

## **Letter to the Editor: Tom Reed has done much for Ashford**

*October 29, 2018*

Submitted

Editor:

Since I first became Ashford Town Supervisor, Tom Reed and his team have been extremely committed to providing critical support to the West Valley Demonstration Project. Tom was instrumental in finding the funds for the \$75 million that was required in order to complete phase one. He went above and beyond for us to ensure that the health and safety of our community was his top priority. Because of Tom's willingness to reach across the aisle, we secured additional funding above what was originally requested.

Tracy Mitrano, on the other hand, only reached out to my team after discussing it on a call with media reporters. It was clear to me that Tracy does not have a clear understanding of our needs or the status of the project. I have to say it again: Tom Reed went above and beyond for us. He and his team are always available to answer our call, graciously hosting us in Washington and at home. There are truly not enough words to express my gratitude to Tom for his commitment to helping us. We need Tom to continue representing us in Congress.

Charlie Davis

West Valley

## West Valley Site, Firefighters Provide Fire Safety Training to Students



**WEST VALLEY, N.Y.** – [EM](#) and its cleanup contractor at the [West Valley Demonstration Project](#) partnered with the local volunteer fire company to conduct fire safety training for West Valley School District middle school students. “In the event of an emergency, you always fall back to what you know,” said Kevin Murray, CH2M HILL BWXT West Valley

emergency preparedness manager and volunteer firefighter. “Now these students have training that they can fall back on. They will be better prepared to deal with an emergency situation. In the end, training is all about learning, practicing, and applying.” Held as part of National Fire Prevention Week, the hands-on training allowed the students to use a fire extinguisher training simulator, as shown here. Murray, who serves as chief of the West Valley Volunteer Hose Company, is pictured with a student during the training.

-Contributor: Joseph Pillittere

## Southern Tier's Rep. Tom Reed faces spirited challenge from Tracy Mitrano

By [Sandra Tan](#) | Published October 30, 2018 | Updated 38 minutes ago



Rep. Tom Reed may support President Trump's policies and enjoy his endorsements, but for much of his time in the House of Representatives, he's worked hard to brand himself as a down-to-earth moderate working to break partisan gridlock.

His lawn signs say, simply, "Tom for Congress."

His eight years in Congress have been spent balancing on a tightrope across his 11-county Southern Tier district from Jamestown to Ithaca, appealing to his rural conservative base while trying not to alienate union workers in manufacturing towns or dismiss voters in the liberal stronghold of Tompkins County.

But in light of an expected wave of Democratic voters and a giant infusion of cash in recent months for Yates County challenger Tracy Mitrano, Reed's sweet, family-centered commercials have taken a back seat to a long-running string of attack ads. And he isn't apologizing for being on the offense in a race that could be one of the tightest he has faced.

"This is about defining someone who will say anything she needs to say to get elected," he said.

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Mitrano, who raised nearly a million dollars toward her campaign in the third quarter, has hurled similar accusations against Reed. His talk of bipartisanship is not supported by his voting record or his negative campaign style, she said.

"How he campaigns totally belies how he would depict himself," said the cybersecurity expert and former director of informational technology policy at Cornell University.

Republicans have a natural – but not insurmountable – edge in the 23rd Congressional District. The last Democrat to hold the seat, before the last redistricting, was Reed's predecessor, Eric Massa, who resigned in 2010. The district's makeup is 39 percent Republican, 32 percent Democratic and 21 percent unaffiliated with any party.

As Election Day draws nearer, both candidates agree that turnout will be a big determiner of the outcome. So both sides are appealing not just to their base but reaching out to independent district voters.

The Cook Political Report recently added the Reed-Mitrano race to its list of competitive races, changing its position from "solid" Republican to "likely" Republican. The fact that Mitrano has raised more than \$1 million in the past few months is another indicator that many consider her a serious challenger.

Her campaign commissioned and released the results of an online survey it commissioned from Change Research on Friday that placed Reed and Mitrano in a statistical dead heat with Mitrano only 1.5 percentage points behind Reed, with Reed at 48.8 percent and Mitrano at 47.3 percent. The survey included 510 participants had a margin of error of +/- 4 percentage points.

"We are within striking, if not crushing, distance of Mr. Reed in this campaign," Mitrano said.



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Jim Twombly, professor of American Politics at Elmira College, noted that the 23rd District has elected Democrats in the past, and strong Democratic candidates can keep the race competitive, though Republicans are clearly favored. The fact that Reed has pushed so many negative campaign ads is a sign of concern by his campaign, he said.

"While I wouldn't necessarily say this district is winnable tomorrow for any Democrat, certainly there's some movement for it to be a closer, tighter race," he said.

Reed's campaign has worked to label Mitrano, a Penn Yan resident, as an "extreme Ithaca liberal," a tag his campaign has attached to prior Democratic challengers. Meanwhile, Reed promotes his own efforts to improve government at the national level and improve his district at the local level.

At the national level, he points to his work as co-chairman of the Problem Solvers Caucus, a bipartisan group that has spent more than a year trying to break through partisan gridlock. The group has [pushed rules reforms](#) that would blunt the the political "shenanigans" of party extremists and a small number of power brokers who block policy debates and stifle bipartisan cooperation.

In a meeting with The Buffalo News Editorial Board, Reed said his support for a new House speaker – Republican or Democrat – will be tied to whether that person would pledge to adopt House rule reforms.

"I will not stay down there if this doesn't happen," he said.

New Jersey Rep. Josh Gottheimer, the caucus co-chairman and a Democrat, said he has spoken almost daily with Reed over the past two years and appreciates his willingness to work hard and compromise to accomplish bipartisan reform efforts, whether it be on immigration or health care.

"I've just seen the way he's really worked with Democrats and Republicans up close, and getting things done for what's good for America," Gottheimer said. "The fact that he is standing up so vocally to try and change the way things are, nobody was really talking about it before."

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Reed serves with Rep. Brian Higgins on the influential Ways and Means Committee, which oversees all legislation related to taxes and key programs like Social Security and Medicare. Reed said he supports Trump's tax reforms and business deregulation but opposed Trump's budget proposal for its "unsustainable" levels of federal spending.

According to FiveThirtyEight, a data and polling analysis website, Reed votes with Trump's position 96.6 percent of the time. Reed said while he is upfront about his positions, he also looks for common ground with people who disagree with him, pointing to the more than 250 town hall meetings he has held with both supporters and dissenters across the district.

Mitrano dismissed Reed's work with the Problem Solvers Caucus and in Congress overall.

"I'm not taken in by his PR campaign," she said. "Problem Solvers have not accomplished a single, concrete thing."

Reed's name has been on only three pieces of legislation, she said, and two of them were for naming a post office, she said. She also criticized his vote on a compromise bill that would place a \$10,000 cap on state and local tax deductions and said he has done little to support local manufacturing jobs.

"He's really just let it go to seed," she said.

She pledges to champion issues of single-payer health care and lowering student debt, issues she said Reed has voted against or ignored. She also said she would fight harder to bring broadband Internet access to rural parts of the district.

Reed described Mitrano as someone who changes her position on hot-button issues like the Second Amendment and health care, depending on her audience. He said she is not someone whose word you can count on.

He said he also supports greater broadband Internet access, as well as immigration and health care reform, infrastructure improvements and addressing the national debt crisis. He pointed to successes with his support of advanced manufacturing centers, investment in the cleanup of the West Valley nuclear fuel reprocessing site, and support of wind and solar energy tax credits.

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He criticized Mitrano's support for "government-controlled health care," which he said would ultimately raise health care costs and "collapse the entire system." Mitrano has argued that a single-payer Medicare system would provide the government the best leverage to negotiate lower health care costs and minimize bloated administrative and advertising fees.

Reed has a clear fundraising advantage over Mitrano, starting off the year with more than \$1 million in his campaign fund. Altogether, he has raised more than \$3 million this election cycle, he said.

But campaign finance reports show Mitrano's fund-raising efforts have rapidly gained on Reed's over the past few months. Posted campaign filings after the start of the year show Mitrano raised about \$1.3 million compared with \$1.6 million for Reed. And according to the OpenSecrets.org website, a far higher percentage of her money has been raised within the district.

## West Valley Advances Cleanup With Removal of Pump-and-Treat System



*Crews pour grout into the well pump casing to stabilize it before pulling out the well pump.*

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**WEST VALLEY, N.Y.** – Workers recently removed a former pump-and-treat system at [EM's West Valley Demonstration Project](#) (WVDP) site, allowing for continued cleanup progress.

“The WVDP team continues to make steady and meaningful progress on reducing the environmental legacy risks and footprint of the site in a safe and compliant manner,” EM WVDP Director Bryan Bower said. “Our crews did an excellent job in their planning and safe execution of this demolition work.”

Joe Ebert, a manager with CH2M HILL BWXT West Valley, EM's WVDP cleanup contractor, commended the work crews.

“Our team continues to use their expertise, knowledge, and lessons learned to safely perform onsite demolition in an environmentally conscious manner,” Ebert said.

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*Workers prepare to remove a well pump from a former pump-and-treat system at EM's West Valley Demonstration Project site.*



*A backhoe is used to pull the well pump and casing from the ground after workers stabilized the casing with grout.*



Workers began the pump-and-treat system demolition last month. They used a backhoe to pull the well pump from the ground. Crews filled the pump's well casing with grout to stabilize it. Using the backhoe, they lifted the well pump and its casing from the ground, allowing the grout to fill the void left by the entire pump assembly.

The treatment system was installed to mitigate the groundwater plume that originated from historical releases at the site's Main Plant Process Building. A [permeable treatment wall](#) has since replaced that system. The wall is an approximately 850-foot-long trench that contains nearly 2,000 metric tons of zeolite, a naturally occurring mineral formed from volcanic ash. The zeolite strips the contaminant strontium-90 from the groundwater passing through the wall.

*-Contributor: Joseph Pillittere*

## Employees Participate in Confined Space Training at West Valley



**WEST VALLEY, N.Y.** – Emergency response personnel at [EM's West Valley Demonstration Project site](#) trained employees on confined space rescue last week. The training was developed to prepare for an upcoming internal inspection of the site's fire water tank. Divers will conduct underwater ultrasonic inspections of the tank's wall and bottom to check for degradation. Employees practiced rescues using a 185-pound mannequin and a platform comparable in height to the tank. While the divers have their own rescue plan, they trained WVDP employees as an added level of safety.



Rep. Tom Reed. (Robert Kirkham/News file photo)

## Tom Reed elected to fifth term in 23rd Congressional District

By [Sandra Tan](#) | Published November 6, 2018 | Updated 6 hours ago

U.S. Rep. Tom Reed won re-election to a fifth term in his Southern Tier district, defeating well-funded Democratic challenger Tracy Mitrano.

Reed, a Republican, held onto the 23rd District seat despite late indications the race was tightening, with some giving Mitrano, a cybersecurity expert from Yates County, a fighting chance to pull off an upset in the Republican-leaning district.

In the end, however, Reed's district continued its loyal support, handing him a decisive victory.

The race between Reed and Mitrano attracted little public attention until late in the campaign, as more signs pointed to a tightening race. The Cook Political Report added the Reed-Mitrano race to its list of competitive races, changing its position from "solid" Republican to "likely" Republican, though Reed was always favored to win.

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Reed went on the offensive early in his bid to keep the 23rd District seat. The eight-year incumbent ran a sustained series of attack ads to brand Mitrano as a "liberal extremist."

Mitrano pushed back by calling Reed a Trump guy who has ignored the Southern Tier district and been satisfied with the status quo.

Mitrano's successful fundraising effort led many to consider the race a competitive one in a district that crosses 11 counties, from Jamestown to Ithaca. While the district has a Republican edge, Democrats have been elected to the seat before. That includes Reed's predecessor, Eric Massa, who resigned in 2010.

In 2012, Reed kept his seat with a 3.6-point edge against Democrat Nate Shinagawa.

Reed has sought to brand himself as a moderate who supports President Trump but also supports bipartisan collaboration and more open debate on the House floor. He has held hundreds of town hall meetings throughout his district and made it a point in this year's campaign to talk about how he reached out to those who agree with him, as well as those who disagree.

Mitrano built her own brand as an energetic reformer. Mitrano courted not only Democrats but also unaffiliated voters, who comprise 21 percent of district voters. With both candidates running strong, well-funded campaigns, voter turnout was expected to be a key driver of the outcome.

Reed, a member of the House Ways and Means Committee, promoted his desire to reform the House of Representatives into a more democratic body that encourages problem solving and compromise. He said he supports Trump's tax reforms and business deregulation but opposed Trump's budget proposal for its "unsustainable" levels of federal spending.

He had focused on immigration and health care reform, infrastructure improvements and addressing the national debt crisis. He pointed to his support of advanced manufacturing centers, investment in the cleanup of the West Valley nuclear fuel reprocessing site, and support of wind and solar energy tax credits.

# THE BUFFALO NEWS

Mitrano focused her campaign on district-specific issues such as expanding broadband access to rural areas. She also pledged to champion issues of single-payer health care and lowering student debt – issues she said Reed has voted against or ignored.

**Story topics:** [Election 2018](#)

## Local Governments Support DOE Clarifying the Definition of High-Level Waste

ECA is encouraging stakeholders to provide input on the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Notice on its Interpretation of High-Level Radioactive Waste. In its Request for Public Comment, DOE outlines a potential modification in how defense high-level waste (HLW) may be defined. This would allow DOE to dispose of waste in accordance with its radiological characteristics and ability to meet appropriate disposal facility requirements rather than the waste's origin.

ECA supports the clarification of the definition of high-level waste. DOE will treat waste based on the waste's actual characteristic, rather than an arbitrary definition based on the waste's origin. ECA expects these changes will:

- Reduce years of DOE operations and risks to current host communities;
- Accelerate Hanford, Idaho, **West Valley** and Savannah River tank retrievals and closures – which decreases risk;
- Reduce the number, size and duration of storage facilities pending availability of a permanent deep geologic HLW repository (which has been delayed for decades); and
- Saves taxpayers \$40 billion or more on DOEEM's remaining lifecycle costs.

DOE's Notice is an important first step in pursuit of recommendations made by ECA in its 2017 report, "Waste Disposition: A New Approach to DOE's Waste Management Must Be Pursued," which examines how clarifying the interpretation of HLW may allow DOE to put into place a smarter, riskbased decision framework.

State regulatory input is critical for both sender and receiver sites prior to the movement of any of the waste. DOE's notice identifies that any changes to how waste is currently managed will still require compliance with the state agreements and performance objectives of a disposal facility as demonstrated through a performance assessment conducted in accordance with all applicable state and federal regulatory requirements.

"Most local governments support DOE clarifying the definition high-level waste at both sites where the waste is currently located and the potential receiver sites," says Ron Woody, ECA Chairman and County Executive for Roane County, TN.

“As the hosts, sender and receiver sites for the federal government’s HLW, we support DOE’s efforts to examine alternative disposal pathways for waste in our communities that, under the current interpretation based on artificial standards, can only go to a HLW repository. If DOE moves to more appropriately align disposal decisions based on actual risk, some of this waste may be safely managed as transuranic or low-level waste and can be moved out of our communities sooner while saving significant taxpayer dollars,” according to Rick McLeod, CEO of the Savannah River Site Community Reuse Organization.

“By beginning the evaluation of this alternative with a call for Public Comment, DOE is notably working to move beyond the old ‘Decide, Announce, Defend’ approach to policy-making. Allowing the people most directly impacted by DOE decisions to provide input early in the process, DOE can more fully understand the challenges and opportunities related to a shift in how this waste is characterized and build support. It could also bring the U.S. in line with how other countries around the world manage nuclear waste,” adds Pam Larsen, Executive Director of Hanford Communities.

“We are pleased with DOE’s effort to attempt clean up and clarify the definition of High Level Waste. Defining waste by its source rather than what it actually is, is an antiquated approach that strands waste at sites when safe disposal pathways are actually available. Disposal decreases the risk and eliminates billions of dollars in future costs associated with oversight of the millions of gallons of waste in storage tanks at our defense sites,” says John Heaton, Energy Coordinator for Carlsbad, New Mexico.

Any change in the HLW Interpretation will most directly affect how liquid reprocessing wastes stored in or removed from large underground tanks at DOE’s Savannah River Site in South Carolina, the Idaho Clean-up Project at the Idaho National Laboratory Site, at the Hanford Site in Washington State and at the **West Valley Demonstration Site in New York**, can be managed in the future.

During DOE’s 60-day comment period, ECA will co-host a roundtable discussion with other DOE stakeholders to consider DOE’s proposal and potential outcomes. The comment period ends on December 10, 2018.

A full copy of ECA’s Waste Disposition: A New Approach to DOE’s Waste Management Must Be Pursued can be found on our website at [www.energyca.org/publications/](http://www.energyca.org/publications/).

For further information contact Kara Colton, Director of Nuclear Energy Programs, at (703)-864- 3520 or [kara.colton@energyca.org](mailto:kara.colton@energyca.org).

## WVDP successfully removes main plant ventilation stack

The ventilation stack, weighing more than 20,000 pounds, was successfully removed from the Main Plant Process Building at the West Valley Demonstration Project, utilizing extensive planning, engineering controls and historical best practices.

“Developing a comprehensive plan and using it with a deliberate approach is a combination for safety and success,” CHBWV President Scott Anderson said. “Our team continues to complete demolition work at the site in a safe and compliant manner.”



*Photo provided*

**Cranes safely lower the stack into staged stanchions on the ground.**

Workers at the WVDP removed the ventilation stack as efforts to dismantle and remove peripheral structures and associated facilities of the Main Plant continue. Other demolition work will include manipulator repair shop, contact size reduction facility, utility room, utility room extension, load-in facility, laundry room and main plant office building.

“Once again the CHBWV Team did an excellent job in their pre-planning and execution of this challenging work,” WVDP Director Bryan Bower, said.

“This work evolution will

forever change the landscape of the WVDP site, and will become a reminder of the ongoing progress here.”

On Sept. 11, crews used a 400-ton crane to lift a man-basket so that workers could begin the removal and packaging of the stack’s six, 7/8-inch steel cable guy wires. Once that was completed, workers were lifted to the 184-foot elevation to cut the steel platform into pieces and lower it to the ground.

The workers finished removing the stack’s guy wires and welded lift trunnions onto the stack for its removal. All materials removed and packaged during this project will be shipped offsite for disposal.

On Sept. 15, crews cut the stack at approximately the 198-foot site elevation leaving approximately 110 feet of stack to be lifted. A cutting technique was used to lessen the movement of the stack once the cut was completed. The 400-ton crane was attached to the lift trunnions at the top of the stack, while a 150-ton support crane was attached to the bottom.

# SPRINGVILLE JOURNAL

Tuesday, November 13, 2018

With both cranes synchronizing their motions, the stack was slowly moved to a horizontal position and safely placed into pre-positioned stanchions on the ground.

The stack will be size-reduced using a specialized cutting torch, packaged and shipped offsite for disposal.

The 160-foot-tall cement-reinforced stainless-steel stack, positioned on top of the 5-story MPPB, was part of the Main Plant's ventilation exhaust system.

The MPPB is a reinforced concrete structure that is 130-feet-wide, 270-feetlong and 79-feet-tall at its highest point.

It was constructed between 1963-1966 as a commercial reprocessing facility to recover reusable plutonium and uranium from spent nuclear reactor fuel. It operated from 1966 to 1972, during which approximately 640 metric tons of irradiated nuclear fuel was processed.

## **NRC review completed for Ashford solar farm**

*November 16, 2018*

Max Borsuk

ASHFORD—The completion of a review by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission was announced at the Nov. 7 Ashford Town Board meeting. The review brings the town one step closer to a proposed solar farm facility at the Western New York Nuclear Service Center in West Valley.

The NRC reported to the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority it was satisfied with the information for the review and didn't see any concerns, NYSERDA West Valley Program Director Paul Bembia said. The review was completed regarding the town leasing a portion of the Western New York Nuclear Service Center from NYSERDA for a community-shared solar facility.

NYSERDA sent information including documentation that the area has not been impacted by nuclear operation, an evaluation whether the facility would impact licensed facilities, evaluation whether an amendment to the NRC license was required and information from the Department of Energy stating the project would not impact the West Valley Demonstration Project.

The lease between the Town of Ashford and NYSERDA can now be signed at the end of a 90-day waiting period required by the Public Authorities Accountability Act. If no objections are raised, the lease can be signed by the end of December.

"It's just another box checked to getting this done," Ashford Supervisor Charles Davis said.

In other board news:

- The board approved the town's insurance for 2019 with Glatfelter Public Practice.
- Highway Superintendent Tim Engels reported salt and sand has been purchased and delivered to the town as it prepares for winter.
- The town has applied for boat launches with Cattaraugus County's Municipal Matching Grant Program.

The next Ashford Town Board meeting will be Wednesday, Dec. 12 at 7:30 p.m. at the Ashford Community Center, 9377 Route 240, in West Valley.



## West Valley Crews Collect 360 Turkeys, Other Food for Area Families



*Crews from EM's West Valley Demonstration Project Site gather alongside pallets stocked with donated food for delivery to area food pantries.*

**WEST VALLEY, N.Y.** – Workers at [EM's West Valley Demonstration Project](#) (WVDP) Site held its annual food drive last week, a [tradition](#) that has delivered more than 1.8 million pounds of food to people in need since its inception in 1989.

“I am honored to be a part of an event that makes a difference in our community,” EM WVDP Director Bryan Bower said. “The amount of food collected year after year demonstrates the generosity and kindness of our employees.”



*Volunteers deliver 40 turkeys and other items to the Saving Grace Food Pantry as part of this year's West Valley Demonstration Project Annual Food Drive.*

This year's drive collected more than 108,000 pounds of turkeys and other items for nine area food pantries serving hundreds of families — surpassing the goal of 100,000 pounds. The volunteers formed two teams to deliver 360 turkeys plus cases of food to the pantries for this holiday season.

“The success of our food drive is a direct result of the goodness of our employees, partners, and subcontractors,” said Lettie Chilson, WVDP facility manager and food drive coordinator. “It demonstrates the positive impact that kindness can have on a community. The WVDP Food Drive helps to improve the quality of life for our neighbors serviced by the local pantries.”

*-Contributor: Joseph Pillittere*

## Thanksgiving a blessing at Trading post

November 21, 2018

Springville Journal Staff

SPRINGVILLE—Every Tuesday, Louise Biela drives from Lackawanna to serve community dinner at the Trading Post. This week, she was able to serve 80 dinners as part of the Post's Thanksgiving dinner. Each server was dressed in black and white and coordinated by Biela.

"It was precious seeing my regulars dressed up enjoying the VIP treatment at my first Thanksgiving at the Trading Post," Biela said.



# SPRINGVILLE JOURNAL

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Along with the dinners, premade gingerbread houses were handed out for children to decorate. All while Mr. and Mrs. Claus stopped by to see how the Springville community was doing.



“Louise Biela is a blessing to the Trading Post and if I was asked what I am thankful for this year, it would be her,” Trading Post Director Peggy Austin said. “Along with all the God-given volunteers who are so faithful to coming and serving God and his people.”

Prior to the dinner, the Trading Post was the recipient of a truckload of food donated by [West Valley Nuclear](#). There were roughly 40 turkeys donated, along with about 2,000 pounds of food. Austin said the donation included everything needed to a Thanksgiving dinner and took a team of about 10 to unload.

“They brought a team to unload and just had it set up like an assembly line,” Austin said. “It was the coolest thing.”

## WVDP food pantry delivery project continues to grow

- By Kellen M. Quigley, Managing Editor, Nov 21, 2018



Volunteers from West Valley Demonstration Project deliver food to the Saving Grace Outreach Trading Post South in Cattaraugus last week as part of the company's annual food drive project. Submitted photo

SALAMANCA — In the spirit of the holiday season, volunteers from the West Valley Demonstration Project (WVDP) and its subcontractors gathered Friday at Sander's Parkview, taking the time and energy to once again distribute food to nine local food pantries.

This year's WVDP Food Drive fundraising effort was responsible for the distribution of 108,000 pounds of food — including 360 turkeys — to area pantries, according to volunteer coordinator Lettie Chilson, exceeding their goal for 2018.

Over 25 people volunteered to help deliver the food Friday, she said, and nearly everything was donated, including the trucks to transport the pallets and turkeys.

"Do we have to deliver 108,000 pounds a food today? No," Chilson said. "We do a grocery run for Thanksgiving, and then after the accounting is done and final counting is done, the food pantries will get an additional allotment of food and distribution in December."

Forty turkeys will go to each of the nine food pantry sites at Ellicottville, Franklinville, Delevan, West Valley, Little Valley, Cattaraugus, South Dayton and two pantries in Springville, Chilson said. She said she surveys each pantry and creates a base list of what they will receive.

"We try to give everybody at least enough to get them through the holiday distributions," she said. In addition to the turkeys, Chilson said each pantry gets a pallet of food with basic staples and holiday items such as stuffing. Some may also have identified a special needed item, which may be brought in by those who donate food instead of cash.

"For example, West Valley was in need of cereal," she explained. "So a lot of people brought in cereal and that cereal will go to West Valley."

The food drive began more than 25 years ago as a drive just for the local West Valley food pantry. Since then, the efforts from WVDP has grown and so has the the event.

In that time, Chilson said the biggest change has been the increase of donations and service because the need in the communities remained. She said the need is seen especially in the elderly population.

"What really has changed is the generosity of our folks," she added. "We've downsized a lot. We have fewer people at the site, and they still manage to hit a very aggressive goal every year."

Between the two trucks and teams of people assigned to each of the pantries, Chilson said it would take about three-and-a-half to four hours to complete the deliveries after leaving Sander's Parkview.

For about a decade, Parkview has been a part of the project. In the past two years, that's where the turkeys have come from, Chilson said, although places like Walmart in Springville have donated the turkeys previously as well.

"That partnership has been fabulous," she said of Parkview. "They palletize the food for us and give us great deals on the provide cost, and they also make a very nice donation."

Chilson said many other partner companies and contractors have been vital over the years. She said some provide the trucks and drivers for the deliveries while others do their own food collections.

Joe Pillittere, communications manager for WVDP, said in just his two years working at the WVDP site, the amount raised has increased by about 5,000 pounds.

"The thing is the employees enjoy this. I enjoy this," he said. "It's their opportunity to give back, and you can't beat that. Most of our employees are here on their day off because it's that important."

Since its inception through 2017, Pillittere said 1.8 million pounds of food have been distributed from this volunteer program through the West Valley Demonstration facility.

They're hoping to have 1.9 million total by the end of the season, he said, but it could be more with late donations.

"Most people see a plant and it's just a plant. They see concrete, they see buildings, but there's people there," Pillittere added. "This is a way of showing there's people there that care about the community."

Chilson said she looks forward to the project every year. It's a lot of work, she said, but delivery day makes it worth it from all the hugs, tears and help that come from the pantries.

"We like to know that we're not just giving to a general Western New York area, but we're giving to the area that is our neighbors directly around the plant," she said. "It benefits the people that live next door to us in our communities."

*(Contact managing editor Kellen Quigley at [kquigleysp@gmail.com](mailto:kquigleysp@gmail.com))*



WEST VALLEY — The third annual West Valley Christmas Tree Lighting ceremony will be held at 6 p.m. Dec. 7 in front of the Community Building on Main Street.

Santa Claus is expected to arrive by West Valley Volunteer Hose Co. fire truck to pass out candy canes and sing Christmas carols.

The West Valley Christmas Tree Lighting began two years ago with about 140 area residents. It grew larger last year, and promises to grow bigger yet this year, said Ashford Town Councilwoman Jean Bond.

Shortly after taking office three years ago, Bond said she thought it would be a good idea to start a Christmas tradition in West Valley. A Christmas tree lighting and visit by Santa Claus would make a nice family tradition, she thought.

As in most towns, the person who comes up with a good idea is often tasked with seeing that it gets carried out.

Bond even went out on the **New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA)** property with a representative to pick out a Christmas tree. As it turns out, the first tree they settled on was too big. It would have taken up all the room in front of the Community Building.

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## OLEAN TIMES HERALD

A shop class at West Valley Central School built a tree stand, Bond said. The Ashford Highway Department will help lift the tree into place and secure it. The town crew will also help decorate the tree with lights.

"I think they'll put the tree up next Monday or Tuesday," Bond said.

Bond met with elementary school art teacher Lillian Lechner to come up with plans for students to make birdseed ornaments for the tree.

Before the tree lighting ceremony Dec. 7, Route 240 (Main Street) will be closed between School and Depot streets by fire police personnel. A detour is readily available, Bond said.

"This way everyone is safe from traffic," Bond said. "There's isn't enough room in front of the building for everyone without overflowing into the street."

The West Valley High School Chorus will sing Christmas carols to start things off, Bond said. Santa will come by fire truck and lead the countdown to lighting the tree.

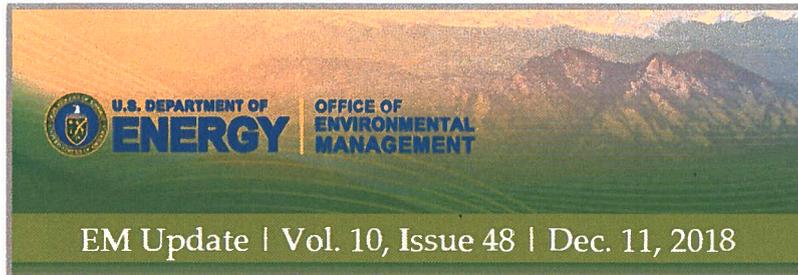
State Sen. Catharine M. Young will also speak.

The Community Choir will lead a sing-along with several Christmas songs.

Girl Scouts and 4-H members will pass out hot chocolate and Christmas cookies.

The Community Center will be open in case of rain or snowy weather. "If it rains or snows, we can put the keyboard inside," Bond said.

"The first year we held umbrellas over the keyboard," she laughed. "That didn't work out



## West Valley Contractor Earns Nearly Half of Award Fee for Six-Month Period in 2018



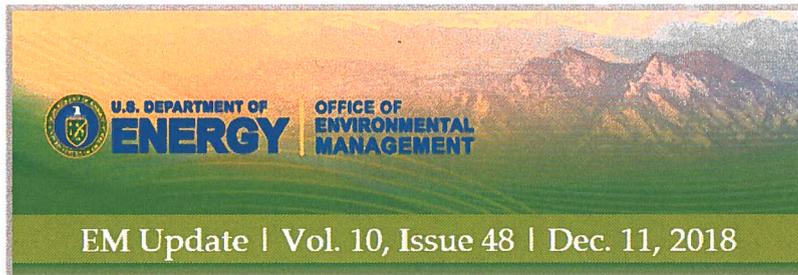
*An aerial view of the West Valley Demonstration Project.*

**WEST VALLEY, N.Y.** – [EM's cleanup contractor at the West Valley Demonstration Project](#) earned **\$225,000 of a possible \$461,080 award fee** for its March through August 2018 performance period, according to a recently released scorecard.

“CH2M HILL BWXT West Valley (CHBWW) continues to foster a positive working relationship with DOE through effective partnering during this rating period,” said Ken Armstrong, EM’s fee determining official.

CHBWW’s noteworthy achievements for the period include:

- “Very good” partnering with EM, with no reported injuries resulting in days away from work, restricted work activity, or transfer to another position.
- Continuous support in functional areas regarding quality and timely submittals of contract deliverables of good quality.
- Meeting its small business goal, with demonstrated improvements in the communication program and results of the annual Facility Information Management System validation, allowing better tracking of infrastructure costs.
- Notable planning and execution of legacy waste processing and shipping, and good planning associated with infrastructure improvements.



- Effective use of mockups in the Main Plant deactivation and the safe removal of the Vitrification Facility cooler units.
- Timely submittal of all environmental and regulatory reports and continued fostering of positive regulatory relations through partnering.

The scorecard also noted that the contractor did not meet EM's goal for its total recordable injury case rate. CHBWV received a notice of violation related to waste management activities and an assessment of civil penalty from the Utah Department of Environmental Quality. Additionally, CHBWV struggled with managing project risk for the Vitrification Facility demolition and debris shipping, resulting in an increase in project costs.

View the scorecard here.

[https://www.emcbc.doe.gov/Content/Office/award\\_fee\\_determination\\_scorecard\\_March\\_2018\\_August\\_2018.pdf](https://www.emcbc.doe.gov/Content/Office/award_fee_determination_scorecard_March_2018_August_2018.pdf)

## Award Fee Determination Scorecard Format

Contractor: CH2M Hill B&W West Valley LLC

Contract: Phase 1 Decommissioning - Facility Disposition

Contract Number: DE-EM0001529

Award Period: 06/29/2011 – 03/09/2020

Basis of Evaluation: Award Fee Plan (AFP) for Period: March 1, 2018 through August 28, 2018

Award Fee Available: \$461,080    Award Fee Earned: \$225,000

Award Fee Adjectival Rating:

Safety, Health and Quality Management –Good

Business Administration – Very Good

Project Management –Good

Environmental & Regulatory Compliance – Good

The Contractor met the majority of performance goals and objectives for the period.

Significant Achievements: None

Significant Deficiencies: During this rating period, CHBWV received a Notice of Violation and Assessment of Civil Penalty from the Utah Department of Environmental Quality. This incident resulted in 25% of the fee earned during this performance period being withheld, which equated to a withhold amount of \$115,270 of the available fee, lowering the fee from \$461,080 to \$345,810.

Safety, Health and Quality Management - The primary factors positively influencing the rating include very good partnering across all areas and no reported injuries resulting in days away from work, restricted work activity, or transfer to another position. Some items that negatively impacted the rating were contamination events this reporting period that exceed the annual goal, and a Total Recordable Case Rate (TRC) exceeding the DOE Environmental Management (EM) goal.

Business Administration - The primary factors that led to this assessment are the continuous support in all functional areas regarding quality and timely submittals of contract deliverables, meeting their Small Business goal, improvements in the Communication Program, and the results of the annual Facility Information Management System validation, allowing better tracking of infrastructure costs. This was offset with their struggle in meeting the annual Strategic Sourcing goal.

Project Management - The primary factors that led to this assessment include work planning weaknesses in the Vitrification demolition and debris shipping, resulting in an increase in project costs; This was partially offset by very good planning and execution of legacy waste processing and shipping, good partnering and planning associated with infrastructure improvements, and use of mockups in Main Plant deactivation and safe removal of the Vitrification Facility cooler units.

Environmental & Regulatory Compliance - The primary factors that led to this assessment are all routine reports submitted were generally well organized, of good quality, and were submitted on time. CHBWV provided all necessary back up data to make DOE's review of deliverables efficient. CHBWV continued to foster positive regulatory relations through partnering.

The DOE evaluation is consistent with the AFP, and the evaluation results in CHBWV earning in the range of \$176,363 to \$259,358 of the possible \$345,810 of award fee for this period.

An award fee of \$225,000 has been earned for the period of performance of March 1, 2018 through August 28, 2018.

Trump wants to reclassify nuclear waste as less dangerous - It would make disposal cheaper. Critics say that's because the waste would just be left in the ground.

By Michael Martin

Published : December 14, 2018



The Trump administration wants to reclassify radioactive waste resulting from the production of nuclear weapons, so it will be cheaper to dispose of, the [Associated Press reported](#).

The Department of Energy has proposed relabeling high-level nuclear waste as "low-level." High-level radioactive waste is currently defined as the byproducts of nuclear reactors or fuel reprocessing, where fissionable material is separated from the waste. Low-level waste, which represents 90 percent of radioactive detritus, generally comes from places where radioisotopes are used, such as nuclear power stations and local hospitals. Items often include wipes, clothes and plastic, [Newsweek reported](#).

About 90,000 tons of nuclear waste is being stored in facilities across the country, while several administrations have struggled to determine what to do with it. There is no current disposal facility in the U.S. for high-level waste.

Reclassifying such waste as low-level would save the Department of Energy \$40 billion and years of work, the Associated Press reported. Critics say that's because the radioactive matter would essentially just be left where it is.

The Department of Energy wouldn't confirm that. "At this time, DOE is not making and has not made any decisions on the classification or disposal of any particular waste stream," the official said.

The facilities that would be affected include the most contaminated site in the U.S.: the Hanford Nuclear Reservation in Washington, which operated from 1943 to 1987 and produced the plutonium for the atomic bomb dropped on Nagasaki. The site contains 56 million gallons of radioactive and hazardous chemical wastes in 177 aging, leaky underground tanks. The other facilities mentioned in the proposal are the Savannah River Plant in South Carolina, the Idaho National Laboratory and the **West Valley Demonstration Project in West Valley, New York.**

Sen. Ron Wyden (D-OR) expressed concern in a letter to the DOE. "No one disputes the difficulty of retrieving and treating high-level waste from Hanford's aging storage tanks," he wrote. "However, lowering the bar for level of protection of future generations and the environment by changing the definition of what has always been considered high-level waste requiring permanent disposal is a significant change."

## Ashford submits comments on waste interpretation

December 21, 2018

Max Borsuk

ASHFORD—Nuclear waste at the Western New York Nuclear Service Center in West Valley could see a new pathway for its disposal. The Ashford Town Board, at its Dec. 12 meeting, approved sending comments to the Department of Energy reinterpreting definitions for nuclear waste.

The Department of Energy conducted a public comment period on the interpretation of nuclear waste as set forth in the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 and the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982. DOE asked for feedback from stakeholders on the definitions of certain types of waste to possibly help with better management and off-site disposal practices.

The WNYNSC has a lot of greater-than-class C waste at the site, Councilman John Pfeffer said. The waste was generated commercially, which means it doesn't meet the current definition and cannot be shipped off-site for disposal.

"The only waste that can be called greater-than-class C waste is generated as defense waste, so our waste is considered as greater-than-class C-like, which means it has nowhere to go and it needs to have a place to go," Pfeffer said. "Redefining waste types by composition rather than origin ... it then can go to places like [the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant] or Waste Control Specialists."

Comments submitted to the DOE state the Town of Ashford believes the WNYNSC site is not an appropriate long-term storage site of nuclear waste. The town is arguing under reinterpretation, waste would not be allowed to be disposed at the WNYNSC, making the site not suitable for its own nuclear waste.

"If we were to say let's reinterpret that waste from [another plant] needed a disposal pathway, West Valley would never be the disposal pathway for that waste," Pfeffer said. "So if it's not appropriate for their greater-than-class C waste, it's not appropriate for the greater-than-class C waste that's sitting here already."

# JOURNAL

SPRINGVILLE



Monday, December 24, 2018

In other news:

– Councilwoman Jean Bond reported the annual Christmas tree lighting was well attended by the community and thanked the speakers, groups and everyone involved who helped with the event.

– Highway Superintendent Tim Engels said the town's new 550 is being equipped and will be ready for pickup soon.

– Councilman Richard Bernstein reported National Grid is applying for a grant to replace street lights with LEDs, which would save money within the town's light districts.

The Ashford Town Board's year-end meeting for 2018 will be Thursday, Dec. 27 at 7 p.m. The 2019 organizational meeting will be on Wednesday, Jan. 9 at 7:30 p.m., followed by the regular board meeting, at the Ashford Community Center, 9377 Route 240, in West Valley.

## WVDP Food Drive exceeds its goals



Photo Submitted

### **WVDP employees stand in front of 108,000 pounds of food that was delivered to nine local food pantries.**

More than 108,000 pounds of food was donated to food pantries in the area, courtesy of the West Valley Demonstration Project. The team set a goal of donating 100,000 pounds of food in its annual Food Drive.

"The success of our Food Drive is a direct result of the generosity and kindness of our employees, partners and subcontractors," said Lettie Chilson, WVDP Facility Manager and Food Drive Coordinator. "It demonstrates the positive impact that kindness can have on a community. The WVDP Food Drive helps to improve the quality of life for our neighbors serviced by the local pantries."

On Nov. 16, volunteers were split into two teams to deliver hundreds of cases of food and 360 turkeys to Fellowship Hill Ministries in Springville, Delevan Methodist Church, Catholic Charities Outreach in Franklinville, Saving Grace Outreach in Cattaraugus, Master's Plan in Dayton, United Church of Christ in Ellicottville, Concord Food Pantry, Little Valley Baptist Church and West Valley Food Pantry.

"I am honored to be a part of an event that makes a difference in our community," said Bryan Bower, DOE Project Director. "The amount of food collected year-after-year demonstrates the generosity and kindness of our employees."

The annual tradition started in 1989 and has been held every year since then. In total, the WVDP Food Drive has collected more than 1.8 million pounds of food since its inception.



A former rail bed that runs between two neighborhoods in Orchard Park is planned for a Rails to Trails conversion. Some residents on Curley Drive, left, and Deer Run, right, are opposed to the plan.  
(Derek Gee/Buffalo News)

## The path to a new Southtowns trail looked smooth. Then things got rocky.

**By [Barbara O'Brien](#)** | *Published 6:00 a.m. December 28, 2018*

There was nothing but delight and applause on a simmering August day last summer when the [Erie Cattaraugus Rail Trail](#) group announced a 49-year agreement that would allow the development of a 27-mile-long trail along an old rail line from Orchard Park to Ashford.

But not everyone was smiling.

From upscale subdivisions near the beginning of the trail in Orchard Park, to rural landowners in Aurora down to Ashford, many who live next to the proposed trail are against the project.

# THE BUFFALO NEWS

Opponents may bristle at the NIMBY (Not In My Back Yard) moniker, but for some, it is in their backyard.

Sandy Artim and her husband built a house on Curley Drive in the Independence Heights subdivision 30 years ago.

"When we built the house, we signed up for the tracks," she said. "That's one of the reasons we moved here."

But now that the Buffalo-Pittsburgh Railroad has granted a 49-year lease, with five 10-year extensions built in, to the nonprofit Erie Cattaraugus Rail Trail, Artim is rattled. There used to be about two trains a day going down the tracks. Now, she and neighbors are envisioning trail hikers and bikers peering in their windows and backyard swimming pools.

While trail advocates have been working more than a decade to get the right of way, it is less than six months since the easement agreement was signed. The trail group is in the process of selecting a design firm, which will get into the specifics of each property owner's concerns, said Deborah Fenn, co-chairwoman of the trail board.

"They're mostly concerned, as they should be, with privacy and security," Fenn said of property owners. "Any successful trail takes into consideration people's concerns."

She said the trail group wants to meet with individual property owners, and visit their properties to understand specific concerns.

"It's real important to visit with people one-on-one," she said.

While there are residents who are looking forward to the trail, there also is vehement opposition.

"We're saying it's not the right area to do this," said Carolyn Coppola, who lives on Highbrook Court in Eagle Heights subdivision. "Right now, it's a trail to nowhere."

Four towns came out against the trail 10 years ago: Aurora, Colden, Concord and Ashford. The Town of Orchard Park passed a resolution "strongly" supporting the trail in 2008. But in light of opposition from

residents in the upscale Eagle Heights and Independence Heights neighborhoods, the board is assessing potential impacts.

"The world in 2008 is a lot different than today," Keem said. "When those people bought the property, no one told them there was a rail trail going through there."

The Town Board has asked eight committees or groups in town to assess everything from economics to the impact on development to public safety. It also plans to hold several public forums for proponents and opponents to make presentations and answer questions, poll the community, and adopt a resolution on the board's position in February or March.



*This former rail bed off of Jewett Holmwood Road in Orchard Park is part of the planned Erie Cattaraugus Rail Trail. (Derek Gee/Buffalo News)*

The Erie Cattaraugus trail starts on Bank Street, in the Village of Orchard Park, and travels along the rail line for about 3 miles in the Town of Orchard Park. It ends outside the **West Valley Demonstration Project** in Ashford, in Cattaraugus County.

# THE BUFFALO NEWS

Concord Supervisor Clyde M. Drake said the Town Board is neutral on the project today. When the board came out against it in 2008, there were concerns that property owners along the trail have a voice, and about first responders having proper equipment to handle emergencies on the trails, he said.

He said property owners remain concerned.

"I got more people from out of town saying they were for it. I guess it's nice if it doesn't run through your backyard," Drake said. "It's got to be done right."

Aurora Supervisor James J. Bach said the town won't support the trail until the issues of property owners abutting the trail are mitigated.

"I want to make sure these residents are in the process," Bach said.

The last train went down the tracks in 1996. The area is a "private, secluded, wooded area with no crime now," Coppola said. She said a survey of the neighborhood 10 years ago found 90 percent were opposed to the trail. Preliminary results of an updated survey are showing the same results, she said.

"We're all for preserving land and trails. We feel this is not the right area," Coppola said.

There are two other trails in the town, in the Birdsong and Chestnut Village developments, and other rails to trails in the region and across the country.

"Why does it work in other places?" Erie Cattaraugus Rail Trail board member Howy Holmes said. "There's trails all over, and they work."

Fenn said the trail group wants property owners and municipalities involved in the planning. For instance, many homeowners don't want motorized vehicles and snowmobiles on the trail, and that is the type of input the trail group seeks from communities.



*Rails need to be removed from the trail between Jewett Holmwood Road and Bank Street in Orchard Park. (Derek Gee/Buffalo News)*

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"The pulse we feel now in Orchard Park is snowmobiles will not work," Homes said.

The average width of the right-of-way is 66 feet, although the path itself would be 8 feet to 10 feet wide, Fenn said. The type of surface has yet to be determined, and will be one of the many details to be considered in the design process, she said.

It's an ambitious project that will cost millions of dollars to finish, although a specific cost estimate was not available. There are a number of culverts along the way that need to be repaired, and it could cost \$100,000 to inspect the trestle over Cattaraugus Creek, Fenn said. The group also has to remove the rails from Bank Street to Jewett Holmwood Road.

But the group hopes to be able to mow the grass and have parts of the trail open by next summer. The trail will be open from dawn until dusk.

# THE BUFFALO NEWS

Concern about security and property values are typical, but the Town of Tonawanda has found its rail-to-trail very popular since it opened two years ago.

Crime on the trail has not been a major issue, according to Town Engineer James Jones.

"It's actually made the community stronger, he said. "Neighbors go out and talk to each other."

He said some realtors market a property's proximity to the trail.

Still, issues remain in southern Erie County.

The trail runs right through most of the archery and trap shooting ranges at the West Falls Conservation Society. The club, with more than 300 members, has been around for more than 70 years, and has a number of programs for youth on its more than 50 acres. But if the trail, which is elevated at that point, is developed without changes, it would mean the end of the club, said president Jack Bouquin.

The conservation society is not opposing the trail for now, and is in favor of outdoor recreation, he said. The two sides are talking, said Fenn.

"We are looking for a way for us to still survive and for them to go around us so we can," Bouquin said.

Part of the trail is already open. The 1.7-mile section in Springville, the Pop Warner Rail Trail, opened two years ago after the village secured a right-of-entry agreement with the railroad to allow development of the trail, which cuts a diagonal line across the village.

"We really believe it's a wonderful thing for our community," Fenn said.

## How Air Bearings Moved Tons of Nuclear Waste

01/01/2019 | Randy Manus

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***Heavy loads must often be moved at power plants of all types. Air bearing-based vehicles can make the process safer, faster, and cheaper. Cask relocation at a nuclear waste facility offers one successful example of the process in action.***

Load moving in the nuclear industry comes with unique challenges, particularly when the cargo is high-level radioactive waste (HLW) stored in specially sealed canisters. The common method for moving these types of casks is with wheeled casters and rails. However, the technique is inefficient and costly due to lack of mobility and inherent risks associated with the process. When a load becomes imbalanced, the floor beneath the track can be damaged to the point of halting the entire project until the flooring can be replaced. There is literally no margin for error and certainly no quick turnaround should an incident like this occur.

As an alternative, several facilities have turned to air bearing-based vehicles, instead of inflexible wheeled rollers or forklifts, with considerable success. One 200-acre site in New York successfully relocated nearly 24,000 tons of radioactive waste using air bearing-based vehicles.

### **The Challenge for West Valley Nuclear Waste Facility**

Launched more than 50 years ago, West Valley Nuclear Waste Facility, located 35 miles south of Buffalo, New York, was at one time the only commercial nuclear fuel reprocessing center in the U.S. From 1966 to 1972, the site accepted and reprocessed spent nuclear fuel from the production of plutonium and uranium for weapons. Suppliers of the spent fuel were other commercial and U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) facilities with reactors. According to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, the site also housed a variety of other radioactive wastes and “left behind a legacy of radioactive contamination” when it ceased operations in 1975. Recognizing the mammoth and costly task involved in a cleanup and relocation of HLW, the state appealed and received help from the federal government through a congressional act in 1980.

How mammoth? A vitrification facility, which supports a storage process in which nuclear waste is mixed with chemicals to form molten glass, was constructed on the site in the 1980s. Between 1996 and 2002, 600,000 gallons of liquid and sludge in two underground storage containers were vitrified.

“This had to be the most highly radioactive waste in the DOE in the United States,” said Dan Meess, a chief engineer working at the West Valley Demonstration Project where a \$464 million contract was awarded for Phase I decommissioning activities. Meess has been working on-site for the last six years.

“We made 275 high-level waste stainless steel canisters around 10 feet high, two feet in diameter, filled them with molten glass and let them solidify,” Meess said, adding that caps on the open end of the canister had to be sealed remotely. From 2002 to 2015, the canisters—each weighing 5,000 pounds—sat in racks inside the facility’s Main Plant Process Building, a structure built in the 1960s and slated for demolition.

According to Babcock and Wilcox, the prime contractors at West Valley, each canister has “a minimum 50-year life expectancy.” The canisters had to be relocated, but with no federal waste repository available to accept them, they had to be moved to a specially constructed 16,000-square-foot storage

pad with a three-foot-thick foundation a quarter-mile from the building. West Valley, in effect, became the first site in the U.S. to place HLW into long-term outdoor storage.

The company determined the most efficient way to move the inventory would be to load one cask at a time into a liner capable of housing five canisters. Each cask had a bolted steel and concrete cover to shield the high radiation levels, along with a welded stainless-steel lid for the liner. All of the operations had to be performed by a remote operator. The weight of each cask with the five canisters was 87 tons.

Relocation to the storage pad was expected to take two years given the relatively tight quarters in the building and the limitations of conventional moving apparatus. Reinforced flooring would also have to be installed to handle the excessive weight.

### **Movement Options**

The process for removing just one cask was expected to take up to seven days assuming no other issues developed. Given the time constraints, costs for relocation were anticipated to increase by millions of dollars.

The West Valley Demonstration Project team reviewed the movement and relocation options considering safety, efficiency, and cost-effectiveness. At first, it appeared those options were limited.

“We had an extremely heavy piece of equipment similar to a forklift that was very long with a counterweight that stuck out,” Meess recalled. “It was massive to work in our confined spaces and we would have only been able to do one cask at a time.”

Cranes, often an option for other segments of the power industry, were ruled out at West Valley due to cost and space limitations. Another important consideration was the inability of the facility’s flooring to support the weight if not reinforced or replaced prior to moving major components.

Facilities using rollers on a track to move their heavy equipment must ensure their flooring is not only strong enough to withstand the weight, but perfectly flat. A seemingly innocuous imperfection in the floor could cause load weight to shift, possibly damaging the equipment and flooring. Flexibility during movement is non-existent as the rollers/track are fixed in place. A change necessitated by a turn or in-path obstacles will stop the process until the track can be re-set. Similarly, if a load on rubber wheels comes into contact with a wall or narrow opening, side loads caused by obstruction and subsequent weight shift can cause the wheels to collapse, shutting down the move and substantially increasing the expense.

One more complication was that an average rubber wheel with a contact area of 10 square inches carrying high-tonnage equipment, such as the above described casks or a heat exchanger, could weigh as much as 6,000 pounds per square inch. No standard mezzanine or non-reinforced flooring is built to withstand that much pressure.

Weighing all the pros and cons, engineers at West Valley decided on a feasible and more cost-effective alternative. They chose air bearing-based vehicles (Figure 1), which offered increased load displacement without the downsides associated with other load-moving choices, particularly the excessively high floor loads caused by wheeled casters.



1. **West Valley** Nuclear utilizes a steel pallet with power drive to safely transport 87-ton casks of nuclear waste. Courtesy: AeroGo Inc.

## **Air Casters and Casks**

Air caster technology, regardless of the type of application, is based upon the lifting and floating of heavy loads on a film of air, which alleviates weight and friction. Lightweight air lines can be easily moved to maintain compressed air pressure. This is just one of a number of advancements that convinced the engineers to use air pallets.

Older versions of air lines weighed up to 300 pounds and required two workers to move them. The newer, lighter version weighs only 20 pounds. The air bearing fabric has also been technologically advanced. Fabric reinforcements have increased air bearings' capabilities to accept higher air pressure and move in confined spaces.

The air bearing transport system pallet easily slides under the casks to move them out. Supervisors noted that the casks were picked up only a few inches off the floor, which enabled the remote operator to drive underneath (Figure 2), compensate and balance the load, and resume steering.



2. Safe cask transport in tight clearance. Courtesy: AeroGo Inc.

The advanced technology of programmable logic controllers (PLCs) enabled the process to proceed smoothly. The PLC senses and adjusts for height and weight of the casks, and rotation. Furthermore, it enables omnidirectional movement unavailable with other fixed methods of load transfers. Ultrasonic height control adjusts weight to the casters while the air bearings evenly distribute the load weight thanks to built-in suspension. Yet, the pressure of the load on the pallets throughout the cask movement process measured only 50 pounds per square inch—the same pressure as that of a 200-pound individual.

In addition, the pallets alleviated concerns about uneven balances and side loads should they strike a wall or other obstruction. The pallets easily slid past obstructions and still maintained an even weight distribution, allowing moves to continue without interruption.

Perhaps the most-appreciated benefit from the use of the air casters was the “incredible” time savings compared with other load movement processes, according to Meess.

“We thought we could process only one cask at a time due to the tight quarters,” the chief engineer recalled, “but with the flexibility of the pallets and the load distribution, we could have three casks processed at different stages simultaneously because the pallets could easily move between columns in the building.

“If we wouldn’t have had the air pallets, it would have taken us another year of processing,” Meess said. Relocation of the casks to the storage pad, expected to take at least two years, only took one, which represented a dramatic reduction of downtime. “We saved millions of dollars,” Meess said. “They performed flawlessly.”

### **Project Update**

The **West Valley** Nuclear Project experience illustrates the value of air bearing-based systems for flexible moving and relocation of nuclear waste in a safe and efficient manner. Instead of incurring major expenses for equipment, such as forklift-style trucks or wheeled casters with their inherent risk of seriously damaging flooring due to excessive loads, the project discovered a functional and less-costly alternative. Meess praised the speed, efficiency, and success of the air bearing transport systems.

The contractor has since shared the air bearing technology with two other nuclear locations—the Savannah River Site in South Carolina and Hanford in Washington state, a decommissioned site where the pallets were recently shipped. With the success of West Valley as their model, both locations plan to use air caster technology to remove casks containing tons of HLW. ■

—Randy Manus is senior application specialist with Seattle, Washington-based AeroGo Inc. ([www.aerogo.com](http://www.aerogo.com)).



## West Valley Crews Safely Demolish Vitrification Facility Support Buildings



*Crews knock down an equipment repair shop that supported the site's vitrification operations from 1996 to 2002.*

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**WEST VALLEY, N.Y.** – [EM](#) crews recently demolished two of seven facilities that supported past vitrification operations at the [West Valley Demonstration Project](#) (WVDP).

EM WVDP Director Bryan Bower commended workers with the site's cleanup contractor, CH2M HILL BWXT West Valley (CHBWV), for tearing down the two ancillary structures, together totaling 3,620 square feet in size.

“Once again, the CHBWV team did an excellent job in their pre-planning and execution of this challenging work,” Bower said. “The completion of this work evolution further changes the landscape and footprint of the WVDP site, and is a reminder of the ongoing progress here.”



*An excavator relocates a dust collector removed from one of two ancillary facilities workers recently demolished at the West Valley Demonstration Project.*

The team tore down facilities used to repair and decontaminate equipment supporting the solidification of 600,000 gallons of high-level liquid radioactive waste at the site from 1996 to 2002.

CHBWV President Scott Anderson said his employees used their combined knowledge and expertise to safely complete the demolitions.

"I'm proud of their accomplishment, and in the work they continue to do on this project," Anderson said.

WVDP crews moved their focus to the two ancillary facilities after [successfully demolishing the 10,000-square-foot Vitrification Facility last year](#). That building removal was EM's largest and most complex environmental cleanup achievement at the West Valley site to date.

EM is scheduled to demolish the five remaining Vitrification Facility ancillary structures this year.

*-Contributor: Joseph Pillittere*

## Ashford asks state for help on street lights

Max Borsuk Staff Reporter

The Town of Ashford is asking New York state to help bring street lights to the intersection of Route 219 and Peters Road. The town will be sending a letter to Senator Cathy Young, asking the state to cover the cost of the street lights. Sending the letter was approved at the town's Jan. 9 meeting.

The town received a quote and plot plan from National Grid for the possible installation of two street lights; one at the Route 219 and Peters Road intersection and one before the median on Route 219. The board decided to send a letter and the quote to Young to see what the state can do to help with the intersection and the safety of drivers.

"It should have been in the bid to start with when they built [the median]," Councilman William Heim said. "I would think for sure somebody ought to come up with some money because it is dangerous."

The initial quote for the street lights would cost the taxpayers around \$12,000, but the town is exploring ways to reduce the cost before moving forward. The project is in its early stages and town is working to ensure the lights are installed in the most cost-effective way.

"The board is not comfortable saddling the taxpayers with this cost," Councilman John Pfeffer said. "We are looking for better ways to reduce that cost or find better ways to pay for it so it's not born by the taxpayers of that light district."

The town also looked at saving money within its light districts with the possible replacement of existing street lights with LEDs. The town will participate in National Grid's LED Street Light Conversion Program, after the board approved a resolution.

National Grid found both light districts within the Town of Ashford were eligible for the conversion program and could benefit from the switch to LED street lights. The town would need to provide seed money up front but would receive money back and see additional money in energy conservation savings.



*Journal File Photo*

### **The median at Peters Road.**

The town made its annual appointments and approvals to start the year during the organizational meeting. Appointments by the board included Susan Feldman as the supervisor's bookkeeper, Larry Feldman as code enforcement officer, William King as town historian and budget officer, Angela Ghani as director of the recreation commission, John Pfeffer as deputy supervisor and Keith Butcher as deputy highway superintendent. The town board meeting schedule, the

Springville Journal as the town's official newspaper and salaries for town officials were also approved.

In other board news: – The board approved the building permit schedule. – Cattaraugus County Legislature Joe Boberg attended the meeting and commended the board for work on the proposed solar farm and combined town and county salt shed project. – U.S. Department of Energy Director of the **West Valley Demonstration Project** Brian Bower updated the board on demolition at the site. The utility room and utility room extension are the next buildings set to be demolished. The next Ashford Town Board meeting will be Wednesday, Feb. 13 at 7:30 p.m. at the Ashford Community Center, 9377 Route 240, in West Valley.