

Reed tours West Valley Demonstration Project site

By RICK MILLER

WEST VALLEY — U.S. Rep. Tom Reed visited the **West Valley Demonstration Project** Thursday to tour the facility, review the latest developments on the nuclear cleanup efforts and discuss funding increases for the program.

The House of Representatives' recent appropriations bill allocated \$88 million for the **West Valley** cleanup program, a nearly \$13 million increase from the previous fiscal year. Reed has been a long-time advocate for the cleanup effort.

The Nuclear Fuel Services plant, which processed spent nuclear fuel rods to reclaim uranium for further use, operated from 1966 to 1972. However, the effort generated hundreds of thousands of gallons of nuclear wastes and left a contaminated main plant building. That structure awaits open air demolition later this year.

A score of other buildings including the vitrification building — where liquid waste was turned into glass for future off-site burial — have already been demolished and removed from the site. There are 275 steel casks filled with radioactive glass stored in concrete containers that remain at the site. Efforts to construct a national nuclear waste repository over the past 40 years have generally stalled.

Last year, Reed successfully led the reauthorization of the program for the first time in 35 years. That reauthorization delivered \$75 million a year to the project and was signed by President Trump in December.

“Supporting the **West Valley Demonstration Project** and its efforts to safely address nuclear waste in the region has long been a top priority of mine,” Reed said. “It is only fair to our local communities that the project receives all the resources it needs to carry out its mission,” he added.

“The Department of Energy is proud of the progress that continues to be made at the **West Valley Demonstration Project**,” said Under Secretary for Science Paul Dabbar, who toured the site with Reed.

“The health and safety of the people in Western New York remains a top priority for the Department and it is important that our country utilize the resources needed to advance our cleanup efforts,” Dabbar said.