

West Valley Crews Mark Two Cleanup Accomplishments



Before and after: The West Valley Demonstration Project site's footprint is dramatically changed following demolition of the former administration building.

WEST VALLEY, N.Y. – [EM](#) recently marked two cleanup accomplishments at its [West Valley Demonstration Project](#) (WVDP) site as crews finished tearing down a former administration building and removed two large steel shield doors from the Vitrification Facility, marking progress toward its demolition.

EM WVDP Site Director Bryan Bower noted that the administration building teardown is a significant milestone even though it wasn't the site's most complex demolition.

"Our crews did an excellent job in their planning and safe execution of this demolition work," Bower said.

Workers took four days to complete the demolition, finishing on Sunday. Work on the building's concrete foundation will continue over the next few days.

Charlie Davis, Town of Ashford supervisor and a West Valley Citizen Task Force member, said completion of the demolition changes the landscape of the site and the community.



“It is a reminder of the hard work that’s being done to clean up the site and reduce its footprint for future generations,” Davis said.

Joe Patti, another task force member, said he believes the demolition signifies an end to an era.

“For more than 50 years, this building could be seen from the road by residents and visitors alike,” he said.

Built in 1963 and expanded in 1983, the nearly 10,000-square-foot structure was the oldest WVDP building. It housed communication and computer systems, along with offices for the New York State Energy Research & Development Authority, DOE, the site’s security, and the site’s prime contractor.

At the Vitrification Facility, the shield doors removed by crews together weighed 160 tons — the equivalent of 80 automobiles.

“The CHBWV team did an excellent job in their execution of this work evolution,” Bower said. “This allows our team to move forward on the final Vitrification Facility demolition activities.”

Jeff Bradford, president of CH2M HILL BWXT West Valley (CHBWV), EM’s cleanup contractor, said his employees used their combined knowledge and expertise to safely complete the challenging work.

“I’m proud of their accomplishment, and in the work they continue to do on this project,” Bradford said.



Crews use equipment to loosen and lower the 100-ton crane maintenance room shield door from the Vitrification Facility.



Heavy equipment lowers the 60-ton transfer tunnel shield door to the ground.

In early July, crews took out a 60-ton door between the Vitrification Cell and a tunnel that provided shielding for the equipment decontamination room. They used a hydraulic hammer to break concrete and rebar holding the 13-inch-thick door in place, and lowered the door to the ground in a large excavator bucket. Workers then used a burning bar to cut the door into three pieces for packaging and shipping for disposal.

Next, crews used the same equipment to remove the 100-ton, 9-inch-thick crane maintenance room shield door located 27 feet above ground. After removing the concrete and steel rebar, workers cut the tracks and cables to release the door's mechanical grips. They lowered the door to the ground using the tip of the hydraulic hammer, and cut the door into four sections for packaging and shipping for disposal.

The Vitrification Facility, one of two such facilities to operate in the U.S., produced 278, 10-foot-tall canisters of vitrified high-level waste from 1996 through 2002.

-Contributor: Joseph Pillittere