

# The Chronicle-Express

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## Will Greenidge plant reopen?

By John Christensen

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AES Eastern Energy, an Ithaca-based subsidiary of AES Corp., filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy on Dec. 30, 2011. According to President of Greenidge AES Eastern Energy Bill Rady, the company's six coal-fired power plants were packaged for sale in two lots; the two large plants, Somerset and Cayuga, and the four smaller plants, Greenidge, Westover, Hickling, and Jennison.

Rady said that of the four, Greenidge stands the best chance of purchase, being the most recently operated facility and most easily restarted. Hickling and Jennison have been shut down since 2000.

"They are not economically viable to survive," said Rady at the time. "Cheap gas and expensive coal, plus the environmental requirements of federal regulations are killing them."

According to multiple sources, the new owner of Greenidge is GMMM Holdings Corp., which is owned by Vincent Alison of Staten Island. Torrey Town Clerk Betty Daggett reports that Alison bought the second lot of the four smaller plants for \$1.2 million. Both Daggett and Steve Griffin of the Yates County IDA report the other three plants are slated for demolition and salvage, which is Alison's business. But they further report that when he toured Greenidge, Alison was so impressed with how up to date, clean, and in such good repair everything was at Greenidge, he changed his

mind about demolition. With the \$38 million worth of air pollution control equipment the plant has, Alison has told them this is the most operational plant he has, and he wants to resell the plant for operation. Multiple attempts to reach Alison for comment were not returned.

When asked last year about converting the plant from coal to natural gas as a fuel source, Rady said the company had also judged that to be not economically viable. But the fact remains that a tap was installed in the Empire Connector Pipeline when it was built in 2008 where it crosses Rte. 54 near Pre-Emption Road with just such a possibility in mind.

Before its closure, AES Eastern Energy just negotiated a reduction of Greenidge's PILOT (Payment In Lieu Of Taxes) with Yates County and the Town of Torrey. From the originally agreed \$1.1 million annual payment when it was operable, AES EE paid just \$600,000 in 2012 and was to pay \$400,000 this year, but with the sale, that has not been paid. AES is also over \$5,000 in arrears to the Village of Dresden for water bills, according to Dresden Clerk/Treasurer Terry Dilts.

Griffin says any PILOT agreement with a new owner would have to be negotiated.

Given its long history of heavy industrial use, many people have been concerned about the prospect of Yates County being saddled with another highly contaminated property that would be difficult to sell and repurpose. Both Rady and Griffin stated that if Greenidge is demolished, court appointed trustees will ensure a complete cleanup of the site in the dissolution of the company properties. "It's in the trustees' hands. They will do what needs to happen," said Rady. "If it is demolished, it will be cleaned up." Ever optimistic, Griffin sees the large site with its extensive Seneca Lake frontage as an opportunity for a wide range of development possibilities, but the potential reopening of the plant with the jobs and tax revenue it would bring is considered by most to be ideal.