the White House conference on a just transition for coal communities, Delta received Just Transition Funds to assist communities and groups across the country to address the effects of coal-related changes. Delta has assisted six communities with POWER Initiative applications, two implementation grants, and four planning grants, and participated in two federally organized roundtables to advise communities about the resources available through the POWER Initiative as well as other federal funding.

Delta's experience with coal plant communities is informed by our 17-year history of empowering communities to reuse and redevelop brownfields. A recipient of an EPA K6 grant, and current provider of technical assistance for brownfields through the EPA, Delta has worked in many communities across the Great Lakes region to reactivate brownfields into productive community assets.



Figure 2: Little Blue Coal Ash Pond  
Delta is working with Greene Township, PA to apply for a POWER Initiative planning grant.



Figure 3: Presque Isle Power Plant  
Delta assisted the Superior Watershed Partnership and Land Trust in applying for an EDA planning grant.



### About Delta Institute

Delta Institute is a nonprofit organization that builds a more resilient Great Lakes environment and economy through sustainable solutions.

For more information on how you can work with us, visit us online at [www.delta-institute.org](http://www.delta-institute.org) or contact Cindy Winland, [cwinland@delta-institute.org](mailto:cwinland@delta-institute.org), 312-462-3420.