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William “Ike” White Outlines DOE-EM Strategic Vision at Waste Management Symposia In Phoenix



Office of Environmental Management senior adviser Ike White outlined the Department of Energy’s strategic vision for environmental cleanup to more than 2,000 attendees at the Waste Management Symposia 2020. Photo by James Tanner/DOE-EM

DOE-EM NEWS

The Department of Energy Office of Environmental Management ([EM](#)) cleanup accomplishments in recent years have now set the stage for dramatic progress in the coming decade, senior adviser William “Ike” White said Monday at the [Waste Management Symposia 2020](#) in Phoenix, Ariz.

Speaking to more than 2,000 attendees, White outlined the Department of Energy’s [strategic vision](#) for environmental cleanup, saying the program is poised for “step change” that will build on its record of successes, with significant achievements in sight as early as this year.



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During its first 30 years, EM has completed [cleanup at 91 out of 107 sites](#) and has successfully shrunk the footprint of the EM mission by 90 percent.

“That is a tremendous feat,” said White, who leads the cleanup program as senior adviser for environmental management to the Under Secretary for Science. “EM’s successes have been individually impactful at a site level.

“But collectively they have set the stage for significant progress in 2020 and throughout the new decade,” he said.

White was a plenary speaker at the symposia, the nation’s leading gathering of government, international and industry experts on waste management.

White told the audience that by the time they convene for their 2030 conference, skylines will have changed at a number of EM sites due to successful demolitions, and waste inventories will have been reduced considerably.

As soon as this year, the Salt Waste Processing Facility will come on-line at the [Savannah River Site](#), as well as the Integrated Waste Treatment Unit at the [Idaho Site](#), he said. At [Hanford](#), construction supporting the Direct Feed Low Activity Waste treatment system is expected to be completed, moving those facilities closer to commissioning.

EM this year also will begin construction of a new utility shaft at the [Waste Isolation Pilot Plant](#) in New Mexico that will provide added ventilation controls and greater flexibility for future mining operations. By the end of 2023, the shaft as well as a new Safety Significant Confinement Ventilation System will be completed.

White said 2020 “will serve as a milestone year for EM and the [Department](#), an inflection point as we kick off a decade of significant progress across the program.”

By 2030, White said, most of the tank waste at the Savannah River Site will have been processed. Likewise, EM will be set to complete treatment of tank waste at the Idaho site by the end of 2028, and DFLAW waste treatment at Hanford will have been underway for more than five years.

White said that elsewhere by 2030:

- Two of the three massive uranium enrichment process buildings at the [Portsmouth](#) site “will be gone.”
- Legacy cleanup activities will be completed at the [Nevada National Security Site](#).
- Demolition of the former Main Plant Process Building at the [West Valley Demonstration Project](#) will be finished.
- Demolition will be completed of the remaining [DOE](#)-owned buildings at the [Energy Technology Engineering Center](#) (ETEC) in Ventura County, California.



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Beyond achievements in the field, White said EM will continue to encourage innovation and improved performance through the “end state contracting” initiative that provides the ability to group work into specific task orders to provide more accurate cost and schedule targets as well as motivate contractors to improve their performance.

EM also plans to ramp up recruitment efforts to replenish a workforce that faces a significant number of retirements in the next few years.

“Achieving our mission relies on having the right talent in the pipeline to encourage innovation and efficiency in every project we start and finish.” White said. “With the EM program anticipated to continue through 2070 we are facing a talent crunch...and an urgent need to ensure knowledge transfer and workforce development for the decade ahead.”

White said planned accomplishments over the next decade will not only reduce environmental risks and liability but also will demonstrate that EM has the ability to tackle the challenge.

The achievements “help us sustain, and grow, the trust and support we need from our stakeholders, including those on Capitol Hill, to perform our mission,” he said.

“We ask you to work with us to continue to innovate and improve performance across the complex,” White told the audience. “I am excited for the future of EM. And I am excited by what we will accomplish together.”