



*Lettie Chilson, left, CH2M HILL BWXT West Valley (CHBWV) facility manager, and Janice Williams, CHBWV vice president of regulatory strategy, stand in front of a cleanup project at EM's [West Valley Demonstration Project](#).*

## **West Valley Demonstration Project**

### ***Women Engineers Share Their Career Inspirations***

**WEST VALLEY, N.Y.** – [EM's West Valley Demonstration Project \(WVDP\)](#) marked Engineers Week by highlighting contributions of women engineers with cleanup contractor CH2M HILL BWXT West Valley (CHBWV).

#### **Lettie Chilson**

"As a young girl growing up on a dairy farm, engineering was not on the early list of career choices, even though I loved math, science, and solving problems," CHBWV Facility Manager Lettie Chilson said. "I was the first child to go to college and had a wonderful support system, but little experience in choosing a profession."

Chilson said she followed the advice of her guidance counselor and attended the Rochester Institute of Technology, where she obtained a degree in industrial engineering.

"What I enjoy most about engineering at West Valley is the opportunity to work with other talented team members to solve project challenges," Chilson said. "When I started at [West Valley](#), I told my manager that this job was fun and when I didn't find it fun anymore, I would look elsewhere. I am still having fun, 27 years later."



Chilson supports science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) programs for girls through the Girl Scouts and the Society of Women Engineers.

### **Janice Williams**

"I was a math and physics whiz kid, so naturally being an engineer should have been something someone could have mentioned to me," said Janice Williams, CHBWV vice president of regulatory strategy. "Growing up in Woodstock, New York, with a population of 6,000, I knew I had to attend college."

Williams said she decided to become an engineer after completing several interesting courses in her first year at St. Lawrence University in upstate New York. She transferred to Colorado School of Mines, an engineering school, where she became the first-ever petroleum engineer from Woodstock.

"Everyone's personality traits are what give this site diversity and excellence," Williams said. "The work we do is complex and difficult, and there is always a new recommendation to explore or a challenge to meet. Our engineers are always there to exceed expectations, and I get to be a part of that."



*Pam Walters, left, CH2M HILL BWXT West Valley (CHBWV) operations manager, and Cheryl Wozniak, CHBWV safety engineer, stand near a structure scheduled for demolition at EM's **West Valley Demonstration Project**.*



### **Pam Walters**

“The only subjects I found interesting in high school were math and science, so I decided to major in chemical engineering as it combined both subject matters,” CHBWV Operations Manager Pam Walters said. “There are always new and exciting challenges at **West Valley**. Even though my career path has led to a more operations-oriented direction than an engineering one, I still get to work with our engineers in developing and implementing new and creative ways to address these challenges.”

### **Cheryl Wozniak**

“I had my heart set on becoming an international lawyer until my uncle took me to work with him one day to see what happens at the local General Motors engine plant,” CHBWV Safety Engineer Cheryl Wozniak said. “I was amazed at the effort it took to create an engine from design to build. It was this experience that encouraged me to become an engineer, especially when seeing it firsthand triggered my brain in ways I never knew possible.”

Wozniak said **West Valley** is a unique place to work and each day poses a new challenge. She is inspired by the ideas her coworkers come up with to accomplish goals.

“The most interesting aspect of my job is to take those ideas and determine how the process can be completed safely and compliantly,” she said.

*-Contributor: Joseph Pillittere*