

Nuclear power: Recycling a bad idea



MIKE WATSON IMAGES



Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Plant is being decommissioned. recorder file photo

January 26, 2020

By DEB KATZ

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Nuclear industry advocates always seem to come up with grand ideas that nuclear power will “solve” our energy problems. Now it’s a solution to climate change. Their solutions always downplay any problems with high-level nuclear waste claiming that nuclear power is safe and finding a solution for its toxic waste is easy. If it’s so easy, why don’t they have a workable solution? Is it really just peoples’ unreasonable fears that obstruct the industry and the federal government from creating a final solution?

Originally we were told that there was no waste problem because the waste would be reprocessed and used again in bombs and new “breeder” reactors. That idea failed! Miserably! The only reprocessing facility for commercial nuclear waste that ever existed was **West Valley** in upstate New York and it shuttered after only five years because it contaminated the land and water around it with radiation. It remains a Superfund site to this day. Without the technology to safely reprocess it, nuclear fuel waste remains in fuel pools and dry storage at reactor sites all over the country.

Because of the threat of nuclear proliferation, where the waste is stolen and used as bomb material by evil forces, President Jimmy Carter ended the research on reprocessing and breeder reactors. Suddenly there was a “waste problem.” Carter commissioned a study to determine the best way to deal with the problem. The level of naivety, arrogance and thoughtlessness is remarkable. Some of the ideas included sending the waste into space, but a payload accident could contaminate the planet; placing the waste in a hole in Antarctica or Greenland ice and letting it melt down into the ocean bed was considered, but the waste would contaminate the ocean. Carter’s commission finally settled on deep geological burial in a hole or an abandoned mine.

All this was codified under the 1982 Nuclear Waste Policy Act (NWPA). Once established, investigations began to determine the best dump site/s. But every state that was identified as a potential site for a repository threatened to sue. Instituting the NWPA was in crisis. The NWPA was amended and Congress targeted Yucca Mountain because Nevada had little political clout at the time.

After spending \$14 billion of taxpayer money developing Yucca Mountain, it failed to meet the necessary criteria for safe isolation of the deadly material. With the failure of the federal government and the nuclear industry to establish Yucca Mountain as the national repository for nuclear waste, nuclear corporations were forced to establish onsite storage at their operating and shuttered reactor sites. Six out of nine reactors in New England have shuttered due to significant public opposition and their inability to compete with gas and renewables. These six sites are in varying degrees of cleanup. Without a “solution” as to dealing with the nuclear waste, these sites have devolved into ad hoc nuclear waste dumps. All have created onsite storage for their high level waste. It costs a lot to store the waste onsite — at least \$5 million out of pocket for each year. This waste could remain onsite for decades if not centuries. So costs could really add up for corporations without any revenue. Naivety, arrogance, and thoughtlessness add up to a lot of money!

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With waste piling up at shuttered reactor sites throughout the country, the industry has a perception problem. This is not a favorable image for an industry trying to reinvent itself as the answer to global warming. So what's the industry's answer? It wants to create "interim storage" dump sites in west Texas and New Mexico in working poor, Hispanic communities to make this problem disappear. These sites don't have to meet the strict environmental standards that sunk Yucca Mountain— i.e., isolation from the environment for 1,000 years and isolation from groundwater for 10,000 years.

This "interim storage" initiative is a statement of the failure of the nuclear industry and the federal government to address the most toxic waste we have ever created. We don't need more nukes; we don't need half baked "solutions". We need a commitment to put our best minds to solve this thorny problem. What is needed is a scientifically sound and environmentally just solution, not more magic or wish fulfillment. A qualified "panel" must be established and funded to create the standards required to meet the health and safety of the public and the planet, not the profit-driven, short-sighted monetary bottom line of a moribund industry.

Deb Katz is the executive director of the Citizens Awareness Network, which was founded locally in 1991 and has offices in Shelburne Falls and Rowe. Here's a link to our website www.nukebusters.org.

January 30, 2020

WVDP receives recognition from American Heart Assoc.

The Department of Energy Office of Environmental Management's prime contractor at the West Valley Demonstration Project, CH2M HILL BWXT West Valley (CHBWV), recently received Silver Level recognition from the American Heart Association for taking significant steps to build a culture of health in the workplace.

The American Heart Association's Workplace Health Achievement Index ("Index") is a self-assessment scorecard that measures the comprehensiveness and quality of a company's workplace health program, and the overall heart health of its employees.

AHA Director of Development, Michelle Mason, congratulated CHBWV for earning this health achievement recognition. "We know that good health is good business and you have reached an important milestone in building a culture of workplace health," she said.

The American Heart Association created the Index with its CEO Roundtable members, a leadership collaborative of more than 40 CEOs from some of America's largest companies who are committed to applying evidence-based approaches to improve their employees' overall health.

The Index uses science-based best practices to evaluate the overall quality and comprehensiveness of their workplace health programs. A unique feature of the Index is that it calculates an average heart health score for employees of participating companies that securely submit aggregate health data.

"The Index is an important scientific-based tool that has helped us to further improve workplace health for our employees," Rachel Charette, Chairperson – CHBWV Health and Wellness Committee, said. "Each year we continue to add more programs and fun activities that contribute to the health of our employees."

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Companies receive benchmarking reports, which allow them to identify potential areas of improvement so that they can advance their annual performance and recognition in the Index and help their workforce move toward ideal heart health. The framework of the Index was built so that organizations would continue to improve the health of their workplace and their workforce from one year to the next.

Recognition and awards are based on a company's score from completing the American Heart Association's Workplace Health Achievement Index. The Index remains available to organizations year-round to be used as a reference for making improvements in health-related practices and policies. The goal is to drive organizational improvements and improve the heart health of employees.

CHBWV receives Silver Level Recognition from American Heart Association



Photo provided

The CHBWV Wellness Committee at the **WVDP** submitted the application to the American Heart Association as part of their ongoing efforts to improve workplace health. Front Row, from left: John Rendall, CHBWV Deputy General Manager and Wellness Committee; Rachel Charette, Wellness Committee Chair; Michelle Mason, American Heart Association and Heather Lafferty, Wellness Committee. Back Row, from left: Scott Anderson, CHBWV President and Jennifer Bacon, CHBWV Safety Department. Committee members absent from the photo: Lettie Chilson, Tommy Fontaine and Joe Wolniewicz.

The Department of Energy Office of Environmental Management's prime contractor at the **West Valley Demonstration Project**, CH2M HILL BWXT West Valley, recently received Silver Level recognition from the American Heart Association for taking significant steps to build a culture of health in the workplace. The American Heart

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Peterborough letter: Take a look at what happened in West Valley, N.Y.

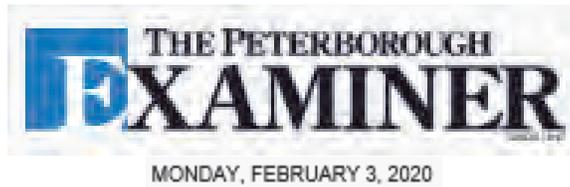
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Local residents opposed to the nuclear firm BWXT's application to do uranium pelleting in Peterborough protest outside BWXT on Monaghan Road on Saturday, Jan. 11, 2020 in Peterborough, Ont. Citizens Against Radioactive Neighbourhoods (CARN) organized the protest. - CLIFFORD SKARSTEDT , Examiner file photo

It is disturbing that only Coun. Dean Pappas seems to be concerned about the nuclear license being sought by the fox overlooking the General Electric henhouse. Clearly no one in this area is familiar with the horror stories that abound both in the U.S. and elsewhere in relation to nuclear use. One that occupied many years of my life was the saga of **West Valley, N.Y.**

Here in the beautiful rural/farming area East of Lake Erie the Getty Oil Company started a small, private reprocessing facility for nuclear waste in the 1960s. This seemed like a good idea since at that time all the



brilliant minds that had found out how to harness the atom had not been able to figure out how to clean up toxic wastes generated by the process of fissioning uranium.

Actually, we are now some 75 years into the atomic age and this problem still exists and, indeed, is edging closer to critical with the waste products of Ontario's nuclear reactors piling up on-site because no one wants to risk burying them where they could leach into our water supply, such as Lake Huron.

Just one of the high-level wastes, plutonium, created by the fission process, has a half-life of a quarter million years. At the **West Valley** installation plutonium was being stored in a garden shed behind an eight-foot wire fence, easy access for terrorists of that era who could also find simple instructions on how to make a radioactive bomb in science books.

Also, this plant was leaking radioactivity from low-level wastes into the tributary of a major stream that runs into Lake Erie just above the water intake for the City of Buffalo's drinking water. Fortunately, the U.S. regulator responded to public alarm over this situation by declining to renew Getty's license.

However, I came to Canada before the costly cleanup of this site ended up, I believe, stuck on the taxpayers of New York state. There was never an explanation of the increased level of miscarriages and other possible effects of this careless handling of dangerous materials.

So, to those opposing the permission to manufacture uranium pellets in Peterborough, and those who are clearly unaware of the threat this proposal could pose, I suggest you research **West Valley** so you can judge for yourselves the level of truth in nuclear proposals.

Joan Reeves, Water Street



Ike White Outlines EM Vision for 2020

EM plans a wide range of accomplishments in 2020, including some that have been years in the making and that promise to significantly advance the cleanup mission, [EM Senior Advisor Ike White](#) told a key stakeholder audience on Jan. 31.

In remarks to the Energy Communities Alliance (ECA), White said major liquid waste treatment facilities at the [Savannah River](#) and [Idaho](#) sites are expected to start operations, and the completion of construction supporting [Direct Feed Low-Activity Waste](#) (DFLAW) treatment at [Hanford](#) puts that project only a short distance away from startup.

“This year will see a leap forward in our ability to tackle our largest and one of the most challenging environmental risks — tank waste — with the start of the [Salt Waste Processing Facility](#) at Savannah River and the [Integrated Waste Treatment Unit](#) at Idaho,” White said. “And at Hanford, we will complete construction and continue moving forward with commissioning on DFLAW. This puts the start of actual tank waste treatment at Hanford within reach in just a few years.

“Individually, these capabilities will ramp up our ability to tackle tank waste,” he said. “Collectively, they represent a fundamental shift for EM as we complete these long-running construction projects and focus on waste treatment operations.

“I’ve been part of the [DOE](#) enterprise for nearly three decades and I can’t recall the last time any part of DOE stood up such an impressive collection of operational capability in relatively short order,” he said.



EM Senior Advisor Ike White delivers remarks to the annual conference of the Energy Communities Alliance.

White, senior advisor to the [Under Secretary for Science](#) overseeing EM, delivered his remarks to the annual conference of ECA, the organization of local governments adjacent to or impacted by DOE activities.



White told the stakeholders EM plans important progress at a number of cleanup sites, including:

- Construction will begin this year on a new utility shaft at the [Waste Isolation Pilot Plant](#) to provide added ventilation and allow greater flexibility for mining operations.
- [Oak Ridge](#) will realize the [Vision 2020](#) goal of completing core cleanup at the [East Tennessee Technology Park](#).
- Demolition will be completed at Hanford's iconic [Plutonium Finishing Plant](#), which produced two-thirds of the plutonium metal used in the U.S. nuclear stockpile.
- Demolition will begin on Building X-326, the first of three massive former uranium enrichment process buildings at the [Portsmouth Site](#).
- Cleanup of the [Separations Process Research Unit](#) site will be declared complete and the area returned to the DOE [Office of Naval Reactors](#).
- Seventy locations where the EM Nevada Program completed successful cleanup, including on the [Tonopah Test Range](#), will be transferred to DOE's [Office of Legacy Management](#) for long-term stewardship.
- Demolition will begin on the Main Plant Processing Building at the [West Valley Demonstration Project](#) in New York state, the last remaining major facility on that site.
- Also in New York, the last cleanup project at the [Brookhaven National Laboratory](#) will be completed with the demolition of a former reactor stack.

White said the planned accomplishments not only will reduce environmental risks significantly but also demonstrate EM's ability to maintain progress, strengthening the case for resources to continue the mission.

"Such results will continue to demonstrate that the government is able to fulfill its commitments to your communities that played such an important role in the security and prosperity of our entire country," he told the audience.

"Not only will 2020 serve as a milestone year for EM and the Department, but I believe it will start off a decade of significant progress across the program," White said. "I'm excited about what is to come, and what we will be able to achieve with the talented and dedicated men and women who work throughout the EM program, and the support of the communities we call home."



EM Prime Contractors Surpass Fiscal 2019 Small Business Goals



Bechtel National, Inc. participated in the Tri-Cities Regional Chamber of Commerce 2nd Annual Diversity Summit to engage with small business owners about opportunities working with the EM Hanford Waste Treatment and Immobilization Plant. Bechtel's Jessica Louderback, left, human resources specialist, and Karen Maynes, background, subcontractor specialist, spoke with attendees prior to the summit luncheon.

A number of prime cleanup contractors across the [EM](#) complex exceeded annual goals for subcontracting with small businesses in the fiscal year ending Sept. 30, 2019.

Contractors at the [Hanford](#), [Savannah River](#), [Oak Ridge](#), [Idaho](#), [Portsmouth](#), [Paducah](#), and [West Valley Demonstration Project](#) sites went beyond their socioeconomic business goals for small business subcontracting. According to the U.S. Small Business Administration, set-asides help small



businesses compete for and win federal contracts. Contracts can be set aside for small businesses in certification programs and socioeconomic categories such as women and veteran owned businesses, and HUBZone (Historically Underutilized Business Zones) programs.



CH2M HILL Plateau Remediation Company contracted with Polestar Technical Services, a woman-owned small business, to help design interim safe storage of reactors at Hanford's 100-K Area and other special projects. From left are Polestar's Kathy Miller, managing director; Patty Bailey, project operations director; and Bill Bailey, engineering and technical programs director.

West Valley Demonstration Project (WVDP)

Cleanup contractor CH2M HILL BWXT West Valley's small business subcontracting total was just over \$27 million, outpacing the contractor's 55-percent small business subcontracting goal by 12 percent.



*Radiation technicians from area small business InTomes survey of the exposed exterior wall of the Main Plant Process Building at EM's **West Valley Demonstration Project** Site after the demolition of the Main Plant Office Building.*

“Exceeding our small business goals demonstrates **WVDP**’s commitment to provide opportunities for local companies to assist in our cleanup efforts, while gaining experience working with a federal agency,” EM WVDP Director Bryan Bower said. “It is this experience that can help them grow their business in other federal agencies as well as with state, county, and local governments.”

The site also achieved \$809,000 in fiscal 2019 savings by using procurement tools provided by the Supply Chain Management Center, a DOE program that helps EM contractors find better prices for goods and services, and makes the buying process easier, more efficient, and more effective.

-Contributors: Ashley Dernberger, Dylan Nichols, Joseph Pillittere, David Sheeley, Erik Simpson, DT Townsend, Staci West, Ben Williams

Public hears update on Scoby Dam project in Springville

Max Borsuk

SPRINGVILLE – In order to try and help with fish habitats in Cattaraugus Creek, the United States Army Corps of Engineers held a public meeting on Jan. 29 at the Concord Town Hall to discuss upcoming work at the Scoby Dam in Springville through the Great Lakes Fishery Ecosystem Restoration project.



Project Manager Geoffrey Hintz speaks to the crowd at the public meeting for the Scoby Dam project.

Partnering with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and Erie County, the project's main goal is to restore ecological connectivity between the upper and lower Cattaraugus Creek watersheds while also maintaining a barrier to invasive sea lamprey. The project would lower the spillway of the dam to approximately 13 feet and install a fish ladder with trap and sort capability to allow steelhead and other fish species to access upstream parts of Cattaraugus Creek.

Representatives from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, DEC and others involved in the project were in attendance at the public meeting to discuss the design of the project, timeline moving forward and answer questions from the community. Village of Springville Mayor William Krebs also spoke at the meeting about the project and its importance to Springville, tourism and helping the Cattaraugus Creek.

"The Village of Springville has been interested in this project since ... around 2013. We believe it's in the best interest of Springville for tourism and for historical reasons," Krebs said. "For us in the Southern Tier and in northern Cattaraugus County, this is a real destination for fishing."

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With the Scoby Dam splitting the Cattaraugus Creek watershed, many fish and other aquatic species are forced to live in lower quality habitats downstream of the dam and isolated from high quality habitats in the upper watershed, according to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The fish ladder would help maximize passage of the aquatic species and help reconnect approximately 572 miles of tributary stream in the upper watershed with the lower watershed and Lake Erie.



The Scoby Dam in Springville.

“We’ve put a lot of effort into this, I think we got a great project going forward, we got great partners and our interest is to make this a better thing for the community,” Project Manager Geoffrey Hintz said.

Community members in attendance voiced their opinions and questions at the end of the public presentations. One concern brought up by the community that was discussed at the public meeting was the former **Western New York Nuclear Service Center upstream in West Valley** and the possibility of nuclear contamination within sediment in the creek. Geologist with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers William Frederick spoke to those concerns, stating sampling and testing has been done with the sediment in Cattaraugus Creek and the levels of contamination are within or below safe levels and is safe for the public.

Design for the project is set to be completed by March, with construction to be completed by Dec. 2021.

EM site completes deactivation of fuel receiving and storage facility



Photo provided

An operator, inside the fuel receiving and storage facility at the **West Valley Demonstration Project**, pumps a fogging agent inside a pipe to fix suspected contamination. This work was part of the deactivation of the FRS, along with the removal of asbestos-containing material.

A deactivation and decommissioning crew recently completed the safe removal of asbestos-containing material from inside the fuel receiving and storage facility. The piping and insulation inside the building contained ACM, which needed to be removed in preparation for future demolition. A total of 700 linear feet of piping was removed from the FRS over a period of five months, and the job was completed safely and compliantly. The FRS was used from 1965-1972 to receive and store spent nuclear fuel before it was reprocessed to recover reusable plutonium and uranium.

“This team used their combined knowledge and lessons learned from previous ACM work activities to safely complete this project,” DOE-**WVDP** Federal Project Director Steve Bousquet said. “The safe and compliant disposition of asbestos-containing material is another important step in the progress towards the future demolition of the FRS.” D&D Crew Foreman Bill Freaney, commended his crew for their hard work and dedication to safety during the project.

“Working with asbestos-containing material is the most physically-challenging work at the site when you include radiological and industrial hazards, layers of protective clothing and limited mobility. This crew used lessons learned to enhance safety, improve efficiency and reduce exposure to job-related hazards. They put their collective knowledge into practice.”

February 7, 2020

Cattaraugus County IDA proposes new P.I.L.O.T. for solar farm projects



Members of the Cattaraugus County Industrial Development Agency debate how to value tax breaks for solar farms at a meeting in Ellicottville on Thursday.

Rick Miller

ELLCOTTVILLE — The Cattaraugus County Industrial Development Agency on Thursday backed away from an initial tax break for solar farms proposed in December.

Members of the IDA board of directors had discussed a payment in lieu of taxes (P.I.L.O.T.) of \$15,000 per megawatt on Dec. 10.

The IDA's current P.I.L.O.T. for solar facilities is \$5,000 per megawatt. Last June the IDA enacted a six-month moratorium on accepting new applications for solar farms.

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Corey Wiktor, IDA executive director, told board members his research showed area counties with lower P.I.L.O.T.s for solar farms, developers were balking at the higher agreements, and towns expecting solar projects are afraid higher IDA rates will kill their projects.

The three BQ Energy solar projects in the city of Olean received \$5,000 P.I.L.O.T.s. For each megawatt the solar facility is capable of producing, the city, Olean school district and Cattaraugus County would split \$5,000.

Wiktor told the board solar firms are pitching a half-dozen or more solar farms with 45 megawatts in Portville, Allegany, Franklinville, Machias and Dayton. There are other projects — including in the town of Great Valley — which have not yet approached the IDA.

The county IDA isn't looking for any of the massive solar farms being proposed in other areas of the region.

"Our sweet spot is from 2 to 20 megawatts," Wiktor explained.

At 20 megawatts, **West Valley Solar LLC, formed by BQ Energy**, is the largest one approved by the IDA. The IDA also approved a project in Portville and additional projects have been proposed on Haskell Road there.

County Legislator Joseph Snyder, who sits on the IDA board, wondered if the IDA should be enabling productive farmland to be used for solar farms.

Many of the solar farms are located on brownfields that have been cleaned up, others are on farmland and the **West Valley solar project** is on land controlled by the **New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA)**.

In most cases, the land the solar farm sits on remains taxable even while the company pays a P.I.L.O.T. on the equipment that generates electricity, IDA attorney George Cregg Jr. said.

Pressing to revise downward the proposed \$15,000 P.I.L.O.T., Wiktor said some town officials contacted him to express concern that solar projects in the hopper and ready to submit applications to the IDA "may not occur."

Wiktor added: "I would ask the board for discussion to back away from \$15,000. We're seeing it in the marketplace" and in research by the IDA.

Wiktor said NYSERDA recommends a P.I.L.O.T of less than half what the IDA currently charges. "And they are trying to encourage alternative energy."

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Developers who spoke recently with Wikor about the proposed \$15,000 per megawatt P.I.L.O.T. pointed out it is among the highest in the state. "They said the market is much lower," he said.

IDA Chairman Thomas Buffamante said the board initially agreed to "see what the market would bear."

According to Wiktor, the \$15,000 per megawatt P.I.L.O.T. looks like more than developers will bear — especially when surrounding counties already have lower rates.

Snyder said "outside investors using our infrastructure" will be making profits from these developments, while providing no permanent jobs or otherwise contributing to the community.

Buffamante said the solar farms give municipalities an opportunity to increase revenues through the P.I.L.O.T.s. "It's more than they are contributing now which is zero," he said of some of the solar sites. There are also provisions for community host agreements.

In December, the IDA board had considered two P.I.L.O.T. rates: The \$15,000 level per megawatt and a \$10,000 level for developers who sweetened the local community host plan.

BQ Energy, for example, will make electricity discounts available for St. Bonaventure University, Olean City government and Olean General Hospital as part of the host agreement for Solean 1 and 2 and Homeridae.

Wiktor said that at the \$15,000 per megawatt P.I.L.O.T. level "some of these projects are just not going to happen." Other IDAs P.I.L.O.T.s are generally in the \$3,000 to \$7,000 range. "A few (solar developers) will submit applications soon."

Board member Michael Wilmer argued for a better P.I.L.O.T. based on the IDA agreeing to increase the P.I.L.O.T. period from 15 years to 25 years. "It adds value to the developer," he explained.

Snyder said he would prefer the \$15,000 per megawatt P.I.L.O.T. and did not think it was unreasonable given all the subsidies the solar industry receives and how aggressively Gov. Cuomo is pushing alternate energy projects.

"We know we're a little high," said Brent Driscoll of the IDA board. "They (developers) must be making money somehow."

Wiktor said the IDA wouldn't grant tax breaks to a project that did not enjoy community support. A letter from a town board is required before a project is granted tax breaks.

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After wrangling back and forth a little, the IDA settled on a tiered P.I.L.O.T. proposal based on megawatts:

0-4.9 megawatts — \$6,000 per megawatt.

5-9.9 megawatts — \$7,500 per megawatt.

10-24.9 megawatts — \$9,000 per megawatt.

Attorney Cregg will prepare the amendments to the solar energy facilities P.I.L.O.T. resolution and circulate them to IDA board members prior to scheduling public hearings in Olean and Ellicottville at a date to be determined.

In addition to the proposed P.I.L.O.T. amounts, the IDA agreed to include in the resolution:

- A 2% annual escalation in the P.I.L.O.T. payments
- Approval by the host community.
- A 25-year P.I.L.O.T. term.

Underlying land would remain subject to assessment and taxation.

Municipalities and solar developers will also be notified of the changes in the proposed solar P.I.L.O.T. and invited to comment, Wiktor said.

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Springville dam project on track but with some hesitation from the community



Photo by Kellen M. Quigley

Several dozen members of the Springville community and from across Western New York gathered Jan. 29 in the Concord Town Hall for a meeting concerning the proposed project to lower Scoby Dam and add a fish ladder.

By Kellen M. Quigley

The proposed project to lower Scoby Dam on the Cattaraugus Creek is moving forward with plans by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, but not without some hesitation by the people who live, work and play nearby.

Several dozen Springville area residents and those concerned about such a project's impact gathered Jan. 29 in the Concord Town Hall for a presentation by several officials involved in the development, environmental impact and health risk aspects of lowering the dam.

Project Manager Geoffrey Hintz with the Corps of Engineers said they have spent the past 10 years putting the project together with preliminary studies and planning.

Pending state and federal approval, the project is expected to go out to bid in August, Hintz said, with construction beginning that fall. If all goes according to plan, he said the project could be done by late 2021 or early 2022.

Hintz said a major concern in the community is the impact of possible nuclear contamination from **West Valley Development Project** upstream, which was previously tested about a decade ago.

"The determination at the time was there is no contamination of concern in the creek," he said. "The DEC partners said the work that we've done isn't sufficient and we want to do more samples down to the bottom of the impoundment and test that for contamination."

Geologist Bill Frederick with the Corps of Engineers explained the various testing processes and analyses performed in the creek between the **West Valley plant** ceased operation and the preparations for the project. The most recent samples showed little to no difference in radiation amounts in the water compared to above **West Valley**, all of which were below levels of concern.

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"The (Nuclear Regulatory Commission) essentially told us the sediment is a low-risk to no-risk profile for the radionuclide," Frederick said. "The 2018 sampling verified what we determined in 2012 and 2015, that there was no added risk to a construction worker, a recreational user or a farmer from sediments behind the dam."

Hints said other concerns are how the project is going to affect fishing, properties downstream, ice jams, and flooding.

"We've evaluated that over these years, we have detailed studies completed and the answer is there is no negative impact from changing that structure that is going to affect the properties downstream," he said.

Biologist James Markham with the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation discussed the impact the dam would have for fisheries and fish passage on the creek. He said the DEC presented the plan last year for public comment and received 53 replies.

"That was a lot more than I thought we were going to get from that," he said. "Thirty-eight of those conveyed special concerns or recommendations, and we take those very seriously. Going through those 38 comments really boiled down to 17 general themes."

Markham said many of the themes were already addressed in the plan or had to be included, improved upon or added upon. Among those themes was keeping as much of the ecosystem as possible the same while allowing fish passage for various species from the lower to upper creek.

"Our management goal in the plan is to manage upper Cattaraugus Creek and its tributaries as a high-quality, year-round sports fishery," he said. "Some of the best catch rates we have in Lake Erie and let alone all of the Great Lakes come right from this creek."

Springville Mayor Bill Krebs said the village has been interested in the project since an initial meeting in 2013, adding that it's in the best interest of the Springville area for tourism and historical reasons.

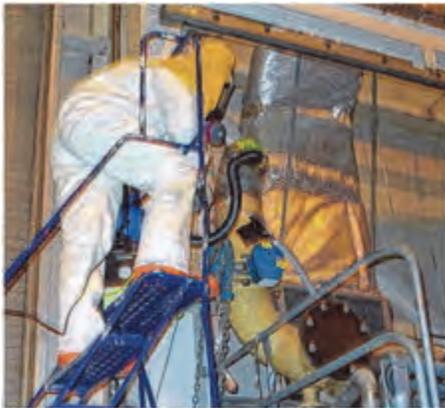
Although the dam ceased producing electricity for the village in the late 1980s and the site was taken over by the county for a park in 1997, Krebs said Springville is still very emotionally connected to the dam.

Krebs said he's talked with a group from New York City who comes to Springville every year for fishing in the creek. He said the creek is also used for whitewater canoeing and rafting.

"There is a lot of visitors here looking for fun things to do in outdoor recreation," he said. "This is an important dam and important 30-acre site for the village and for Concord."

The existing dam was completed in 1924. It is roughly halfway up the 70-mile-long creek.

EM site completes deactivation of former fuel receiving, storage facility



Contributed photos

An operator, inside the Fuel Receiving and Storage (FRS) facility at the **West Valley Demonstration Project**, pumps a fogging agent inside a pipe to fix suspected contamination; Engineers Herrick Nelson (foreground) and Mike Weyand perform a walk-down of the facility's Fuel Pool Canister Bridge Crane to help construct a wooden platform that workers will use to access and remove asbestos-containing material.

A deactivation and decommissioning crew recently completed the safe removal of asbestos-containing material (ACM) from inside the Fuel Receiving and Storage (FRS) facility. The piping and insulation inside the building contained ACM, which needed to be removed in preparation for future demolition.

A total of 700 linear feet (the equivalent of 17.5 school bus lengths) of piping were removed from the FRS over a period of five months, and the job was completed safely and compliantly. The FRS was used from 1965-1972 to receive and store spent nuclear fuel before it was reprocessed to recover reusable plutonium and uranium.

“This team used their combined knowledge and lessons learned from previous ACM work activities to safely complete this project,” said DOE-**WVDP** Federal Project Director Steve Bousquet. The safe and compliant disposition of asbestos-containing material is another important step in the progress towards the future demolition of the FRS.”

D& D Crew Foreman Bill Freaney commended his crew for their hard work and dedication to safety during the project.

“Working with asbestos-containing material is the most physically-challenging work at the site when you include radiological and industrial hazards, layers of protective clothing, and limited mobility. This crew used lessons learned to enhance safety, improve efficiency, and reduce exposure to job-related hazards. They put their collective knowledge into practice.”



West Valley's 200-Foot Meteorological Tower Passes Inspection



A meteorological tower at EM's West Valley Demonstration Site recently underwent an annual inspection by the company Mid-State Communications.

WEST VALLEY, N.Y. – A 200-foot meteorological tower critical to cleanup planning at [EM's West Valley Demonstration Project \(WVDP\)](#) Site recently passed an annual inspection.

“The annual inspection results are good news for the site and our use of the meteorological tower information for site work,” EM WVDP Director Bryan Bower said. “This information helps provide historical data for long-term planning, weather impacts, and responses to any unplanned conditions.”



*An inspector climbs a 200-foot meteorological tower at EM's **West Valley Demonstration Project** Site.*

Demolition work is dependent on the weather, which can produce high winds, rain, snow, and ice at this upstate site, especially in winter, according to Janice Williams, vice president of regulatory strategy for **WVDP** cleanup contractor CH2M HILL BWXT West Valley (CHBWV).

“The meteorological tower is an important tool for the project and provides key risk management information that can be used for project success,” Williams said. “Being prepared is a key factor in the success of any project.”

Inspectors from the company Mid-State Communications examined the tower, including wires and concrete blocks that keep it upright and in place. The wires were re-tensioned as needed. The inspectors also climbed the tower to check the structure’s steel and replace lights.

-Contributor: Joseph Pillittere

February 11, 2020

WVDP promotes safety through eyes of children



Ellie and Kael Tuttle receive an Artist's Kit for participating in this year's Family Fun Safety Calendar that was sponsored by the WVDP ISMS Committee. CHBWV Facilities Manager Lettie Chilson is their aunt and presented them with their participation reward.

Photo submitted

WEST VALLEY — The Department of Energy and CH2M HILL BWXT West Valley (CHBWV), its cleanup contractor at the **West Valley Demonstration Project**, created a new way to increase safety awareness for workers and their families.

It's called the Family Fun Safety Calendar and features drawings created by **WVDP** employees' children, ages 12 and under, that depict general safety practices.

"At the **West Valley Demonstration Project**, it is understood that safety must be something that is not just remembered but put into practice every day and in everything we do, DOE-WVDP Safety and Site Programs Leader Jennifer Dundas, said. "The **WVDP** ISMS Committee recognized that safety does not start and stop at the worksite. The Family Fun Safety Calendar engages not just employees, but their families as well, and provides a constant reminder on safety awareness."

The Family Fun Safety Calendar was created in-house by the Integrated Safety Management System (ISMS) Committee with assistance from Human Resources and Administrative Support Services.

February 11, 2020

Calendars include monthly safety topics that can be used as Safety Shares at pre-job briefings and federal holidays and company BeyondTargetZero Safety Meetings.

Calendars are also distributed to subcontractors and key stakeholders, and all the original drawings are posted at the site's offsite location to be viewed by employees and the public during Citizen Task Force and Quarterly Public Meetings.

"We wanted to find a new approach in creating safety awareness across the site, but in a unique way," Jennifer Henry, CHBWV ISMS Committee Chair, said. "The calendar allowed us to promote safety on site as well as at home, and the children's drawings make them a 'got-to-have' item."

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THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2020

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FINAL EDITION

Budget plan cuts items important to WNYers

Trump's 2021 proposal targets social safety nets

By Jerry Zremski

NEWS WASHINGTON BUREAU CHIEF

WASHINGTON – President Trump released his proposed fiscal 2021 budget earlier this week, and it offered what his earlier budgets suggested, only more so.

It proposes slashing or ending programs that are hugely important to Western New York – from Medicare and Medicaid to home heating assistance and urban development programs.

And while Trump has reversed course and vowed to fully fund the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, plenty of other environmental programs would suffer deep cuts.

Trump's \$4.8 trillion spending plan is just that: a plan. Again and again, Congress has rejected Trump's spending proposals out of hand.

"My hope is that this will occur again this year," said Rep. Brian Higgins, a Buffalo Democrat who serves on the House Budget Committee. Dismissing the Trump spending plan as "a wish list," Higgins added: "This is a budget that lacks the big ideas critical to advancing the economy for everyone while increasing the debt."

But Rep. Tom Reed, a Corning Republican, indicated the budget, while flawed, is a useful document.

"I think the president has demonstrated that he'll put a marker down, and he forces us as legislators to defend what we believe are appropriate investments of the taxpayer dollars and the prioritization of those dollars," Reed said. "To me, that's not a bad outcome of this type of approach because we now have to go and defend these programs and services."

Here's an item-by-item look at what Trump proposes for programs that are important to Western New Yorkers:

Medicare

One of the few new items in Trump's proposed 2021 budget is the first round of cuts in Medicare's expected growth that would total \$756 billion. Most of that money would come out of the reimbursements that the government pays to doctors and other Medicare providers.

Over time, the federal government wants to pay less money to the doctors and hospitals who serve the nearly 200,000 Medicare recipients in Erie County and millions more nationwide.

Would that force doctors to stop taking Medicare patients or force hospitals to make changes that affect patients? Advocates of the Medicare program fear that it would.

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“One would hope that in an election year when politicians like to put forward their most popular ideas, the president would understand the benefits of protecting our most cherished income and health security programs,” said Max Richtman, president and CEO of the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare.

The president appears to think he’s doing just that. Two days before releasing his budget, Trump tweeted: “We will not be touching your Social Security and Medicare in Fiscal 2021 Budget.”

Medicaid

Trump is also looking for big cuts in Medicaid, the federal/state health plan for lower-income Americans. His spending plan calls for \$920 billion less in federal Medicaid spending over the next 10 years.

The proposal revives a block-grant proposal that would shift more of Medicaid’s cost to the states. In addition, the spending plan ends federal funding for the expansion of Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act, and forces those enrolled in the program to requalify more often. Advocates for low-income Americans worry that the cuts would have a dramatic impact on people enrolled in Medicaid, which total about 280,000 people in Erie County.

Nationwide, “the proposed cuts would cause millions of people to lose coverage,” Aviva Aron-Dine, vice president for health policy at the left-leaning Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, said in a blog post.

But Trump administration officials contend the cuts in future Medicaid spending merely aim to cut waste rather than patient services.

“Reducing the cost of health care is not a cut,” said Russ Vought, acting director of the Office of Management and Budget. “Medicaid will grow more than 3% on average, which is much higher than the rate of inflation.”

Aid to families

The Trump budget once again proposes eliminating the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, which serves about 70,000 Erie County families.

In addition, his spending plan would cut funding for the Children’s Health Insurance Program – Child Health Plus in New York – by about 10%, while reducing the cost of the Social Security disability program by tightening eligibility and work requirements. Trump also recycles his proposal to tighten food stamp eligibility requirements, a move that could trim 700,000 people from the rolls nationwide.

Those items are likely nonstarters in the Democratic House, and the Democratic minority in the Senate will be sure to fight them, too.

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“They’re poor, take it away.’ – Is that what this country stands for?” Senate Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer, a New York Democrat, said earlier this week. “Is that what our Judeo-Christian tradition stands for? Absolutely not.”

But in the budget proposal, the Trump administration said there was a good reason for all of those cuts.

“The president has laid out a vision to drive down deficits and debt through spending restraint in every budget he has submitted to the Congress,” said Trump’s spending plan, which nonetheless includes a deficit of nearly \$1 trillion.

Aid to communities

Once again, the president suggested eliminating the Community Development Block Grant program, Buffalo’s single largest source of direct federal aid, bringing about \$14 million to the city annually.

The HOME Investment Partnerships program, which brought more than \$5 million to the Buffalo area last year for housing development, would be eliminated, too. So would the Heritage Partnership Program, which funds the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area.

Meantime, agencies important to the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus – the National Institutes of Health and the National Cancer Institute – would suffer budget cuts of 7% and 9%, respectively.

Environmental programs

For the first time in the Trump era, his annual budget proposes no cut in funding for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, the program responsible for the cleanup of the Buffalo River and other onetime environmental wastelands. What’s more, the budget increases funding for the **West Valley Demonstration Project**, the Cattaraugus County nuclear waste site, to \$88 million – a 17% increase.

But the spending plan cuts funding for the Army Corps of Engineers – which maintains Buffalo’s waterways – by nearly half. The Trump budget also cuts federal funding for improvements to local sewage and drinking water systems, and trims back environmental enforcement through a 27% budget cut at the Environmental Protection Agency.

Adding it all up, Laura Rubin, director of the Healing Our Waters – Great Lakes Coalition, said: “This budget is one step forward and three steps backward.”

Unveiling the cuts, EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler took a much different view.

“Under President Trump’s leadership, I am certain that we will inspire the next generation of environmental leaders to continue building on our progress for the next 50 years,” he said.

THE BUFFALO NEWS



Copies of President Trump's 2021 budget are shown Monday in Washington. Once again, the president suggested eliminating the Community Development Block Grant program, Buffalo's single largest source of direct federal aid, bringing about \$14 million to the city annually. Getty Images

SPRINGVILLE JOURNAL

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West Valley Demonstration Project promotes safety through the eyes of children



Ellie and Kael Tuttle receive an Artist's Kit for participating in this year's Family Fun Safety Calendar that was sponsored by the WVDP ISMS Committee. CHBWV Facilities Manager Lettie Chilson is their aunt and presented them with their participation reward.



The Family Fun Safety Calendar features drawings created by WVDP employees' children, ages 12 and under, that depict general safety practices. The month of January features a drawing by Edna McKune, which was submitted by CHBWV employee Bonnie Jeffery.

The Department of Energy and CH2M HILL BWXT West Valley, its cleanup contractor at the **West Valley Demonstration Project**, created a new way to increase safety awareness for workers and their families. It's called the Family Fun Safety Calendar and features drawings created by **WVDP** employees' children, ages 12 and under, that depict general safety practices.

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“At the **West Valley Demonstration Project**, it is understood that safety must be something that is not just remembered, but put into practice every day and in everything we do, DOE-WVDP Safety and Site Programs Leader Jennifer Dundas said. “The WVDP ISMS Committee recognized that safety does not start and stop at the work site. The Family Fun Safety Calendar engages not just employees, but their families as well, and provides a constant reminder on safety awareness.”

The Family Fun Safety Calendar was created in-house by the Integrated Safety Management System Committee with assistance from Human Resources and Administrative Support Services. Calendars include monthly safety topics that can be used as safety shares at pre-job briefings and federal holidays and company BeyondTargetZero Safety Meetings. Calendars are also distributed to subcontractors and key stakeholders; and all the original drawings are posted at the site’s offsite location to be viewed by employees and the public during Citizen Task Force and Quarterly Public Meetings.

“We wanted to find a new approach in creating safety awareness across the site, but in a unique way,” Jennifer Henry, CHBWV ISMS Committee Chair said. “The calendar allowed us to promote safety onsite as well as at home; and the children’s drawings make them a ‘got-to-have’ item.”



CHBWV receives silver level recognition from the American Heart Association

The Department of Energy Office of Environmental Management's prime contractor at the **West Valley Demonstration Project**, CH2M HILL BWXT West Valley (CHBWV), recently received silver level recognition from the American Heart Association for taking significant steps to build a culture of health in the workplace.

The American Heart Association's Workplace Health Achievement Index (Index) is a self-assessment scorecard that measures the comprehensiveness and quality of a company's workplace health program, and the overall heart health of its employees.

AHA Director of Development, Michelle Mason, congratulated CHBWV for earning this health achievement recognition.

"We know that good health is good business and you have reached an important milestone in building a culture of workplace health," Mason said.

The American Heart Association created the Index with its CEO Roundtable members, a leadership collaborative of more than 40 CEOs from some of America's largest companies who are committed to applying evidence-based approaches to improve their employees' overall health. The Index uses science-based best practices to evaluate the overall quality and comprehensiveness of their workplace health programs. A unique feature of the Index is that it calculates an average heart health score for employees of participating companies that securely submit aggregate health data.

"The Index is an important scientific-based tool that has helped us to further improve workplace health for our employees," Rachel Charette, chairperson – CHBWV Health and Wellness Committee, said. "Each year we continue to add more programs and fun activities that contribute to the health of our employees."

Companies receive benchmarking reports, which allow them to identify potential areas of improvement so that they can advance their annual performance and recognition in the Index and help their workforce move toward ideal heart health. The framework of the Index was built so that organizations would continue to improve the health of their workplace and their workforce from one year to the next.

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Great Valley & Killbuck*

Recognition and awards are based on a company's score from completing the American Heart Association's Workplace Health Achievement Index. The Index remains available to organizations year-round to be used as a reference for making improvements in health-related practices and policies. The goal is to drive organizational improvements and improve the heart health of employees.



Contributed photo

The CHBWV Wellness Committee at the **WVDP submitted the application to the American Heart Association as part of their ongoing efforts to improve workplace health.**

West Valley Honors Employee for Quick Lifesaving Actions



Representatives of EM [West Valley Demonstration Project \(WVDP\)](#) and CH2M HILL BWXT West Valley (CHBWV) recognized Capt. James Madden for his lifesaving response to Cattaraugus County Sheriff's Office Sgt. Jason Dry. From left, Anthony Lechanski, WVDP physical scientist; Scott Anderson, CHBWV president and general manager; Bryan Bower, WVDP director; Jennifer Dundas, WVDP safety and site programs team leader; Craig Rieman, WVDP deputy director; Madden, with Securitas Critical Infrastructure Services; Dry; John Bauer, CHBWV Board chair; John Rendall CHBWV deputy general manager; Joey Hoskins, CHBWV Board member; Ken Whitham, CHBWV vice president of environmental, safety, health, and quality; and Dave Schuman, CHBWV safeguards and security manager.

WEST VALLEY, N.Y. – The [EM West Valley Demonstration Project \(WVDP\)](#) commended the captain of the site's security force in a ceremony last week for his lifesaving response to a member of the local sheriff's office.

[WVDP](#) security officers and Cattaraugus County Sheriff's Office representatives were having lunch at [WVDP](#) in January when Capt. James Madden observed Sgt. Jason Dry choking. Madden rushed to Dry and applied the Heimlich maneuver. After three attempts, a blockage was removed, allowing Dry to breathe freely.

"Captain James Madden's immediate response to the emergency saved a life," EM WVDP Director Bryan Bower said. "His dedication to duty and commitment to excellence resulted in his immediate reaction when faced with a life-and-death situation."



EM West Valley Demonstration Project (WVDP) Director Bryan Bower presents a plaque to Capt. James Madden during a ceremony at WVDP last week. Madden, who was recognized for his lifesaving actions, is an employee with Securitas Critical Infrastructure Services, a subcontractor to WVDP cleanup contractor CH2M HILL BWXT West Valley.

Madden is an employee of Securitas Critical Infrastructure Services, a subcontractor to WVDP cleanup contractor CH2M HILL BWXT West Valley (CHBWV).

“For exemplary meritorious service to the community and to the WVDP, it would be my honor to recognize the actions taken by Captain Madden,” Bower said during the ceremony attended by Dry and representatives of WVDP and CHBWV. “I am very proud of him and recognize his valuable service to protecting the staff at the WVDP and the surrounding community.”

Ken Whitham, CHBWV vice president of environmental, safety, health, and quality, said Madden’s actions speak volumes to his knowledge and dedication to employees, WVDP visitors, and the greater public.

“He was able to put his knowledge and training into action to save the life of a coworker, and that is truly commendable,” Whitham said.

-Contributor: Joseph Pillittere

BAPG February Meeting: West Valley Demonstration Project



Register at BAPG.ORG

“West Valley” consists of two sites: The Western New York Nuclear Service Center (WNYNSC) and the West Valley Demonstration Project (WVDP). The WNYNSC is a 3,338-acre site located 30 miles south of Buffalo, NY owned by the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA).

Established in 1961 as the site of a nuclear center, WNYNSC was comprised of a commercial spent nuclear fuel reprocessing facility and two waste disposal facilities Nuclear Fuel Services, a private company, built and operated the fuel reprocessing plant and the burial grounds under contract with the State of New York, processing 705 tons of spent nuclear fuel at WNYNSC from 1966 to 1972 under an Atomic Energy Commission (later Nuclear Regulatory Commission or NRC) license. These spent nuclear fuel reprocessing operations resulted in the generation of 660,000 gallons of high-level radioactive waste, which were stored in two underground storage tanks.

In 1980, Congress passed the WVDP Act, and the creation of the West Valley Demonstration Project, directed DOE to take the lead role in solidifying the liquid high-level radioactive waste remaining in underground tanks and decontaminating and decommissioning the facilities at WNYNSC used in solidifying the waste. NYSERDA maintained responsibility for the WNYNSC property. The act guided activities at the site through the early 2000’s, and continues today.

More recently, DOE and NYSERDA were joint lead agencies for the preparation of the 2010 Environmental Impact Statement for Decommissioning and/or Long-Term Stewardship at the West Valley Demonstration Project and Western New York Nuclear Service Center (2010 FEIS). This “Phase 1 Decisionmaking” EIS involved near-term decommissioning and removal actions where there is agency consensus and undertakes characterization work and studies that could facilitate future decisionmaking for the remaining facilities or areas. Phase 1 activities have been ongoing for the last 10 years. Significant site work, as well as site data collection and modeling, have continued. Finally, a “Phase 2 decisionmaking” Supplemental EIS is presently under development, to allow for continued decommissioning, using information generated during the Phase 1 process. Demolition of facilities has been ongoing and will continue with removal of the Main Plant commencing in late-2020.

Please join the BAPG for an interactive discussion of the history, status, future, and incredible challenges faced when decommissioning a 50+ year old nuclear facility.

Register at bapg.org

From <https://allevents.in/williamsville/bapg-february-meeting-west-valley-demonstration-project/200019130650156>

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West Valley Demonstration Project Quarterly Public Meeting

Wednesday, February 26, 2020, 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

Ashford Office Complex

9030 Route 219, West Valley, NY 14171

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) will hold a public meeting to provide information on WVDP activities and progress. NYSERDA and DOE will provide the public with an opportunity to ask questions and provide comments.

For further information, please contact Joseph Pillittere at Joseph.Pillittere@chbvw.com or (716) 998-4900.



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



Contributed photos

WVDP employees assist Mid-State Communications worker with the annual inspection of the site's 200-foot tower. The inspection includes climbing the entire length of the tower to perform the required inspections.

Annual inspection of 200-foot Meteorological Tower completed

The Department of Energy and its prime contractor CH2M HILL BWXT West Valley (CHBWV) recently completed the annual inspection of its 200-foot Meteorological Tower (Met Tower) located at the **West Valley Demonstration Project**. The inspection was performed by Mid-State Communications with assistance from CHBWV employees from Balance of Site Operations, and Regulatory Strategy and Compliance.

This work activity included observable inspections of the guy wires and appurtenances, grounding, and anchor points. During ground-level inspections, guy wires were re-tensioned as needed in accordance with compliance standards. Trained inspection professionals also climbed the tower to visually inspect the steel, replace the lights and check the paint for Federal Aviation Administration vividness.

“The Meteorological Tower is an important tool for the project and provides key risk management information that can be used for project success,” said CHBWV Vice President of Regulatory Strategy Janice Williams. “Demolition work is performed under the influence of external factors like the weather. In New York, that means planning for anything from high winds to snow, ice and rain, especially during the winter season. Being prepared is a key factor in the success of any project.”

“The annual inspection results are good news for the site and our use of the Met Tower information for site work,” WVDP Director Bryan Bower, said. “This information helps provide historical data for long-term planning, weather impacts, and responses to any unplanned conditions.”

Annual inspection of meteorological tower completed at WVDP



Photo provided

After inspecting the lower half of the 200-foot meteorological tower, a Mid-State Communications employee continues to make his way up the structure to finish his inspections.

The Department of Energy and its prime contractor CH2M HILL BWXT West Valley recently completed the annual inspection of its 200-foot meteorological tower located at the [West Valley Demonstration Project](#). The inspection was performed by Mid-State Communications with assistance from CHBWV employees from Balance of Site Operations, and Regulatory Strategy and Compliance.

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“The meteorological tower is an important tool for the project and provides key risk management information that can be used for project success,” CHBWV Vice President of Regulatory Strategy Janice Williams said. “Demolition work is performed under the influence of external factors like the weather. In New York, that means planning for

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anything from high winds to snow, ice and rain, especially during the winter season. Being prepared is a key factor in the success of any project.”

“The annual inspection results are good news for the site and our use of the met tower information for site work. This information helps provide historical data for long-term planning, weather impacts, and responses to any unplanned conditions,” WVDP Director Bryan Bower said.

SPRINGVILLE TIMES

March 6, 2020



The Springville Area Chamber of Commerce is pleased to announce the winners to be recognized at the 2020 Awards Gala to be held on March 28.

The award winners were chosen by the Chamber of Commerce Awards Gala Committee following nominations submitted by the general public.

The awardees are:

Helen Brogan, recipient of the President's Award

CH2M HILL BWXT West Valley (CHBWV), recipient of Business of the Year

The Meat Shoppe, recipient of Small Business of the Year

Springville Volunteer Fire Department, recipient of Non-Profit of the Year

Dennis Dains, recipient of Citizen of the Year

David Sullivan, recipient of the Community Service Award

Max Borsuk, Joe Rumfola, D.D.S. and Liesle Neureuther, recipients of the Young Professionals Award

Gentner Commission Market and Lawrence's Tavern, recipients of the Longevity Award

The Chamber of Commerce invites the entire community to celebrate the accomplishments of the award winners at the annual Awards Gala, which will be held on Saturday, March 28 at Springville Volunteer Fire Department Hall located at 405 West Main St., Springville.

This year's Awards Gala will also be a celebration of the Springville Area Chamber of Commerce's 70th Anniversary.

The event begins with a social hour at 5 p.m., a catered dinner will be provided by Julie's Restaurant at 6 and the award presentations at 7. The evening's entertainment will be provided by Hintz of Thunder. A cash bar, silent auction and 50/50 will also be available at the Awards Gala.

Tickets for the dinner are \$35 each, two for \$60 and tables of eight are available for \$240. Tickets can be purchased through March 23 at the Springville Area Chamber of Commerce office, open Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Ticket purchases can be made via cash, check or credit card.

Please inform organizers of any dietary needs at the time of ticket purchase.

Those interested in tickets but cannot stop by the chamber office during office hours can call (716) 592-4746 during office hours or email director@springvillechamber.com anytime for an alternative arrangement.

The Springville Area Chamber of Commerce wishes to thank those who submitted nominations for this year's awards and hopes to see everyone at the Awards Gala on March 28. For additional information, call (716) 592-4746, email director@springvillechamber.com.



Winners chosen for Chamber awards

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The awardees are:

- President's Award: Helen Brogan
- Business of the Year: CH2M HILL BWXT West Valley (CHBWV)
- Small Business of the Year: The Meat Shoppe
- Non-Profit of the Year: Springville Volunteer Fire Department
- Citizen of the Year: Dennis Dains
- Community Service Award: David Sullivan
- Young Professionals Award: Max Borsuk, Joe Rumfola, D.D.S., Liesle Neureuther
- Longevity Award: Gentner Commission Market, Lawrence's Tavern

The Chamber of Commerce invites the entire community to celebrate the accomplishments of the award winners at the annual Awards Gala, which will be held on Saturday, March 28 at Springville Volunteer Fire Department Hall, located at 405 West Main St. This year's Awards Gala will also be a celebration of the Springville Area Chamber of Commerce's 70th anniversary. The event begins with a social hour at 5 p.m., a catered dinner will be provided by Julie's Restaurant at 6 p.m. and the award presentations at 7 p.m. The evening's entertainment will be provided by Hintz of Thunder. A cash bar, silent auction and 50/50 will also be available at the Awards Gala.

Tickets for the dinner are \$35 each, two for \$60 and tables of eight are available for \$240. Tickets can be purchased through March 23 at the Springville Area Chamber of Commerce Office, which is open from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays. Ticket purchases can be made via cash, check or credit card.

Those interested in tickets but unable to stop by the Chamber office during office hours can call 592-4746 during office hours or email director@springvillechamber.com anytime for an alternative arrangement.

The Springville Area Chamber of Commerce wishes to thank those who submitted nominations for this year's awards and hopes to see everyone at the Awards Gala. For additional information, call 592-4746 or email director@springvillechamber.com.



ECA UPDATE Mar 9, 2020

EM issues strategic vision for 2020-2030

ECA Staff | 3/9/2020

Today, DOE EM issued a new strategic plan for the next decade. DOE states it will "... build upon the cleanup progress the nuclear complex has seen over the first 30 years of EM operations."

The EM 2020-2030 strategic vision was first highlighted at the [2020 ECA Annual Conference](#) in Washington DC on January 30-31 as senior adviser for environmental management to the Under Secretary for Science Mr. William "Ike" White presented a keynote address about "Understanding EM Priorities and the Year Ahead." That session touched on what the turn of the year, and the turn of the decade, would mean for EM priorities and expectations, the future challenges, and the role local governments can play to support cleanup goals.

The main initiatives of this 40-page document prioritizes several overarching topics including:

- Safety
- Project Management
- End-State Contracting
- Innovative Approaches
- Potential Opportunities for Acceleration
- Next-Generation Workforce
- Infrastructure
- Regulatory/stakeholder Engagement
- Security/Cybersecurity

Within those overarching themes above, the 2020-2030 strategic timeline provides specific projects that will be undertaken including:

- Initiating radioactive tank waste treatment at the Hanford Site in Washington State.
- Emptying and closing 22 of 51 underground waste tanks and completing disposal of legacy transuranic waste at the Savannah River Site in South Carolina.
- Completing construction of the Outfall 200 Mercury Treatment Facility, along with completing disposition of remaining legacy transuranic waste and uranium-233 at the Oak Ridge Reservation in Tennessee.
- Completing treatment of remaining liquid-sodium bearing waste and completion shipments of legacy transuranic waste from the Idaho National Laboratory site.
- Completing key infrastructure upgrades at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant in New Mexico.
- Completing the legacy cleanup activities at the Nevada National Security Site.

Local Government Involvement

ECA would like to see more of a plan to work with local communities in the site strategic plans. There is a clear plan to work with the states (which is required by law) but the plan to work with local communities is unclear. The strategic plan that includes local government engagement – and we will note that EM does integrate community engagement in most its actions and identifies local government as a meaningful group for regulatory/stakeholder engagement "to promote mutual interests, share perspectives, and openly discuss potential impacts." Local government interaction must be a priority across the nuclear complex for progress to move at the pace set by this decade long strategic vision.

A notable detail ECA would like to highlight in the document is that the plan identifies that DOE plans to transfer land to LM at Oak Ridge. Last year Congress rejected this plan so we will need to see how this plays out.



ECA UPDATE Mar 9, 2020

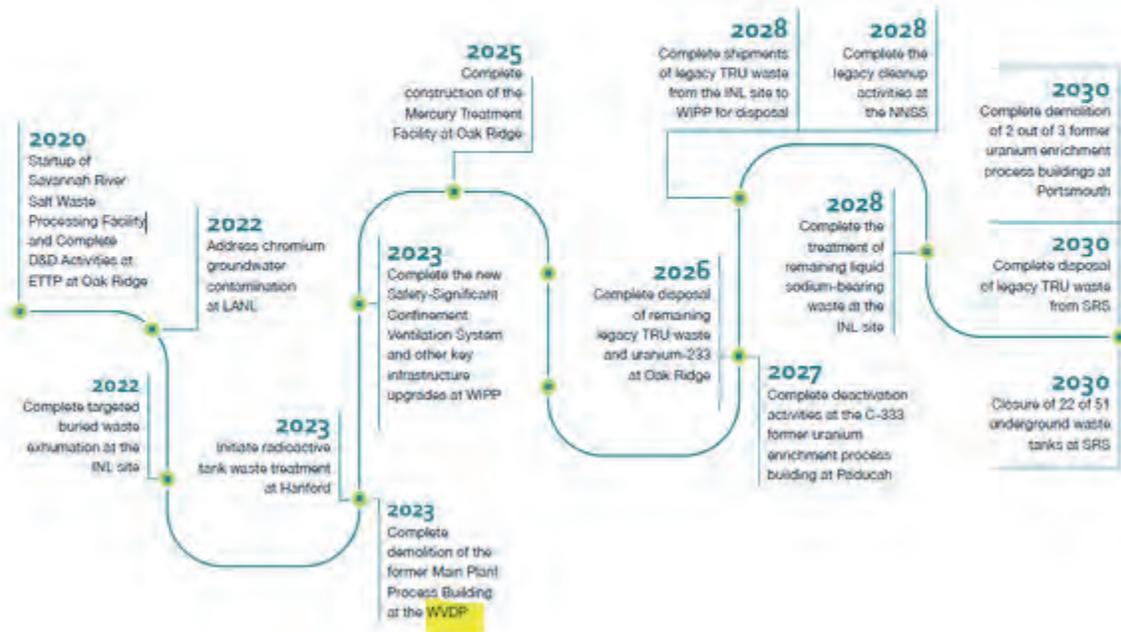
To learn more about the timeline, EM priorities and strategies, please find the document [HERE](#).

Mentioned above, EM maps out initiatives for the Next Generation of Workforce, the topic of ECA's Peer Exchange during May 13 and 14, in Santa Fe, NM.

Topics of high importance to EM and ECA overlap to include the following: waves of retirement, training and retention of a new workforce, and programs that will support workforce development and stability.

To learn more about the ECA Workforce Peer Exchange, please find the website [HERE](#).

Decade Timeline





March 11, 2020

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.



Los Alamos Reporter

The News from Los Alamos & Beyond

March 11, 2020

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.



Los Alamos Reporter

The News from Los Alamos & Beyond

March 11, 2020

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.”

JOURNAL

SPRINGVILLE



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March 12, 2020

Winner announced for Springville Chamber of Commerce Awards Gala



The Springville Area Chamber of Commerce announced the winners to be recognized at the 2020 Awards Gala on March 28.

The award winners were chosen by the Chamber of Commerce Awards Gala Committee following nominations submitted by the general public.

The awardees include Helen Brogan, President's Award; **CH2M HILL BWXT West Valley (CHBWW)**, Business of the Year; The Meat Shoppe, Small Business of the Year; Springville Volunteer Fire Department, Non-Profit of the Year; Dennis Dains, Citizen of the Year; David Sullivan, Community Service Award; Max Borsuk, Joe Rumfola D.D.S and Liesle Neureuther, Young Professionals Award; Gentner Commission Market and Lawrence's Tavern, Longevity Award.

The Chamber of Commerce invites the entire community to celebrate the accomplishments of the award winners at the annual Awards Gala, which will be held on Saturday, March 28 at the Springville Volunteer Fire Department Hall, located at 405 W. Main St. This year's Awards Gala will also be a celebration of the Springville Area Chamber of Commerce's 70th anniversary.

The event begins with a social hour at 5 p.m., a catered dinner will be provided by Julie's Restaurant at 6 p.m. and the awards presentations at 7 p.m. The evening's entertainment will be provided by Hintz of Thunder. A cash bar, silent auction and 50/50 will also be available.

Tickets for the dinner are \$35 each, two for \$60 and tables of eight are available for \$240. Tickets can be purchased through March 23 at the Springville Area Chamber of Commerce office, which is open Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. Ticket purchases can be made via cash, check or credit card. People can let the Chamber know of any dietary needs at the time of ticket purchase.

Those interested in tickets but cannot stop by the chamber office during office hours can call 592- 4746 during office hours or email director@springvillechamber.com for alternative arrangement.



WVDP promotes safety through the eyes of children

The Department of Energy and CH2M HILL BWXT West Valley (CHBWV), its cleanup contractor at the **West Valley Demonstration Project**, created a new way to increase safety awareness for workers and their families. It's called the Family Fun Safety Calendar and features drawings created by **WVDP** employees' children, ages 12 and under, that depict general safety practices.

"At the **West Valley Demonstration Project**, it is understood that safety must be something that is not just remembered, but put into practice every day and in everything we do, DOE-WVDP Safety and Site Programs Leader Jennifer Dundas, said. "The WVDP ISMS Committee recognized that safety does not start and stop at the work site. The Family Fun Safety Calendar engages not just employees, but their families as well, and provides a constant reminder on safety awareness."

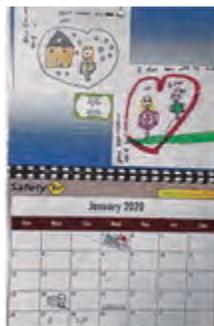
The Family Fun Safety Calendar was created in-house by the Integrated Safety Management System (ISMS) Committee with assistance from Human Resources and Administrative Support Services. Calendars include monthly safety topics that can be used as Safety Shares at pre-job briefings, federal holidays and company BeyondTargetZero safety meetings. Calendars are also distributed to subcontractors and key stakeholders; and all the original drawings are posted at the site's offsite location to be viewed by employees and the public during Citizen Task Force and quarterly public meetings.

"We wanted to find a new approach in creating safety awareness across the site, but in a unique way," Jennifer Henry, CHBWV ISMS Committee Chair, said. "The calendar allowed us to promote safety onsite as well as at home; and the children's drawings make them a 'got-to-have' item."



Ellie and Kael Tuttle received an Artist's Kit for participating in this year's Family Fun Safety Calendar that was sponsored by the WVDP ISMS Committee.

Contributed photo



The Family Fun Safety Calendar features drawings created by **WVDP employees' children, ages 12 and under, that depict general safety practices. The month of January features a drawing by Eden McKune, Age 9, which was submitted by CHBWW employee Bonnie Jeffery.**

Ashford Town Board discusses possible uses for funding

Max Borsuk
Editor

The Ashford Town Board, at its March 11 meeting, discussed \$200,000 in community and regulatory support coming to the town through a cooperative agreement with the Department of Energy and possible ways the funding can be used in the future.

After announcing the funding for Ashford, Supervisor John Pfeffer started a discussion on possible ideas that could fit into the guidelines for the funding, create revenue for the town and not be a burden on the taxpayers in the future.

“This funding is not bound to the fiscal year, this funding can last over many years, but the principals in this cooperative agreement must be laid out now,” Pfeffer said. “This is not just an open pit of money that we can do whatever we want. They want to know what we are going to do with this money over time.”

Ideas brought up during the meeting included supplementing the Cattaraugus County Sheriff’s, purchasing a vehicle for the town constables, creating a better space for the constables in the town, paving the town’s side of the salt barn, funding a grant writer, purchasing a generator for the Ashford Community Center and kayak docks. Pfeffer also suggested talking with members of the community for input.

One specific idea that was brought up in discussion by the councilmembers was a vehicle for the constables. With some of the constables expressing that a vehicle would be beneficial, Pfeffer said, the constables would then be able to patrol, not have to use personal vehicles and provide more service to the town. During discussion, councilmembers talked about their opinions both for and against a vehicle for constables.

“If we are going to have our first line of defense our own constables, who are DOJ trained, they are in our community, under the direction of the supervisor, they are here for us ... why are we not using them to our best advantage,” Councilmember Richard Bernstein said.

“I’m not saying I’m against it, I’m just not comfortable at this point with it,” Councilmember William Heim said. “At this point my vote would be that we are not ready for a cop car in this town at this time.”

Pfeffer said he will continue to work on the cooperative agreement and work with the councilmembers and community to decide on the best ways the money can be used in Ashford.

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SPRINGVILLE



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March 19, 2020

In other board news:

– The board approved a bid from MRC Disposal for the annual trash and refuse removal scheduled this spring in the amount of \$13,200.

– **New York State Energy Research and Development Agency** West Valley Program Director Paul Bembia reported negotiations between the **NYSERDA** and the town are moving forward and the sides are moving toward the implementation phase of the solar farm in Ashford. With construction of the solar farm set to be around seven acres, the board also discussed the possibility of replacing trees one-for-one that would need to be taken down during construction.

The next Ashford Town Board meeting will be Wednesday, April 8 at 7:30 p.m. at the Ashford Community Center, 9377 Route 240, in West Valley.

TOWN OF ASHFORD TOWN BOARD

Notice of Adoption of Resolution Subject to Permissive Referendum Approving a Proposed Amendment to the Sub-lease with West Valley Solar LLC

Notice is hereby given that the Town Board of the Town of Ashford has approved an Amendment to the Sub-lease with West Valley Solar, LLC to enable a solar energy project at **Western New York Nuclear Service Center**, West Valley NY. The Solar Project proposes the construction and operation of a solar energy facility and associated infrastructure a 10 megawatt (MW) alternating current (AC) (15 MW direct current [DC]) solar photovoltaic facility, which will provide approximately 2 MW of community distributed electricity to subscribers and about 8 MW to larger users. The solar facility would be built on approximately 54 acres of land owned by the **New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA)** at the **Western New York Nuclear Service Center** in the Town of Ashford. The Center consists of 3,300 acres. As approved by the **NYSERDA** Board, **NYSERDA** will lease the land for the solar project to the Town of Ashford, who will further lease the land to West Valley Solar, LLC. The Amendment changes the exact footprint of the project, a similar amendment was made to the Town's lease with **NYSERDA**.

The adopted resolution is subject to permissive referendum pursuant to New York Town Law §64(2), and will not take effect until thirty days after its adoption; nor until approved by the affirmative vote of a majority of the qualified electors of the Town voting on such proposition, if within thirty days after its adoption (March 11, 2020) there is filed

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March 19, 2020

with the Town Clerk a petition signed, and acknowledged or proved, or authenticated by electors of the Town qualified to vote upon a proposition to raise and expend money, in number equal to at least five per centum of the total vote cast for governor in the Town at the last general election held for the election of state officers.

Patricia R. Dashnaw
TOWN OF ASHFORD TOWN CLERK
#4



DAM PROJECT SCOBY DAM PROJECT ON TRACK FOR FALL CONSTRUCTION

By Kellen M. Quigley

Those of us in Springville know one of the best attractions and historical places in the area is the Scoby Dam and its park, but that site is looking to get a major facelift in the coming months.

The proposed project to lower Scoby Dam on the Cattaraugus Creek is moving forward with plans by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Project Manager Geoffrey Hintz with the Corps of Engineers said they have spent the past 10 years putting the project together with preliminary studies and planning.

Pending state and federal approval, the project is expected to go out to bid in August, Hintz said, with construction beginning that fall. If all goes according to plan, he said the project could be done by late 2021 or early 2022.

Hintz said a major concern in the community is the impact of possible nuclear contamination from West Valley Development Project upstream, which was previously tested about a decade ago.

"The determination at the time was there is no contamination of concern in the creek," he said. "The DEC partners said the work that we've done isn't sufficient and we want to do more samples down to the bottom of the impoundment and test that for contamination."

Geologist Bill Frederick with the Corps of Engineers explained the various testing processes and analyses performed in the creek between the West Valley plant ceased operation and the preparations for the project. The most recent samples showed little to no difference in radiation amounts in the water compared to above West Valley, all of which were below levels of concern.

"The (Nuclear Regulatory Commission) essentially told us the sediment is a low-risk to no-risk profile for the radionuclide," Frederick said. "The 2018 sampling verified what we determined in 2012 and 2015, that there was no added risk to a construction worker, a recreational user or a farmer from sediments behind the dam."

Hintz said other concerns are how the project is going to affect fishing, properties downstream, ice jams and flooding.

"We've evaluated that over these years, we have detailed studies completed and the answer is there is no negative impact from changing that structure that is going to affect the properties downstream," he said.

Biologist James Markham with the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation discussed the impact the dam would have for fisheries and fish passage on the creek. He said the DEC presented the plan last year for public comment and received 53 replies.

"That was a lot more than I thought we were going to get from that," he said. "Thirty-eight of those conveyed special concerns or recommendations, and we take those very seriously. Going through those 38 comments really boiled down to 17 general themes."

Markham said many of the themes were already addressed in the plan or had to be included, improved upon or added upon. Among those themes was keeping as much of the ecosystem as possible the same while allowing fish passage for various species from the lower to upper creek.

"Our management goal in the plan is to manage upper Cattaraugus Creek and its tributaries as a high-quality, year-round sports fishery," he said. "Some of the best catch rates we have in Lake Erie and let alone all of the Great Lakes come right from this creek."

Springville Mayor Bill Krebs said the village has been interested in the project since an initial meeting in 2013, adding that it's in the best interest of the Springville area for tourism and historical reasons.

Although the dam ceased producing electricity for the village in the late 1980s and the site was taken over by the county for a park in 1997, Krebs said Springville is still very emotionally connected to the dam.

Krebs said he's talked with a group from New York City who comes to Springville every year for fishing in the creek. He said the creek is also used for whitewater canoeing and rafting.

"There is a lot of visitors here looking for fun things to do in outdoor recreation," he said. "This is an important dam and important 30-acre site for the village and for Concord."



Image provided

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is planning on lowering Scoby Dam and installing a fish ladder for some species to travel upstream beyond the dam. This initial design was proposed in 2015.



April 10, 2020

DOE Extends West Valley Demonstration Project Cleanup Contract Extension Will Enable Safe Demolition of Last Remaining Major Facility

Cincinnati – Today, the U.S Department of Energy, Office of Environmental Management (EM) has extended CH2M Hill BWXT West Valley, LLC's (CHBWV) cleanup contract at the West Valley Demonstration Project in New York State by an additional 39 months, to June 29, 2023. The purpose of this extension is to enable CHBWV to safely and efficiently complete deactivation, demolition and removal of the Main Plant Process Building (MPPB), the last remaining major facility at the West Valley site, as well as other facility disposition activities.

In preparing the MPPB for demolition, CHBWV has removed seven of the nine facilities surrounding the MPPB, and has completed 98% of the deactivation work required before the MPPB can be demolished. CHBWV has also demolished 44 of 47 balance of site facilities and has restored the areas around the facilities. In addition, significant infrastructure improvements have been completed to support the current and future cleanup efforts at the site.

The contract extension provides the best overall solution for completing demolition of the MPPB in a safe and compliant manner. Based upon lessons learned from demolition of other contaminated facilities at West Valley, as well as other DOE sites, the extension eliminates previous incentives focused on cost and schedule, and replaces them with a new highly incentivized Performance-Based Incentive (PBI) structure aligned with the work to be performed. The contractor will be required to perform work safely and efficiently until the activities under the scope of work are completed. The total value of the extension modification is \$243 million. The new contract value will be approximately \$836 million.

Completion of this work scope will position the site to have a follow-on contract to complete Phase 1 Decommissioning.

The West Valley New York Site is located on the Western New York Nuclear Service Center (WNYNSC) that comprises 3,300 acres of land used for the commercial reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel. Between 1966 and 1972, commercial nuclear fuel reprocessing was conducted within the Main Plant Process Building (MPPB). In 1972, commercial nuclear fuel reprocessing activities ceased and never resumed. WVDP Phase 1 Decommissioning is the first phase in a two-phase decommissioning process being used for final decommissioning of the site in accordance with the WVDP Act (Public Law 96-368).

Additional information is available via the procurement website at <https://www.emcbc.doe.gov/SEB/CPCCL/>.



ECA UPDATE

Apr 13, 2020

CONTRACTS

DOE Extends West Valley Demonstration Project Cleanup Contract Extension Will Enable Safe Demolition of Last Remaining Major Facility

DOE-EM | 4/9/2020

The U.S. Department of Energy, Office of Environmental Management (EM) has [extended](#) CH2M Hill BWXT West Valley, LLC's (CHBWV) cleanup contract at the [West Valley Demonstration Project](#) in New York State by an additional 39 months, to June 29, 2023. The purpose of this extension is to enable CHBWV to safely and efficiently complete deactivation, demolition and removal of the Main Plant Process Building (MPPB), the last remaining major facility at the [West Valley](#) site, as well as other facility disposition activities.

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Completion of this work scope will position the site to have a follow-on contract to complete Phase 1 Decommissioning.

April 14, 2020

Department of Energy extends West Valley cleanup contract to 2023

• By Rick Miller | County Reporter

WEST VALLEY — The **West Valley Demonstration Project** nuclear cleanup contract has been extended for 39 months.

The U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Environmental Management announced this week it has extended CH2M Hill BWXT West Valley, LLC's cleanup contract to June 29, 2023.

The extension will enable CHBWV to safely and efficiently complete deactivation, demolition and removal of the Main Plant Process Building, the last remaining major facility at the **West Valley** site, as well as other facility disposition activities, according to a DOE statement.

In preparing the Main Plant Process Building for demolition, CHBWV has removed seven of the nine facilities surrounding the building, and has completed 98% of the deactivation work required before it can be demolished.

"The contract extension provides the best overall solution for completing demolition of the Main Plant Process Building in a safe and compliant manner," according to the statement.

The building was the center of operations by Nuclear Fuel Services Inc. to reprocess spent nuclear fuel rods from civilian and military nuclear plants to recover plutonium and other material from 1966 to 1972 when the plant closed. The extensive cleanup at the site got underway after passage of the **West Valley Demonstration Project Act** in 1980.

April 14, 2020

“Based upon lessons learned from demolition of other contaminated facilities at **West Valley**, as well as other DOE sites, the extension eliminates previous incentives focused on cost and schedule, and replaces them with a new highly incentivized Performance-Based Incentive (PBI) structure aligned with the work to be performed.”

The contractor will be required to perform work safely and efficiently until the activities under the scope of work are completed.

The total value of the extension modification is \$243 million. The new contract value will be approximately \$836 million.

(Contact reporter Rick Miller at rmiller@oleantimesherald.com. Follow him on Twitter, @RMillerOTH)



ECA UPDATE

Apr 20, 2020

CONTRACTS

DOE extends contracts across the complex

ECA Staff | 4/20/2020

Last year, ECA highlighted major EM contracts that were set to expire in 2020. DOE has announced several extensions and awards in recent months:

- **Environmental Program Services in Nevada**
 - Extended through 7/31/20. Originally ending 1/31/20
- **Security Services at Savannah River Site**
 - Extended through 10/7/20. Originally ending 2/7/20.
- **Hanford Site Infrastructure Services**
 - Extended through 11/25/20. Originally ending 5/25/20.
- **Waste Isolation Pilot Plant Management and Operating Contract**
 - Extended through 9/30/22. Originally ending 9/30/20.
- **West Valley Demonstration Project Interim End State**
 - Extended through 6/29/23. Originally ending 4/17/20.

The remaining 11 contracts have not yet been extended and have an end date in 2020 (current as of April 9, 2020):

- **NRC Licensed Facilities Management Contract in Idaho**
 - Ending 3/31/20 (no change).
- **Decontamination & Decommissioning Project for the East Tennessee Technology Park**
 - Ending 7/31/20 (no change).
- **Hanford 222-S Laboratory Analysis and Testing Services**
 - Ending 9/20/20 (no change).
- **Tank Operations Contract at Hanford**
 - Ending 9/30/20 (no change).
- **Paducah Infrastructure Services**
 - Ending 9/30/20 (no change).
- **Hanford Site Central Plateau Remediation**
 - Ending 9/30/20 (no change).
- **Design, Construction and Commissioning of the Salt Waste Processing Facility at Savannah River Site**
 - Ending 9/30/20 (no change).
- **Savannah River Liquid Waste Program**
 - Ending 9/30/20 (no change).
- **Management and Operation (M&O) of the Savannah River Site**
 - Ending 9/30/20 (no change).
- **Transuranic Waste Processing at Oak Ridge**
 - Ending 10/26/20 (no change).
- **Carlsbad Technical Assistance Contract**
 - Ending 12/3/20 (no change).

EM also recently began the procurement process for the DUF6 conversion contract for the **Portsmouth Paducah Project Office**, issuing a request for information (RFI)/sources sought notice in late March. The current contract held by Mid-America Conversion Services, LLC expires in January 2022. A procurement site for this contract is available [here](#).

While the management contract for **Savannah River National Laboratory** is set to end in October this year, DOE [issued](#) a draft request for proposals (RFP) for a new 10-year, \$3.8 billion contract. DOE has the option to extend the current contract for up to two more years while a final RFP and potential award are pending.

In addition to recent action on EM contracts, DOE/NNSA [announced](#) a major extension for UT-Battelle to continue management of **Oak Ridge National Laboratory** (ORNL) for another five-year period. It is the fourth extension for UT-Battelle at ORNL since it began its management in 2000.

JOURNAL

SPRINGVILLE



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April 23, 2020

Ashford Town Board discusses COVID-19 impacts

Max Borsuk
Editor

The Ashford Town Board, at its April 15 meeting via teleconferencing, discussed what the town is doing to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 and heard reports from others within the town who are also taking precautionary steps.

Supervisor John Pfeffer reported a State of Emergency was declared for the Town of Ashford as of April 15 due to emergency conditions produced by COVID-19. Pfeffer also started soliciting people in the community who would be able to help deliver meals to people in need, with a number of people who offered to help with various organizations including the West Valley Food Pantry. The town is also continuing communication with Cattaraugus County regarding updates with COVID-19.

Highway Superintendent Tim Engels reported the highway department is continuing to work in a safe manner and is following guidelines and orders from the state and county. Engels and Pfeffer continue to talk on a weekly basis regarding the highway department to make sure everything is running smoothly and all required measures are being followed.

Department of Energy **West Valley Demonstration Project** Director Brian Bower talked about what precautions and steps are being taken at the **WVDP** regarding COVID-19. Bower reported there are no COVID-19 confirmed cases at the **WVDP** and are currently working with a limited number of staff at the site. Crews at the **WVDP** are also complying with the executive order to wear masks when employees are not able to practice social distancing.

New York State Energy Research and Development Agency West Valley Program Director Paul Bembia reported that **NYSERDA** is complying with Governor Andrew Cuomo's executive orders on teleworking. **NYSERDA** staff in **West Valley** are conducting routine work activities from home, while state license disposal area inspections, environmental monitoring and other required activities are being conducted as scheduled in a safe manner.

In other news:

– Bower reported DOE has extended the contract with CH2M HILL BWXT **West Valley**, LLC by 39 months to June 2023 for decommissioning activities at the **WVDP**. The purpose for the extension was to address the impacts associated with the pause of the main plant demolition, as well as incorporating lessons learned from the demolition of the vitrification facility and other successful demolitions at the site.

The next Town of Ashford board meeting will be on Wednesday, May 13 at 7:30 p.m.

04-28-2020

A Glass Nightmare: Cleaning Up the Cold War's Nuclear Legacy at Hanford

Scientists have spent three decades cleaning up the Hanford Site's 177 giant tanks of radioactive sludge. And they're just getting started

By Maria Gallucci



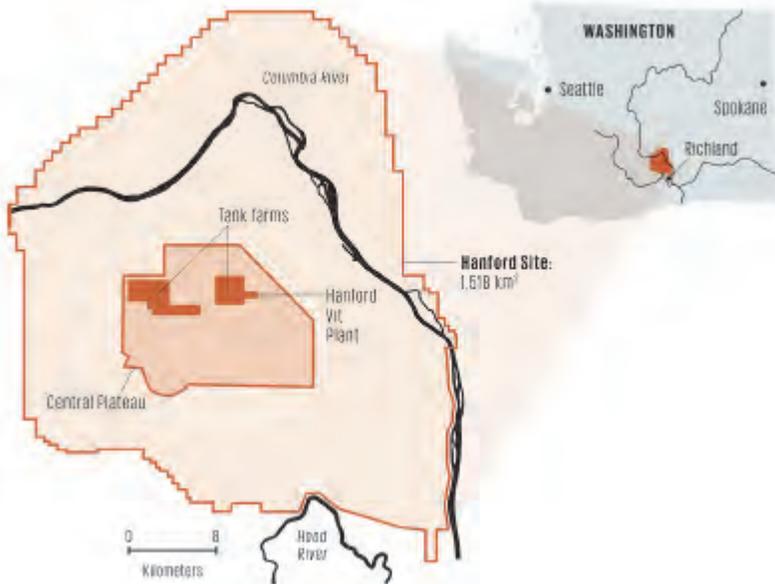
Photos: U.S. Department of Energy

The Hanford Site, in south-central Washington state, produced plutonium for nuclear weapons during World War II and the Cold War. The Hanford Vit Plant is designed to clean up the waste from that nuclear legacy.

It's a place of superlatives. Reporters have called it the most polluted place in the Western Hemisphere. It's also the location of one of the [largest construction projects](#) in the world.

At the [Hanford Site](#) in south-central Washington state, 177 giant tanks sit below the sandy soil, brimming with the radioactive remnants of 44 years of nuclear-materials production. From World War II through the Cold War, Hanford churned out plutonium for more than 60,000 nuclear weapons, including the atomic bomb that razed Nagasaki, Japan, in August 1945. The sprawling enterprise eventually contaminated the soil and groundwater and left behind 212 million liters of toxic waste—enough to fill 85 Olympic-size swimming pools. Decades after the site stopped producing plutonium, the U.S. government is still grappling with how to clean it all up.

Today the 1,500-square-kilometer site, roughly half the size of Rhode Island, is a quiet expanse of sagebrush and wispy grasses outside Richland, Wash. The underground steel-and-reinforced-concrete tanks are grouped in “farms” beneath a central plateau, while shuttered nuclear reactors stand like sentinels on the periphery. Scientists have identified some 1,800 contaminants inside the tanks, including plutonium, uranium, cesium, aluminum, iodine, and mercury. Watery liquids rest atop goop as thick as peanut butter and salt cakes resembling wet beach sand.



Map: James Provost

The waste is what's left of an intense period in wartime and Cold War innovation. Starting in 1943, Hanford experts pioneered industrial-scale methods for chemically separating plutonium from irradiated uranium, and doing so safely. Their original [bismuth-phosphate process](#) yielded hockey-puck-size "buttons" of plutonium, which were then formed into spherical cores and used in the 1945 Trinity atomic bomb test in New Mexico and then the Nagasaki bomb. Over the years, five more processes followed, culminating with [plutonium uranium extraction \(PUREX\)](#), which became the global standard for processing nuclear fuels.

Each of these methods produced its own distinct waste streams, which were stored onsite and then pumped into underground storage tanks. When some of the older single-shell tanks started leaking years later, workers pumped the liquids into newer, sturdier double-shell tanks. Chemical reactions ensued as the different waste products mixed together, leaving each tank filled with its own complex aggregation of liquids, solids, and sludges.

The upshot is that by 1987, when Hanford stopped producing plutonium, the tank farms contained a deadly brew of chemicals, metals, and long-lasting radionuclides. No two of the 177 tanks contain exactly the same concoction, but they all pose a significant public risk. The site borders the Columbia River, which nourishes the region's potato crops and vineyards, serves as a breeding ground for salmon, and provides drinking water for millions of people. So far, the aging, corroding vessels have leaked roughly 4 million liters. Some experts have said it's only a matter of time before more waste seeps through the cracks.

The [U.S. Department of Energy \(DOE\)](#), which controls Hanford, has for decades had a goal of treating and "vitrifying," or glassifying, the tank waste for safer disposal. Vitrification is a time-tested method for immobilizing radioactive waste by turning it into glass blocks. With the waste thus encased, the harmful radionuclides cannot leach into rivers or underground water tables. To enhance the isolation, the most radioactive blocks are put in steel containers, which can then be deposited in a dry and geologically stable underground vault. [Vitrification plants](#) have been built and successfully operated in Belgium, France, Germany, Japan, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

By the Numbers

Hanford's 177 waste tanks hold anywhere from 208,000 liters to 3.8 million liters.

The tanks contain a total of 212 million liters of toxic waste—enough to fill 85 Olympic-size swimming pools.

There are 149 single-shell tanks, built between 1943 and 1964, and 28 larger, double-shell tanks, built from 1968 to 1986.

But Hanford's waste is unique among the world's nuclear leftovers, in both composition and volume. Before they can turn it into glass, workers must first figure out exactly what is inside each tank and then develop glassmaking formulas for each batch.

It is a monumental task, and it's just one facet of one of the biggest engineering projects in the world. The centerpiece of the work is a series of vast facilities called the Waste Treatment and Immobilization Plant, also known as the [Hanford Vit Plant](#), sprawled over some 25 hectares (65 acres). The

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DOE currently estimates that it will cost US \$16.8 billion to finish the plant, which is being built by [Bechtel National](#) and a host of subcontractors. Even as scientists continue to puzzle over Hanford's tank waste, and as contractors flip the lights on in shiny new buildings, concerns about massive cost overruns, [contractor lapses](#), and missed deadlines weigh heavily on the project. Hanford, born and built feverishly in the heat of World War II, now seems to be in a slow, meandering slog toward an unseen finish line.

"Hanford is unique," says [Will Eaton](#), who leads the vitrification task force at the DOE's [Pacific Northwest National Laboratory \(PNNL\)](#) in Richland. "There's been lots of work done on the details, to make sure we have the highest likelihood of real, efficient success when we get going. Because it's a long mission." Eaton, who is 53 years old, adds, "My goal is that the plant actually starts up before I retire."

I visited Hanford in July 2019 to get a better understanding of the many challenges facing the beleaguered vitrification project. I met Eaton on a blindingly sunny afternoon on the PNNL campus, which sits in an oasis of green trees amid the desert scrub. Hanford begins directly across the street, stretching out toward the flat ridge of Rattlesnake Mountain.

Eaton held up a clear plexiglass vessel, about 13 centimeters in diameter. In May 2018, his team used containers like this to glassify 11 liters of waste from two of the Hanford tanks. As a safety precaution, the experiment was conducted beneath a radioisotope fume hood. Those vessels contain the largest volume of Hanford waste that's been vitrified so far, after three decades and billions of dollars. Just 211,999,989 more liters to go.

1. The Tanks



For more than 40 years, radioactive waste from plutonium processing was pumped into 177 underground storage tanks on the Hanford Site [above]. Each tank contains a uniquely toxic mix of liquids, solids, and sludges [below, top]; some of the older tanks are leaking [below, bottom]. Researchers have spent decades figuring out how to treat and then safely store the waste. Tank cleanup is expected to take another 60 years and cost as much as US \$550 billion.



Photos: U.S. Department of Energy

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After I met with Eaton, I set off to visit Hanford. The DOE wasn't letting individual journalists visit the Vit Plant, so I opted for the next best thing: I joined a public tour of the Hanford cleanup site. About a dozen passengers and I rode in an air-conditioned bus through the reservation, most of which resembles arid parkland. Tall bluffs stand off in the distance, carved by ancient rivers. Herds of elk sought shade among spindly trees near an abandoned schoolhouse.

It's an incongruous but resonant sight. In 1943, as part of the Manhattan Project, the U.S. government seized a vast swath of land, including the towns of White Bluffs and Hanford, to build a [nuclear manufacturing complex](#). The government ordered 1,500 homesteaders to leave their farms and towns, and Native American tribes were barred from visiting sacred fishing, hunting, and ceremonial grounds. To the west, members of the Wanapum tribe still live in a community that overlooks Hanford.

As the bus ascends the central plateau, sweeping vistas give way to rumbling forklifts, workers in hard hats, and buildings wrapped in scaffolding. Our tour guide notes that this great-nephew works here as a welder, a member of the 2,800-person construction crew.

The Vit Plant was born out of a comprehensive 1989 cleanup agreement among the DOE, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the state of Washington's Department of Ecology. Construction began in 2002 and was supposed to wrap up by 2011, at a cost of \$4.3 billion. But a series of major unforeseen problems soon cropped up, including dangerous hydrogen accumulation in piping and ancillary vessels, and inadequate ventilation for managing radon and other gases that are produced as the radioactive waste material breaks down. Cost estimates soared, and timelines stretched.

Today, the Vit Plant is a complex of buildings the size of a small town. Its 56 systems require an electric power grid that could light up 2,250 houses; a chilled-water system could supply air-conditioning to 23,500 houses. A 1.3-million-liter storage tank can hold enough diesel fuel to fill the tanks of 19,000 cars at once.

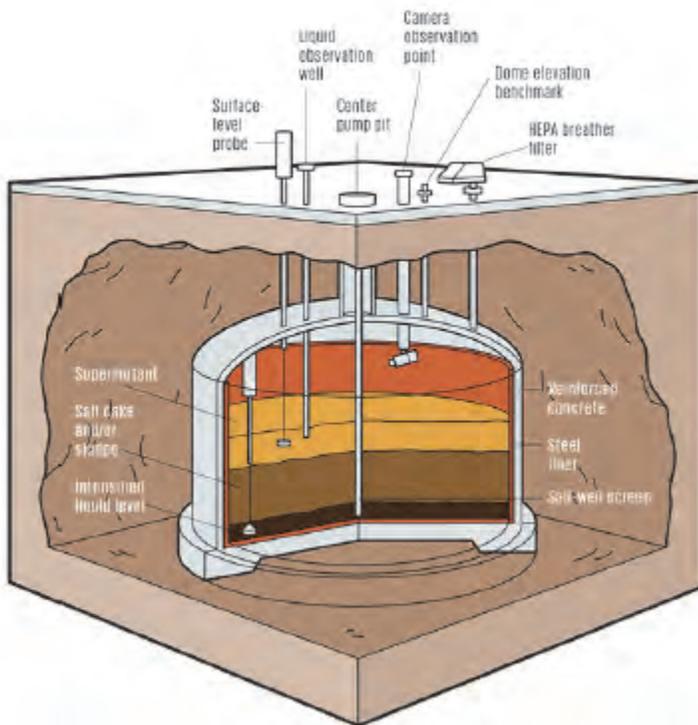


Illustration: James Provost

Some of Hanford's single-shell tanks [above] have leaked 4 million liters of waste into the surrounding soil and groundwater. The single-shell tank design was later replaced with a sturdier, double-shell design.

Even after the Vit Plant is completed, the actual cleanup will take decades more. In its [2019 Hanford Lifecycle Scope, Schedule and Cost Report](#) [PDF], the DOE estimated that the process of vitrifying and disposing of Hanford's waste could cost as much as \$550 billion and last 60 years.

The plan calls for tank waste to flow via underground pipes to a massive pretreatment facility. This facility will eventually rise 12 stories, although during my tour it's still just an outline of metal frames, above which hovers a motionless yellow crane. Inside sealed tanks, pulse-jet mixers, working like turkey basters, will suck up the waste and eject it at high velocity, to keep the whole tank mixed and prevent solid particles from settling.

Ion exchangers will remove highly radioactive isotopes, dividing the waste stream into two groups. High-level radioactive waste makes up only about 10 percent of the total waste by volume but accounts for 90 percent of the radioactivity, Eaton says. The remaining waste is considered low-activity waste, containing very small amounts of radionuclides.

The appropriate streams will flow to separate high-level and low-activity vitrification facilities. In both, technicians will mix the waste with silica and other glass-forming materials and then pour the lot into a ceramic-lined melter. Immersed electrodes will heat the melter's tank to nearly 1,150 °C,

turning the mixture into a red-hot goop of molten glass. Low-activity waste will be poured into a container made of stainless steel, where it will cool and harden into a 2.3-meter-tall, 1.2-meter-diameter log. High-level waste will go into longer, skinnier 4.4-meter-tall, 0.6-meter-diameter canisters, also made of stainless steel.

Off-gases, including steam and nitrogen oxides, will exit through a nozzle in the melter's roof, to be collected and treated to remove radioactive isotopes and keep pollutants out of the environment. Up to 1,000 steel-encased logs of low-activity waste will be produced each year and then buried in nearby trenches. The Vit Plant complex also includes an analytical laboratory, which will test some 3,000 glass samples of low-activity waste each year, ensuring that the vitrified waste meets regulatory requirements.

Once completed, the high-level waste plant is slated to produce some 640 canisters per year. The vitrified high-level waste is considered too dangerous to keep on-site, even inside the steel canisters. Instead, that waste will be sent to an as-yet-unidentified offsite location. The original plan called for the high-level waste to be buried in a deep geologic repository such as the proposed and long-delayed [Yucca Mountain site](#) in Nevada. Construction on Yucca Mountain began [in 1994](#) but was halted during the Obama administration amid fierce resistance from Nevada politicians, Native American groups, environmentalists, and others. President Trump, who called for the revival of the project early in his administration, recently reversed his stance on the matter. At present, there are no plans to build a deep repository anywhere in the United States.

Meanwhile, Hanford cleanup experts are figuring out ways to dramatically reduce the number of vitrified logs they'll need to produce and store. When workers began building the Vit Plant 18 years ago, for instance, researchers were designing glasses that contained no more than 10 percent waste, the rest being materials necessary for glass forming. By modeling different formulas, a team at PNNL found they could double the waste portion to 20 percent, in part by finding ways to accommodate more aluminum, chromium, and other chemicals. That could halve the number of glass logs that Hanford has to produce and store.

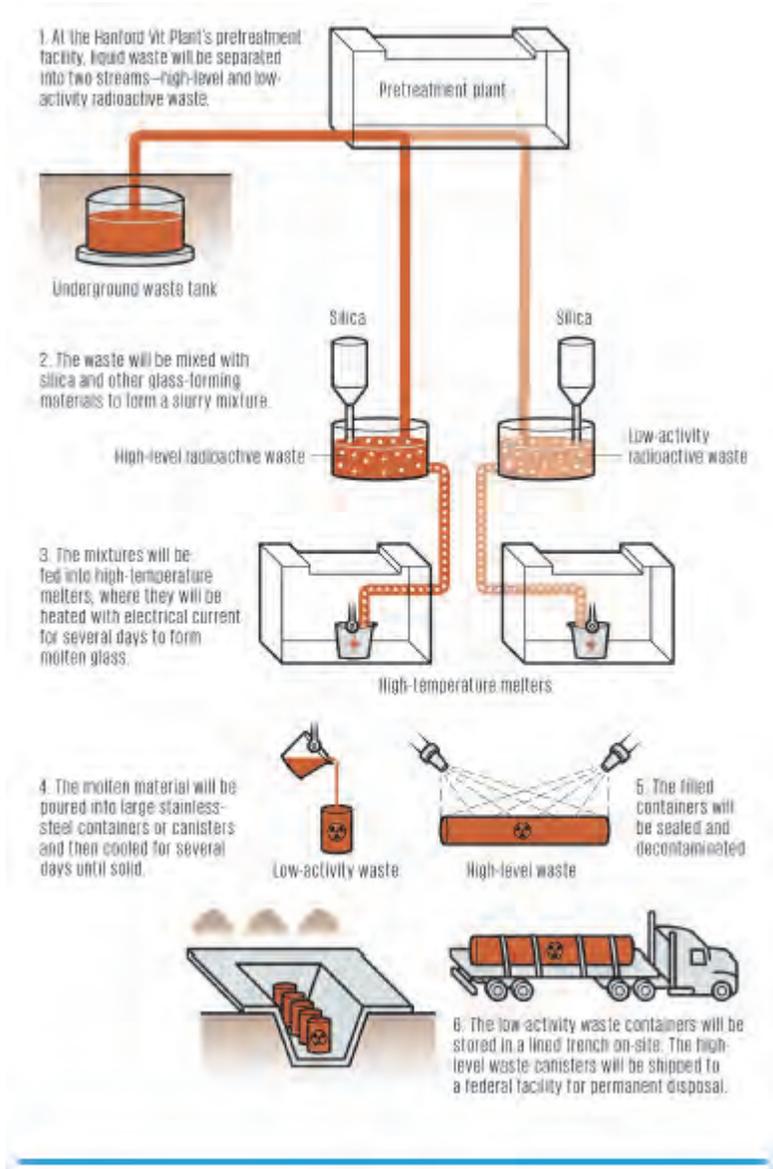
2. Vitrification

Treating Hanford's radioactive waste involves "vitrifying" it into glass blocks for safer disposal. Other sites around the world have used vitrification to successfully immobilize their nuclear waste. But Hanford's waste is so complex and varied that scientists need to devise a unique vitrification "recipe" for each batch of waste. Eventually, stainless-steel-encased vitrified logs of low-activity waste will be buried on the Hanford Site. High-level vitrified waste will be transported to an as-yet-undetermined site.

Photo: Pacific Northwest National Laboratory/Science Source; Illustration: James Provost



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As the tour bus winds its way through the Hanford Site, empty dirt patches mark the footprints of demolished buildings from the plutonium-production period. Their scraps are now interred in a massive landfill, which holds more than 16 million metric tons of low-level radioactive, hazardous, and mixed wastes. A Hanford employee on the bus points to black pipes snaking along the road; these carry contaminated groundwater away from the Columbia River and toward a central treatment plant, we're told.

During Hanford's plutonium-production heyday, workers discharged some 1.7 trillion liters of waste liquids into soil disposal sites, which developed into vast underground plumes of toxic chemicals, including the carcinogens [hexavalent chromium](#) and [carbon tetrachloride](#) [PDF], that infiltrated aquifers. Today six underground pump-and-treat systems hydraulically push contaminants toward the 200 West Groundwater Treatment Plant, a cavernous space filled with silver tubes and tall gray bioreactors. The plant's operator, CH2M Hill (now part of [Jacobs Engineering Group](#)), says it treats some 7.6 billion liters of groundwater every year. In September 2019, workers removed the last of the highly radioactive sludge that was being stored in underwater containers near the river.

Our tour complete, the bus heads back down the dusty plateau, past taco trucks and wisecracking signs: "Got Sludge? Yes We Do!"

The construction is "essentially complete," "the DOE says, on the Vit Plant's low-activity vitrification facility, analytical laboratory, and most of the smaller support buildings. But work on the pretreatment facility has been "deferred," as Hanford experts try to resolve technical questions regarding the separation and processing of waste and the design life of the facility's equipment. In late 2016, officials also decided to halt construction on the high-level vitrification facility so they could focus on treating the low-activity waste.

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To make progress on the low-activity waste, the DOE's latest strategy calls for bypassing the pretreatment facility. Instead, the liquid waste will be pumped into a smaller system, near the tanks where the waste is being stored. This system will filter out large solids and remove radioactive cesium, which has a relatively short half-life but emits high amounts of tissue-damaging gamma radiation and is thus considered the most immediately dangerous of the radionuclides in the waste. The liquid will then flow directly to the low-activity waste vitrification plant to be glassified. An effluent-management facility will handle the liquid waste produced by the glass melters and off-gas treatment system.

The [DOE's Office of River Protection](#), which oversees the tank cleanup mission, says it is on track to start processing low-activity waste this way as soon as 2022. As part of the preparations, in May 2019, Hanford workers began installing two towering, 145-metric-ton vessels that will hold effluent.

Last August, officials from the DOE and Bechtel National celebrated the opening of a 1,860-square-meter annex to the low-activity waste facility. The building houses the control room and operations center, where workers will perform startup and testing activities.

At the ribbon-cutting ceremony, the Vit Plant's project director, Valerie McCain, said, "We are getting closer to making low-activity-waste glass."

It's anybody's guess when Hanford will start vitrifying the high-level waste. The DOE says the technical issues that stalled construction have mostly been resolved but that it "cannot project with certainty" when the pretreatment and high-level waste vitrification facilities will be completed and put into service. The answer depends on many variables, including federal funding, the efficiency of contractors, and the pace of technological advances. In September, the department warned regulators in the state of Washington that it is at "serious" risk of missing deadlines to start treating high-level waste by 2033 and have the plant fully operational by 2036. The deadlines are specified in legal agreements among the DOE, the state of Washington, and other interested parties.

Meanwhile, the DOE is also studying alternative methods for treating some of the waste, including filling the tanks with a concrete-like grout, to in effect immobilize the waste in place. Officials had considered such a strategy earlier in the cleanup mission, but they ultimately ruled that vitrification was the safest, surest path for treatment.

3. Work in Progress

The US \$16.8 billion Hanford Vit Plant [below, top] is designed to separate and process the Hanford Site's 212 million liters of radioactive tank waste. Under construction since 2002, it has yet to begin treating waste. Melters [below, middle left] will heat low-activity waste, silica, and other glass-forming materials to nearly 1,150 °C. The low-activity waste vitrification facility [below, bottom] will handle about 90 percent of Hanford's tank waste. Low-activity waste contains very small amounts of radionuclides. Vitrified high-level waste will be stored in stainless-steel canisters [below, middle right].



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Photos, from top: Bechtel National (3); bottom: Washington Department of Ecology

Regulators as well as activists say they are frustrated to be revisiting the glass-versus-grout debate, particularly given how much work is still left on the Vit Plant. “It can be hard on folks to feel like they’re beating their heads against a wall and not actually accomplishing the stuff they set out to accomplish,” says Alex Smith, the nuclear waste program manager for Washington state’s Department of Ecology.

Adding to the sense of inertia is the somber fact that most people working on Hanford cleanup today won’t be alive to see the end results. A person in her 40s now would be a centenarian in 2078, the year the DOE expects to conclude its cleanup work.

“It’s easy to say, ‘Well, what do you care? You’re not going to be here when the consequences of this decision hit,’” Smith adds. “It’s really a challenge for our workforce, for the DOE workforce, and for people who have been working at Hanford for a long time.”

To keep people aware of the Hanford mission, Smith’s department is increasing community outreach, through social media and school talks. She says public awareness is key to ensuring lawmakers continue to fund the cleanup—even if most U.S. taxpayers have never even heard of it. The waste may be buried in Washington state, but it’s the product of federal actions meant to safeguard the entire country, through nuclear weapons production.

“We feel that this is a national cleanup,” agrees Susan Leckband, who chairs the [Hanford Advisory Board](#). The board offers policy advice to the DOE and regulators, and it includes local experts, current and former Hanford workers, representatives from neighboring Oregon, and members of three tribal governments: Nez Perce Tribe, Yakama Nation, and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation.

Leckband acknowledges that people outside of Washington state don’t necessarily share the board’s perspective. “They have their own problems,” she says. “I get that. There are not unlimited funds.” She worries about a growing push for “faster and less expensive” solutions to the cleanup mission, rather than a “better and more permanent” approach.

John Vienna, a materials scientist at Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, hands me a shiny rectangular glass slab. The rusty red and orange stripes are iron, he says, of which there’s an abundance in Hanford’s high-level waste. Vienna’s team analyzes myriad materials to observe how they behave in glass. Inside the lab, cross-sections of metal canisters reveal glasslike obsidian, made from simulants of high-level tank waste. Chunks as green as emeralds contain low-activity waste simulants.

Vienna explains that the contaminants don’t sit inside the glass, like beer swishing in a bottle. Rather, they become part of the “bottle” itself, atomically bound in place until the glass dissolves—which won’t be for “upwards of a million years,” he says. By then, the troubling radionuclides will all have decayed to relatively benign levels.

The two waste types are challenging to treat for different reasons. High-level waste contains higher levels of the “cold chemicals,” such as aluminum, that were used in the more inefficient stages of plutonium production and that don’t dissolve easily in glass. Low-activity waste is mostly made of sodium salts, which can make glass less durable. Glass formulations must account for these distinct complications.

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Photos: Maria Gallucci

John Vienna [above, top] is a researcher at Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, in Richland, Wash. He's holding a nonradioactive mixture of water and chemicals that simulate Hanford's high-level waste. In the bottom photo are samples of some of those chemicals.



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Scientists at PNNL's sprawling campus have worked on waste vitrification for more than half a century. In the 1970s, for example, the lab developed the technology for the ceramic melters at the heart of Hanford's high-level waste and low-activity waste facilities. Other U.S. locations as well as sites in Japan and Europe have used the technology to glassify their nuclear waste. Glassification began in 1996 at the [DOE's Savannah River Site](#) in South Carolina, the United States' other plutonium-production site, where some 133 million liters of radioactive liquid waste were stored. To date, a little over half of the waste has been processed. At the [West Valley Demonstration Project](#), near Buffalo, N.Y., the DOE vitrified all 2.3 million liters of waste before demolishing the facility.

Compared to Hanford, those sites had less waste, and it was far more uniform in composition. For [West Valley](#), scientists spent years developing one general formula that could be used to treat all of the waste, says Vienna, who worked on that [project](#) and several others. Given the sheer volume and complexity of Hanford's 212 million liters of tank waste, experts have to take a different approach.

Researchers at PNNL are creating computational models based on the behavior of actual tank waste, chemically similar simulants, and lab tests. Inside clear cabinets, they study how glass samples are affected by extremely high and low temperatures and by water, so that they can verify the glass will dissolve slowly enough to outlive the radioactive hazard. To understand the effects of time, they've examined the structures of ancient glasses, including a 2- to 4-million-year-old piece of Icelandic basalt glass and a 1,800-year-old bowl handle recovered from a shipwreck in the Adriatic Sea. The idea is that when the Vit Plant becomes operational, experts will be able to refine the glass compositions on the fly, right up until the mixtures hit the melter. Vienna's group is responsible for the modeling that will enable Hanford to double the amount of waste per glass log, for instance.

"Part of what our group does is understand how we can push the limits," says [Charmayne Lonergan](#), a PNNL materials scientist. "As you start doing that, you start cutting back on the number of years that processing all the waste may take. You start cutting back on costs, time, labor, facilities, and resources."

Meanwhile, the clock is ticking, and an air of uncertainty still surrounds the Vit Plant. The DOE is moving to reclassify some of the nation's nuclear waste as less dangerous, which could allow it to sidestep vitrification for some of Hanford's tank waste.

Policy changes designed to accelerate cleanup have to be weighed against the safety and well-being of people who won't be born for tens of thousands of years.

In particular, the department said in June 2019 that it was changing the way it interpreted the [definition of "high-level radioactive waste"](#) at Hanford, Savannah River, and the Idaho National Laboratory. Traditionally, any by-products that result from processing highly radioactive nuclear fuels have been considered high level and must be buried in deep geological repositories. All of Hanford's waste (before pretreatment) falls into this category. The department wants to instead categorize waste based not on how it was produced but on its chemical composition.

Under the revised definition, waste from fuel processing could be considered "low-level radioactive waste" if it doesn't exceed certain radioactive concentration limits. The limit for cesium-137, for instance, is 4,600 curies (or 1.7×10^{14} becquerels) per cubic meter.

Under the new interpretation, low-level waste wouldn't necessarily have to move through Hanford's pretreatment and vitrification facilities. Some of it could potentially be turned into a groutlike form and trucked to a private waste repository in Texas. In other cases, Hanford workers could pour grout directly into tanks, as was done with seven underground vessels at Savannah River.

Federal officials and other proponents of this strategy say these steps could dramatically cut the time and cost required to treat Hanford's tank waste. PNNL and five other DOE national laboratories have voiced "strong support" for the technical merits of the new interpretation.

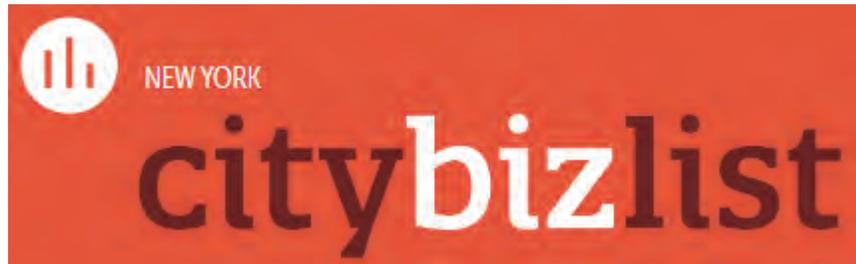
[Paul M. Dabbar](#), the DOE's Under Secretary for Science, told reporters that the department will "analyze each waste stream and manage it in accordance with Nuclear Regulatory Commission standards, with the goal of getting the lower-level waste out of these states without sacrificing public safety." He said that each tank considered for classification as low-level waste would require an environmental study, under the National Environmental Policy Act.

But critics, including Washington governor Jay Inslee and the state's Department of Ecology, say that reclassifying Hanford's waste will jeopardize environmental safety and give the DOE unilateral control over the cleanup mission. In a letter to the DOE, leaders of the Yakama Nation expressed their concern that the changes would lead to more contamination at the site and "a lower standard of clean-up."

This latest controversy highlights the constant calculations that officials, regulators, activists, and citizens must make in confronting Hanford's toxic legacy. Policy changes designed to accelerate cleanup have to be weighed against the safety and well-being of people who won't be born for tens of thousands of years. Waste treatment methods are viewed through the prism of limited, and often dwindling, congressional funding. Scientific results don't exist in a vacuum—they are interpreted according to political motives, public opinions, and business interests.

Leckband, the Hanford Advisory Board chair, says it's important to take the long view. "Our mantra is, we want the best cleanup possible—for the public, the people who are paying for it, the people who will be drinking the water, breathing the air, and eating the vegetables in the entire Pacific Northwest as well as the country," Leckband says. "It needs to be done not just for us, but also for future generations."

This article appears in the May 2020 print issue as "What to Do With 177 Giant Tanks of Radioactive Sludge."



4/29/20

BWXT Environmental Management Joint Venture Earns \$243M Contract Extension

LYNCHBURG, Va.--([BUSINESS WIRE](#))--**BWX Technologies, Inc.** (NYSE: BWXT) announced today that the U.S Department of Energy (DOE) has extended CH2M Hill BWXT West Valley, LLC's (CHBWV) cleanup contract at the [West Valley Demonstration Project](#) in New York State by an additional 39 months to June 2023. The purpose of the \$243 million extension is to enable CHBWV to safely and efficiently complete deactivation, demolition and removal of the Main Plant Process Building, which was the only commercially operated nuclear fuel reprocessing plant in the United States, as well as other facility disposition activities.

"BWXT has successfully partnered with Jacobs and the DOE's Office of Environmental Management at [West Valley](#) since the contract was awarded in 2011," said **Ken Camplin**, president of BWXT's Nuclear Services Group, Inc. "We appreciate that the DOE has recognized our performance at the site, and we remain committed to utilizing our nuclear operations and environmental expertise in fulfilling the cleanup mission on the project."

Since it began work at [West Valley](#), CHBWV has removed seven of the nine facilities surrounding the Main Plant Process Building and has completed 98% of the deactivation work required before it can be demolished. Significant infrastructure improvements have also been completed to support the current and future cleanup efforts at the site.

About BWXT

At BWX Technologies, Inc. (NYSE: BWXT), we are People Strong, Innovation Driven. Headquartered in Lynchburg, Va., BWXT provides safe and effective nuclear solutions for national security, clean energy, environmental remediation, nuclear medicine and space exploration. With approximately 6,600 employees, BWXT has 12 major operating sites in the U.S. and Canada. In addition, BWXT joint ventures provide management and operations at more than a dozen U.S. Department of Energy and NASA facilities. Follow us on Twitter at [@BWXTech](#) and learn more at www.bwxt.com.



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DOE extends Jacobs-led project on clearing former nuclear fuel reprocessing plant in NY



Energy infrastructure engineering firm Jacobs has gained a 39-month extension on its contract to deactivate and demolish buildings at a decommissioned nuclear fuel reprocessing plant in New York.

U.S. Department of Energy, Office of Environmental Management (DOE-EM) awarded the extension contract estimated at \$243 million, bringing the entire new contract to more than \$800 million.

The **West Valley Demonstration Project** is a long-term remediation effort at the site which was decommissioned beginning in 2011. Jacobs is leading a joint venture which includes CH2M, Hill and BWXT.

The purpose of the extension is for the joint venture team to complete deactivation, demolition and removal of the last major facility standing at the site-the main plant processing building (MPPB).

The team has demolished 44 of 47 site facilities so far, as well as cleanup efforts at the **West Valley Demonstration Project**. Jacobs led a major milestone in late 2018 when the 10,000-square-foot vitrification plant was demolished and legacy waste was disposed.

The company called it the largest and most complex environmental cleanup of the entire effort. The CHBWV team has completed 98 percent of the deactivation work required before the MPPB can be demolished.

“The Jacobs team has performed impressive and impactful work at the site and around the **West Valley**, New York community for the past 10 years,” said Jacobs Critical Mission Solutions North American Nuclear Senior Vice President and General Manager Karen Wiemelt. “I’m confident in our ability to continue to perform and exceed expectations throughout the contract extension.”

The **West Valley Demonstration Project** was created by Congress after the site was abandoned in 1980, according to reports. The site was called **Western New York Nuclear Service Center** and was charged with handling commercial spent nuclear fuel for reprocessing.

Jacobs-Led LLC at West Valley Demonstration Project Receives Contract Extension from DOE

NEWS PROVIDED BY

[Jacobs](#)

Apr 29, 2020, 07:45 ET

DALLAS, April 29, 2020 /PRNewswire/ -- Jacobs (NYSE: J), as part of CH2M Hill BWXT West Valley, LLC (CHBWV), a Jacobs-led joint venture, was awarded a contract extension from the U.S. Department of Energy, Office of Environmental Management (DOE-EM) at the **West Valley Demonstration Project**.

DOE-EM estimates the 39-month contract extension modification to be valued at \$243 million, bringing the new contract value to a total of \$836 million.

"The Jacobs team has performed impressive and impactful work at the site and around the **West Valley**, New York community for the past 10 years," said Jacobs Critical Mission Solutions North American Nuclear Senior Vice President and General Manager Karen Wiemelt. "I'm confident in our ability to continue to perform and exceed expectations throughout the contract extension."

The purpose of the more than three-year extension is for the CHBWV team to safely and compliantly complete the deactivation, demolition and removal of the last major facility remaining at the site, the Main Plant Processing Building (MPPB), as well as other facility disposition activities.

The CHBWV team has completed 98% of the deactivation work required before the MPPB can be demolished. The team also has demolished 44 of 47 site facilities to date, in addition to significantly improving infrastructure to support the cleanup efforts at the site, both current and future. Jacobs reached major milestones late 2018 when crews completed the demolition of the 10,000-square-foot vitrification plant and disposition of legacy waste, the largest and most complex environmental cleanup at the site.

The **West Valley Demonstration Project** is an environmental remediation project at the site of a former commercial nuclear fuel reprocessing center located about 40 miles south of Buffalo, New York. Since taking control of the site to carry out the first phase of decommissioning activities that began in August 2011, the Jacobs-led team has been conducting cleanup and facility demolition activities and is actively engaged in removing radioactive waste, contaminated equipment and obsolete structures from the 200-acre site.



04-29-2020

At Jacobs, we're challenging today to reinvent tomorrow by solving the world's most critical problems for thriving cities, resilient environments, mission-critical outcomes, operational advancement, scientific discovery and cutting-edge manufacturing, turning abstract ideas into realities that transform the world for good. With \$13 billion in revenue and a talent force of more than 55,000, Jacobs provides a full spectrum of professional services including consulting, technical, scientific and project delivery for the government and private sector. Visit [jacobs.com](https://www.jacobs.com) and connect with Jacobs on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and Twitter.

Certain statements contained in this press release constitute forward-looking statements as such term is defined in Section 27A of the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, and Section 21E of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended, and such statements are intended to be covered by the safe harbor provided by the same. Statements made in this release that are not based on historical fact are forward-looking statements. We base these forward-looking statements on management's current estimates and expectations as well as currently available competitive, financial and economic data. Forward-looking statements, however, are inherently uncertain. There are a variety of factors that could cause business results to differ materially from our forward-looking statements, including, but not limited to, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the related reaction of governments on global and regional market conditions and the company's business. For a description of some additional factors that may occur that could cause actual results to differ from our forward-looking statements, see our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended September 27, 2019, and in particular the discussions contained under Item 1 - Business; Item 1A - Risk Factors; Item 3 - Legal Proceedings; and Item 7 - Management's Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations, as well as the company's other filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission. The company is not under any duty to update any of the forward-looking statements after the date of this press release to conform to actual results, except as required by applicable law.

For press/media inquiries:

Kerrie Sparks
214.583.8433

SOURCE Jacobs

Related Links

<https://www.jacobs.com>

Jacobs-led joint venture awarded \$234M contract extension

Apr. 29, 2020 9:35 AM ET|About: [Jacobs Engineering Grou... \(J\)](#)|By: [Akanksha Bakshi](#), SA News Editor

Jacobs ([J](#) +2.1%) led joint venture (CH2M Hill BWXT West Valley, LLC) has been [awarded](#) a contract extension from the U.S. Department of Energy, Office of Environmental Management (DOE-EM) at the [West Valley Demonstration Project](#).

DOE-EM estimates the 39-month contract extension modification to be valued at \$243M, bringing the new contract value to a total of \$836M.

Valdosta Daily Times

Your News. Your Voice. Your Times.

04-29-2020

BWXT Environmental Management Joint Venture Earns \$243 Million Contract Extension

LYNCHBURG, Va.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Apr 29, 2020--

BWX Technologies, Inc. (NYSE: BWXT) announced today that the U.S Department of Energy (DOE) has extended CH2M Hill BWXT West Valley, LLC's (CHBWV) cleanup contract at the **West Valley Demonstration Project** in New York State by an additional 39 months to June 2023. The purpose of the \$243 million extension is to enable CHBWV to safely and efficiently complete deactivation, demolition and removal of the Main Plant Process Building, which was the only commercially operated nuclear fuel reprocessing plant in the United States, as well as other facility disposition activities.

"BWXT has successfully partnered with Jacobs and the DOE's Office of Environmental Management at **West Valley** since the contract was awarded in 2011," said Ken Camplin, president of BWXT's Nuclear Services Group, Inc. "We appreciate that the DOE has recognized our performance at the site, and we remain committed to utilizing our nuclear operations and environmental expertise in fulfilling the cleanup mission on the project."

Since it began work at **West Valley**, CHBWV has removed seven of the nine facilities surrounding the Main Plant Process Building and has completed 98% of the deactivation work required before it can be demolished. Significant infrastructure improvements have also been completed to support the current and future cleanup efforts at the site.

Forward Looking Statements

Valdosta Daily Times

Your News. Your Voice. Your Times.

04-29-2020

BWXT cautions that this release contains forward-looking statements, including statements relating to the performance, timing, impact and value, to the extent contract value can be viewed as an indicator of future revenues, of the cleanup contract extension and the timing, benefits and impact of such contract. These forward-looking statements involve a number of risks and uncertainties, including, among other things, modification or termination of the contract. If one or more of these or other risks materialize, actual results may vary materially from those expressed. For a more complete discussion of these and other risk factors, please see BWXT's annual report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2019 and subsequent quarterly reports on Form 10-Q filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission. BWXT cautions not to place undue reliance on these forward-looking statements, which speak only as of the date of this release, and undertakes no obligation to update or revise any forward-looking statement, except to the extent required by applicable law.

About BWXT

At BWX Technologies, Inc. (NYSE: BWXT), we are People Strong, Innovation Driven. Headquartered in Lynchburg, Va., BWXT provides safe and effective nuclear solutions for national security, clean energy, environmental remediation, nuclear medicine and space exploration. With approximately 6,600 employees, BWXT has 12 major operating sites in the U.S. and Canada. In addition, BWXT joint ventures provide management and operations at more than a dozen U.S. Department of Energy and NASA facilities. Follow us on Twitter at [@BWXTech](#) and learn more at www.bwxt.com.



May 4, 2020

US DOE extends contract to clean up West Valley Demonstration Project

The US Department of Energy (DOE) has extended the cleanup contract with CH2M Hill BWXT West Valley, LLC's (CHBWV) at the **West Valley Demonstration Project** in New York State by an additional 39 months to June 2023.

The purpose of the \$243 million contract extension is to enable CHBWV to finish deactivation, demolition and removal of the Main Plant Process Building, which was the only commercially operated nuclear fuel reprocessing plant in the USA, as well as other facility disposition activities. The contract was originally awarded in 2011.

Since it started work at **West Valley**, CHBWV has removed seven of the nine facilities surrounding the Main Plant Process Building. The consortium has also completed 98% of the deactivation work required before it can be demolished.

Significant infrastructure improvements have also been completed to support the current and future cleanup efforts at the site, BWXT said.

The CH2M Hill BWXT West Valley is a joint venture of Jacobs, Babcox & Wilcox Technical Services Group (BWXT), Environmental Chemical Corporation; and American DND.

Face masks for WVDP employees purchased from local business



Photo submitted

An employee at the **West Valley Demonstration Project** wears one of the cloth face coverings recently purchased for all employees. Pictured in the background is the Main Plant Process Building, which is scheduled to be demolished this year.

WEST VALLEY — CH2M HILL BWXT West Valley (CHBWV), the prime contractor at the **West Valley Demonstration Project**, recently purchased cloth face coverings for its employees.

“Throughout the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the USDOE and CHBWV have continued to follow the guidelines of the Administration, DOE and other federal officials and state and local authorities,” USDOE-WVDP Director Bryan Bower, said. One of those guidelines was the use of cloth face coverings when social distancing is not practicable.

CHBWV’s Procurement team learned about a local business that just started producing cloth face coverings, and at a lower cost than other potential vendors providing value to taxpayers.

“The health and safety of all employees at the **West Valley** site remains our top priority,” said CHBWV President John Rendall. “The purchases we make as part of our ongoing cleanup efforts help protect employees, the general public and the environment. This purchase had a positive impact beyond our site by helping another organization and its employees. It also helped us save money by buying locally, providing value to the taxpayer and support to the community.”

This local business is also providing cloth face coverings for free to veterans, and a local non-profit receives one free face covering for every 10 made.

Using the procurement guidelines in the **West Valley** contract, CHBWV purchased the masks from Northeast Cleaners, a local business that is known for its dry-cleaning services and shirt laundering.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, both the **WVDP** and Northeast Cleaners have had to adjust to the impacts the virus has had on their operations. Together, both organizations have benefitted from their newfound partnership.

SPRINGVILLE JOURNAL

Vol. 152 - Issue 12

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May 14, 2020

Face coverings purchase by CHBWV benefits employees, community and veterans



Photos provided

An employee at the West Valley Demonstration Project wears one of the cloth face coverings recently purchased for all employees. Pictured in the background is the main plant process building, which is scheduled to be demolished this year.



A cloth face covering with a notice to employees recommending use, is available to workers upon entering the site and at its offsite office complex.

JOURNAL

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City of Idaho Falls Signs Letter to Increase DOE EM Funding to Create Jobs, Infrastructure



IDAHO FALLS -- Recently, a broad coalition of labor, community and industry organizations prepared a [letter](#) urging Congress to provide a much-needed economic boost to some of the regions hardest hit by the current pandemic through a one-time \$7.25 billion increase in funding for the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Office of Environmental Management (EM) program.

The funding, which could be spent in the near future, will help reignite the national economy, assist in reviving small businesses, and create thousands of new jobs. At the same time, it could reduce one of the federal government's largest liabilities, accelerate the national defense mission, and build a nuclear workforce for the future.

The letter was signed by 17 organizations including the Metal Trades Department, AFL-CIO, North America's Building Trades Unions, the Energy Communities Alliance (ECA), and Energy, Technology and Environmental Business Association (ETEBA).

"We have worked to improve coordination among federal, state and local government leaders, contractors, unions, communities and economic development entities, resulting in real progress," the letter states. "However, we must remain committed to reducing one of the country's largest



Published online: May 18, 2020

environmental and financial liabilities to drive the innovations and technological advancements for America's future."

According to the letter, DOE can successfully manage increased funding and leverage it for future economic development as it has in the past:

"The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) allowed DOE to speed up decontamination and demolition at numerous sites and award more contracts to private industry and small businesses to hasten the clean-up of legacy nuclear waste. During ARRA, EM proved a worthy investment: the program received \$6 billion and was able to reduce the program's future financial liabilities by \$13 billion through the acceleration of cleanup work. EM contractors alone hired over 20,000 new workers, putting them to back to work to reduce the overall cleanup complex footprint by 688 square miles while strengthening local economies."

The letter identified dozens of high-impact projects that EM could initiate and complete with the \$7.25 billion for the Hanford Site, **Idaho Cleanup Project**, Waste Isolation Pilot Plant, Los Alamos Legacy Cleanup, Nevada, Oak Ridge, Paducah, Portsmouth, **West Valley**, and Savannah River Site.

"In Idaho Falls, we are definitely supportive of obtaining any funding that will help keep the Idaho Clean-up Project operating at, or ahead of schedule so that the desert site may be cleared as rapidly as possible and returned to other uses and/or its natural state," said Idaho Falls Mayor Rebecca Casper. " We are very close to having that done, so it is smart to keep that momentum going and keep the expert and dedicated members of the ICP workforce going full steam ahead at our key cleanup sites."

The 17 organizations and local governments signing the letter include:

- Energy Communities Alliance (ECA)
- Energy, Technology and Environmental Business Association (ETEBA)
- Metal Trades Department, AFL-CIO
- United Steelworkers Local 12-9477
- **City of Idaho Falls, Idaho**
- City of Paducah, Kentucky
- **Town of Ashford, New York**
- Tri-City Development Council (TRIDEC)
- Greater Paducah Economic Development
- Hanford Communities
- McCracken County, Kentucky
- North America's Building Trades Unions
- Paducah Area Chamber of Commerce
- Paducah Area Community Reuse Organization (PACRO)
- **Regional Economic Development for Eastern Idaho (REDI)**
- Savannah River Site Community Reuse Organization (SRSCRO)
- Citizens for Nuclear Technology Awareness (CNTA)

\$7 billion stimulus plan for Hanford and others could add jobs and kick-start national economy

BY ANNETTE CARY

MAY 18, 2020 11:29 AM , UPDATED MAY 18, 2020 02:44 PM

Tri-Cities area supporters of [Hanford nuclear reservation](#) cleanup are asking Congress to provide a one-time boost to Hanford funding to help jump start the national and Tri-Cities economy during the new coronavirus pandemic.

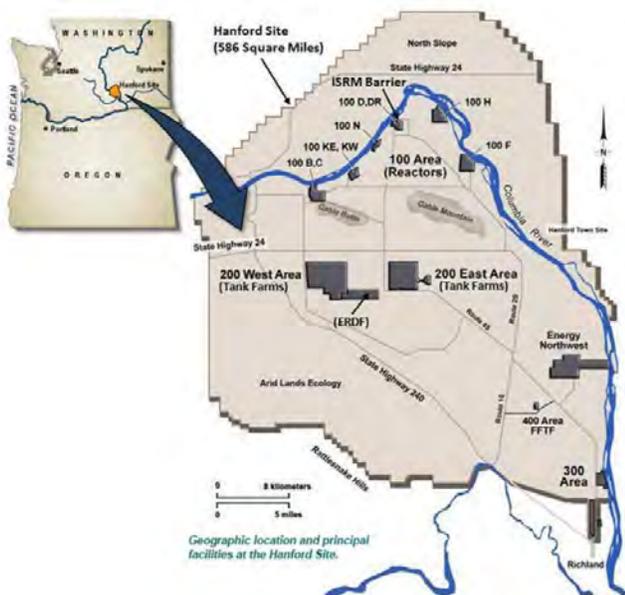
The [Tri-Cities Development Council](#) and [Hanford Communities](#) joined with other local government, community and industry organizations asking for \$7.25 billion in stimulus money for environmental cleanup of Department of Energy sites.

“This funding, which could be spent in the near future, will help reignite the national economy, assist in reviving small businesses and create thousands of new jobs,” said a [letter sent May 15](#) to leaders of the U.S. Senate and House.

“At the same time, it could reduce one of the federal government’s largest liabilities, accelerate the national defense mission, and build a nuclear workforce for the future,” the letter said.

It pointed to the success of an [earlier economic stimulus boost](#), the \$6 billion allocated for cleanup of nuclear waste under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

Nearly \$2 billion of the money went to Hanford.



Hanford was used to produce plutonium for the nation’s nuclear weapons program during World War II and the Cold War. Environmental cleanup is underway now. *COURTESY DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY*

Tri-City Herald

MAY 18, 2020

Nationwide DOE reduced its future costs by \$13 billion by speeding up cleanup and reducing the area requiring cleanup by 688 square miles.

DOE contractors hired about 20,000 new workers, strengthening local economies, the letter said.

The Hanford nuclear reservation is contaminated from the past production of plutonium for the nation's nuclear weapons program during World War II and the Cold War. The nation spends about \$2.5 billion a year on its cleanup, with the work expected to continue for decades.

HANFORD CLEANUP DELAYS

The \$7.25 billion requested now could start and complete dozens of projects at sites in Washington state and at least eight other states, the letter said.

It proposes spending the [money at Hanford on projects](#) that include two that a recent DOE report proposes delaying.

The "Environmental Management Vision 2020-2030: A Time of Transition and Transformation" proposes delaying work to move 2,000 capsules of radioactive strontium and cesium from underwater storage to dry storage.



Workers with Hanford's CH2M Hill Plateau Remediation Co. have removed, packaged and shipped contaminated waste from the 324 Building, which sits over a radioactive spill. *COURTESY DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY*

Preparations have been underway for years to move the capsules after concerns were raised about the structural integrity of the pool holding them.

Tri-City Herald

MAY 18, 2020

The DOE Office of Inspector General says that the pool, built in 1973, could be at risk in a severe earthquake.

A loss of cooling water could cause the capsules to overheat and break and radioactive contamination could be released into the ground or air.

The same DOE report would put on hold the cleanup of the highly radioactive spill beneath the 324 Building just north of the city of Richland and near the Columbia River.

Extensive work already has been done to prepare to stabilize the building and then cut through the floor to dig up the soil.

DOE officials have said that the radioactive cesium and strontium contamination beneath the building is so radioactive that it would be fatal within a few minutes of human contact.

OTHER HANFORD SITE WORK

The requested stimulus money also could be spent to continue environmental cleanup work of the [K West Reactor basin after radioactive sludge](#) was removed from underwater storage in the basin last year.

The basin still holds contaminated water and equipment and needs to be cleaned up and removed.



Hot cells at Hanford's Waste Encapsulation and Storage Facility will be used to prepare capsules of radioactive strontium and cesium for dry storage. *DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY*

Tri-City Herald

MAY 18, 2020

More work also is ready to be done to clean up contaminated soil and groundwater at the nuclear reservation.

Some of the money also could be spent to continue engineering and construction work to glassify high level radioactive waste at the Hanford vitrification plant for disposal.

Now work at the plant is focused on starting to treat low activity radioactive waste by a federal court deadline of 2023 but DOE also has a court deadline to have the plant fully operating by 2036.

SITES READY TO START WORK

The information sent to Congress says that projects across the nation could be completed in three to five years. DOE is ready to begin work immediately on many of the proposed projects, it said.

“We believe we have a rare opportunity to address the legacy of the past, implement DOE’s strategic vision more rapidly and develop the pipeline of nuclear workers and technologies to help us lead in the future,” the letter said.

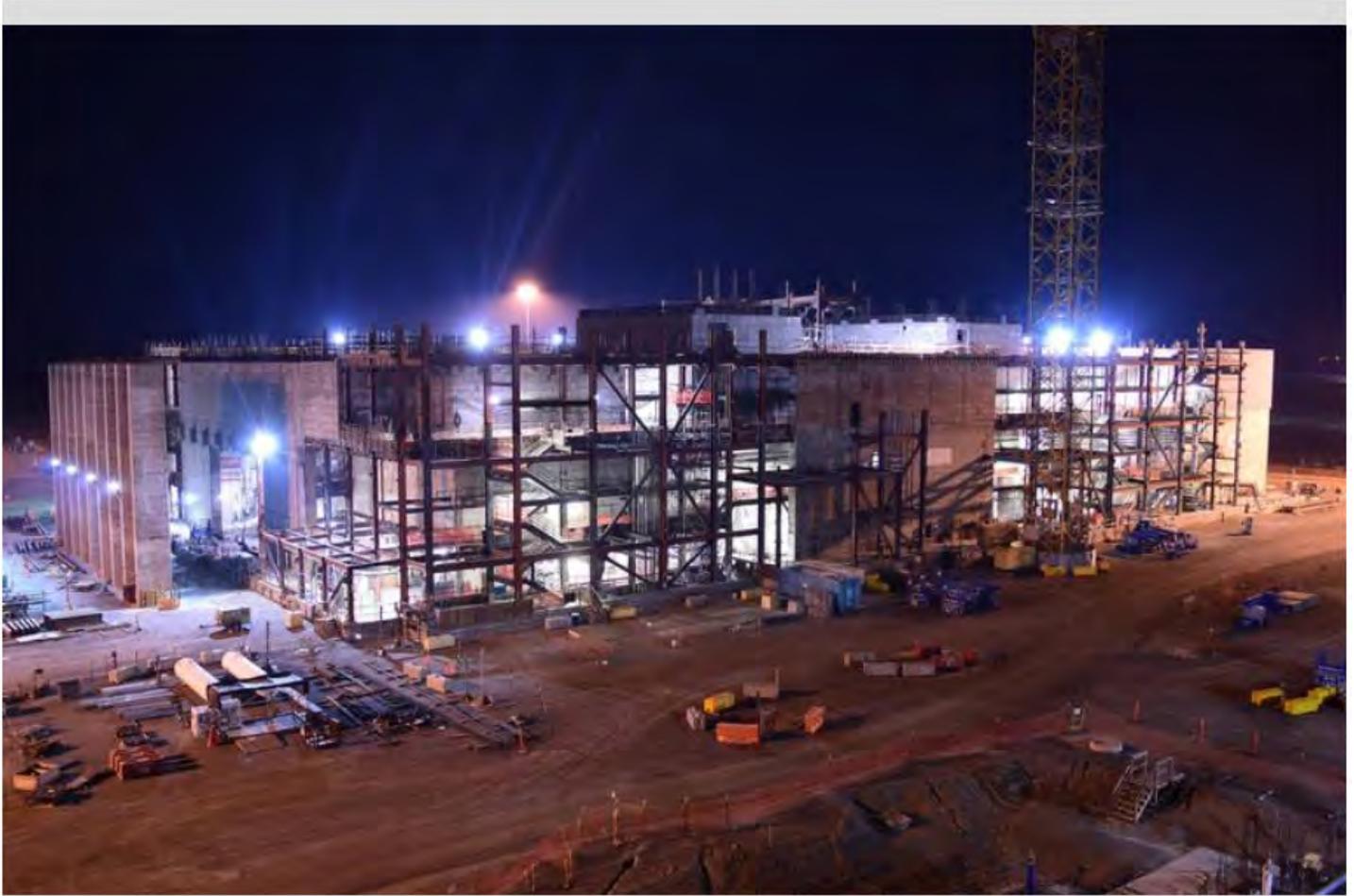
Among those signing it were regional economic development and community leaders in the Tri-Cities; Savannah River, S.C.; Idaho Falls, Idaho; Paducah, Ky.; West Valley, N.Y., area, and the Oak Ridge, Tenn., area; plus leaders AFL-CIO Metal Trades Department and North America’s Building Trades Union.

It also was signed by the Energy Communities Alliance, an organization of local governments with an interest in DOE environmental cleanup projects.

It includes Hanford Communities, a coalition of Tri-City area governments with an interest in successful Hanford cleanup.

Tri-City Herald

MAY 18, 2020



Lights shine at night at the High-Level Waste Facility at the Hanford vitrification plant. The plant is required by a federal court consent decree to be fully operational by 2036, but now the Department of Energy is focused on starting up the plant's Low Activity Waste Facility by 2023. *COURTESY BECHTEL NATIONAL*

[ANNETTE CARY](#)

[509-582-1533](tel:509-582-1533)

Senior staff writer Annette Cary covers Hanford, energy, the environment, science and health for the Tri-City Herald. She's been a news reporter for more than 30 years in the Pacific Northwest.

Ashford board discusses updates during COVID-19 pandemic

Max Borsuk
Editor

The Ashford Town Board, at its May 13 meeting via teleconferencing, discussed the COVID-19 pandemic and the recent effects it is having within the town.

Supervisor John Pfeffer announced the town will be extending the state of emergency for another 30 days or until rescinded. Due to COVID-19, the Town of Ashford also announced at its meeting the cancellations of this year's Memorial Day celebration and the youth summer recreation program.

Pfeffer presented a resolution to the board to support federal funding related to the coronavirus pandemic that is directly delivered to all municipalities, regardless of population size. With the federal government passing the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, it would provide a \$150 billion fund for states, tribal governments and units of local government with a population in excess of 500,000 people. According to the resolution, less than one-half of one percent of municipalities in the United States meet the population threshold and of the 933 towns in New York, 931 are not eligible for direct federal funding under the CARES Act, including the Town of Ashford.

With an estimated \$2 billion in sales tax revenue lost, along with the losses of other sources of revenue including permit fees, justice court fines and mortgage recording tax, the coronavirus pandemic has created financial stress for local governments in New York, according to the resolution. After discussion, the board unanimously approved the resolution.

“What this resolution is asking is they make that payment directly to the town rather than going through the state or any other method,” Pfeffer said.

Councilman Charlie Davis updated the board on the West Valley Food Pantry. Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the numbers for the food pantry have doubled, Davis said. Donations from businesses, organizations and members of the community have been great and Davis thanks everyone for helping those in need. With the increased donations, Davis said a larger location is needed for the food pantry, with the board later discussing options for a possible future expansion or bigger space.

“The town we live in is awesome because we have had more donations than we have ever had,” Davis said.

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In other board news:

– Trash dumping has started to become an issue within the town. Pfeffer said he will be contacting New York State Department of Environmental Conservation officers to explore options for the prevention of future dumping and prosecution of offenders.

– Highway Superintendent Tim Engels reported employees within the highway department continue to work according to guidelines from the Centers of Disease Control.

– Communications Manager for CH2M HILL BWXT West Valley, LLC Joe Pillittere reported on back to work policies at the **West Valley Demonstration Project**. Employees will have to check in on their arrival, with the process already being tested. Some employees at the site are essential and have continued to work on site, while being compliant with CDC guidelines.

The next Town of Ashford board meeting will be Wednesday, June 10 at 7:30 p.m.

West Valley Demonstration Project Quarterly Public Meeting

Wednesday, May 27, 2020, 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

Virtual Public Meeting

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) will hold a virtual public meeting to provide information on WVDP activities and progress. NYSERDA and DOE will provide the public with an opportunity to ask questions and provide comments.

If you would like to participate, please contact Joseph Pillittere at Joseph.Pillittere@chbvw.com or (716) 998-4900.

Ashford urges Congress to increase DOE's Environmental Management funding

ASHFORD — A broad coalition of labor, community and industry organizations has sent a letter urging Congress to provide a one-time \$7.25 billion increase in funding for the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Environmental Management program to some of the regions hardest hit by the coronavirus pandemic.

Among those communities is the town of Ashford, home of the [West Valley Demonstration Project](#).

The funding, which could be spent in the near future, will help reignite the national economy, assist in reviving small businesses and create thousands of new jobs. At the same time, it could reduce one of the federal government's largest liabilities, accelerate the national defense mission and build a nuclear workforce for the future.

The [West Valley Demonstration Project](#) focuses on the cleanup and containment of radioactive waste left behind after the abandonment of a commercial nuclear fuel reprocessing plant operating from 1965 to 1980. The project was created by an Act of Congress in 1980 and is directed to be a cooperative effort between the United States Department of Energy and the [New York State Energy Research and Development Authority](#).

The letter was signed by 17 organizations including the Metal Trades Department, AFL-CIO, North America's Building Trades Unions, the Energy Communities Alliance (ECA) And Energy, Technology and Environmental Business Association (ETEBA).

"We have worked to improve coordination among federal, state and local government leaders, contractors, unions, communities and economic development entities, resulting in real progress," the letter states. "However, we must remain committed to reducing one of the country's largest

OLEAN TIMES HERALD

May 22, 2020

environmental and financial liabilities to drive the innovations and technological advancements for America's future.”

According to the letter, DOE can successfully manage increased funding and leverage it for future economic development as it has in the past:

“The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) allowed DOE to speed up decontamination and demolition at numerous sites and award more contracts to private industry and small businesses to hasten the clean-up of legacy nuclear waste. During ARRA, EM proved a worthy investment: the program received \$6 billion and was able to reduce the program's future financial liabilities by \$13 billion through the acceleration of cleanup work. EM contractors alone hired over 20,000 new workers, putting them back to work to reduce the overall cleanup complex footprint by 688 square miles while strengthening local economies.”

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For more information, please contact ECA Program Manager MacKenzie Kerr at mackenziek@energyca.org or (202) 828-2410.

Purchase benefits employees, community and veterans



An employee at the **West Valley Demonstration Project** wears one of the cloth face coverings recently purchased for all employees. Pictured in the background is the Main Plant Process Building, scheduled to be demolished this year.

CH2M HILL BWXT West Valley (CHBWV), the prime contractor at the **West Valley Demonstration Project**, recently purchased cloth face coverings for its employees.

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Journal file photo

People interested in solar energy speak with representatives from Solar by CIR at last year's Solarize Southtowns launch party hosted by Green Springville.

Green Springville receives Environmental Excellence Award

Max Borsuk
Editor

After the success of its Solarize Southtowns campaign, Green Springville was recently awarded a 2020 Environmental Excellence Award from the Erie County Environmental Management Council.

The Environmental Excellence Award program began in 2015 to “recognize exceptional projects carried out by municipal and non-profit organizations in Erie County that stand to have a significant and lasting

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positive impact on the natural environment. The awards program is designed to help showcase and publicly promote projects that can be replicated in community throughout the Western New York region.”

Green Springville, a nonprofit organization that promotes sustainable living in Springville and the surrounding communities,” started its Solarize Southtowns campaign in 2019, which brought potential solar customers together from the towns of Concord, Colden, Evans, Eden and Sardinia in order to work with a vetted solar installer to provide a cheaper price on solar installation. The campaign also worked to educate people, dispel myths and promote the benefits of solar energy. “It was a surprise and an honor,” Green Springville President Reed Braman said.

“It’s nice to be recognized for the hard work ... and if it could help us move people in that direction whether its solar panels or gardening or just coming to one of our events, I’m happy to have received that.”

Throughout the Solarize Southtowns campaign, 40 events were held within the five participating towns, over 120 residents were engaged within the many events and 34 homeowners decided to install solar panels on their property, which was enough of a solar array to reduce greenhouse gases by 271 metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions, according to the EMC.

Along with Solarize Southtowns, Green Springville was also the first to include a Solar-for-All program. Solar-for-All is a program from the **New York State Energy Research and Development Agency** for low income residents that helps older residents on a fixed income access solar electricity to help reduce their energy bills.

From reducing energy bills to helping the planet by using more renewable energy, solar energy offers a variety of benefits and Braman is happy with the reception for the Solarize Southtowns campaign from the local communities.

“I figured [the Solarize Southtowns campaign] was a success in terms of stimulating the local economy, getting people to switch over to green energy and to help out the planet a little bit,” Braman said. “It’s a great way to reduce your bills, use green energy and reduce your carbon impact. If you can afford it and your situation is right ... it’s a great deal and now is the time to do it.”

Other recipients of the Environmental Excellence Award included Cornell Cooperative Extension of Erie County, Master Gardener Volunteer Program; Western New York Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management, Watercraft Inspection Stewardship Program; Erie Community College and Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper, Water Academy.

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For more information on Green Springville, visit the Green Springville, Inc. Facebook page or email GreenSpringvilleInfo@gmail.com.



Local governments, labor, community and industry organizations urge Congress for one-time increase in EM funding to create jobs and infrastructure projects

Recently, a broad coalition of labor, community and industry organizations prepared a letter urging Congress to provide a much-needed economic boost to some of the regions hardest hit by the current pandemic through a one-time \$7.25 billion increase in funding for the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Environmental Management program.

The funding, which could be spent in the near future, will help reignite the national economy, assist in reviving small businesses, and create thousands of new jobs. At the same time, it could reduce one of the federal government's largest liabilities, accelerate the national defense mission and build a nuclear workforce for the future.

The letter was signed by 17 organizations including the Metal Trades Department, AFL-CIO, North America's Building Trades Unions, the Energy Communities Alliance and Energy, Technology and Environmental Business Association. "We have worked to improve coordination among federal, state and local government leaders, contractors, unions, communities and economic development entities, resulting in real progress," the letter states. "However, we must remain committed to reducing one of the country's largest environmental and financial liabilities to drive the innovations and technological advancements for America's future."

According to the letter, DOE can successfully manage increased funding and leverage it for future economic development as it has in the past.

"The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 allowed DOE to speed up decontamination and demolition at numerous sites and award more contracts to private industry and small businesses to hasten the clean-up of legacy nuclear waste. During ARRA, EM proved a worthy investment: the program received \$6 billion and was able to

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reduce the program's future financial liabilities by \$13 billion through the acceleration of cleanup work. EM contractors alone hired over 20,000 new workers, putting them to back to work to reduce the overall cleanup complex footprint by 688 square miles while strengthening local economies."

The letter identified dozens of high-impact projects that EM could initiate and complete with the \$7.25 billion for **West Valley**, the Hanford Site, Idaho Cleanup Project, Waste Isolation Pilot Plant, Los Alamos Legacy Cleanup, Nevada, Oak Ridge, Paducah, Portsmouth and Savannah River Site.

The 17 organizations and local governments signing the letter include Energy Communities Alliance; Energy, Technology and Environmental Business Association; Metal Trades Department, AFL-CIO; United Steelworkers Local 12-9477; City of Idaho Falls, Idaho; City of Paducah, Kentucky; **Town of Ashford, New York**; Tri-City Development Council; Greater Paducah Economic Development; Hanford Communities; McCracken County, Kentucky; North America's Building Trades Unions; Paducah Area Chamber of Commerce; Paducah Area Community Reuse Organization; Regional Economic Development for Eastern Idaho; Savannah River Site Community Reuse Organization and Citizens for Nuclear Technology Awareness.

For more information, contact ECA Program Manager MacKenzie Kerr at mackenziek@energyca.org or (202) 828-2410.



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
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OFFICE OF
ENVIRONMENTAL
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From left, waste operators Darren Rhodes, Dan Kessler, and Tom Cronmiller practice installing protective covers for waste containers at the West Valley Demonstration Project

West Valley Demonstration Project

While deactivation and decommissioning operations were put on hold, workers at the [West Valley Demonstration Project](#) (WVDP) completed critical compliance inspections, environmental monitoring, and other activities.

Employees installed a new hoist in the Equipment Decontamination Room inside the Main Plant Process Building. This new hoist will be used for moving waste boxes and drums when the site returns to full operations and resumes deactivation work inside a former reprocessing cell in the building.

Workers installed protective covers on four 69,000-pound containers stored in a secure location onsite to protect them from water infiltration. The containers are filled with low-level waste.

Employees performed annual inspections of a dam onsite as part of environmental monitoring. They installed new trailers for use as breakrooms, locker rooms, offices, and meeting areas that support social distancing. They also put in plexiglass shielding.

"The protection of our workers, the public, and the environment has always been our core value," EM WVDP Director Bryan Bower said. "During our pandemic response, the WVDP team maintained focus on safety and compliance, while continuing to advance our mission to eliminate legacy risks at the site."

Some tidbits from the new EM "By the Numbers:"

More than 7 miles of piping and more than 50 tons of equipment have been removed from high-hazard areas of the [West Valley Demonstration Project](#)

Town of Ashford to be lead agency in West Valley Solar LLC Project

Max Borsuk
Editor

The Ashford Town Board, at its June 10 meeting, approved a resolution for the town's notice of internet to act as the lead agency for the BQ Energy LLC/West Valley Solar LLC Project.

The project is a 10-megawatt photovoltaic facility consisting of two five-megawatt projects from BQ Energy LLC and its affiliate West Valley Solar LLC planned to be constructed and operate on 54-acres of land on either side of Buttermilk Road at the **Western New York Nuclear Service Center** in Ashford. Work would include the installation of solar panels, installation of ancillary and support equipment, a buried electrical line and access road and related improvements. The project will provide two-megawatts of community distributed electricity and eight-megawatts to larger users.

Councilman Charles Davis reported on updates at the site of the solar project. Archeologists and surveyors have been out at the property, with one of the next steps in the process being tree removal.

"We are on the path forward to get this thing done," Davis said.

In other board news:

– Supervisor John Pfeffer reported he will check with Cattaraugus County about obtaining signage to be placed at the entrances of the town advising people that there is a fine for littering or dumping of garbage.

– Pfeffer announced the town will not be renewing the COVID-19 state of emergency. The previous state of emergency expired on June 15.

– The board approved advertising that the town is accepting bids to install wooden side rails on the new pedestrian bridge on the east side of Route 240 in the hamlet between Depot Street and Felton Hill Road.

The next Ashford Town Board will be Wednesday, July 8 at 7:30 p.m.

West Valley continues progress during mission critical operations



Photo provided

Workers Darren Rhodes and Brad Schurr begin the installation of a weather protective cover on one of four high-integrity containers located in a secure storage area onsite.

Crews continued work on a smaller scale than usual while in an essential mission-critical operating posture at EM's [West Valley Demonstration Project](#). While deactivation and decommissioning operations were put on hold, workers completed critical compliance inspections, environmental monitoring, and other activities.

"The protection of our workers, the public and the environment has always been our core value," EM WVDP Director Bryan Bower said. "During our pandemic response, the [WVDP](#) team maintained our focus on safety and compliance, while continuing to advance our mission to eliminate legacy risks at the site."

Employees installed a new hoist in the equipment decontamination room inside the main plant process building. This new hoist will be used for moving waste boxes and drums when the site returns to full operations; and crews resume deactivation work inside a former reprocessing cell there.

Crews also encapsulated the main plant office building concrete slab so it is no longer posted as an asbestos area.

Workers installed protective covers on four 69,000-pound high-integrity containers stored in a secure location onsite to protect them from water infiltration. Each HIC contained spent ion exchange resins and diatomaceous earth from the FRS water treatment system.

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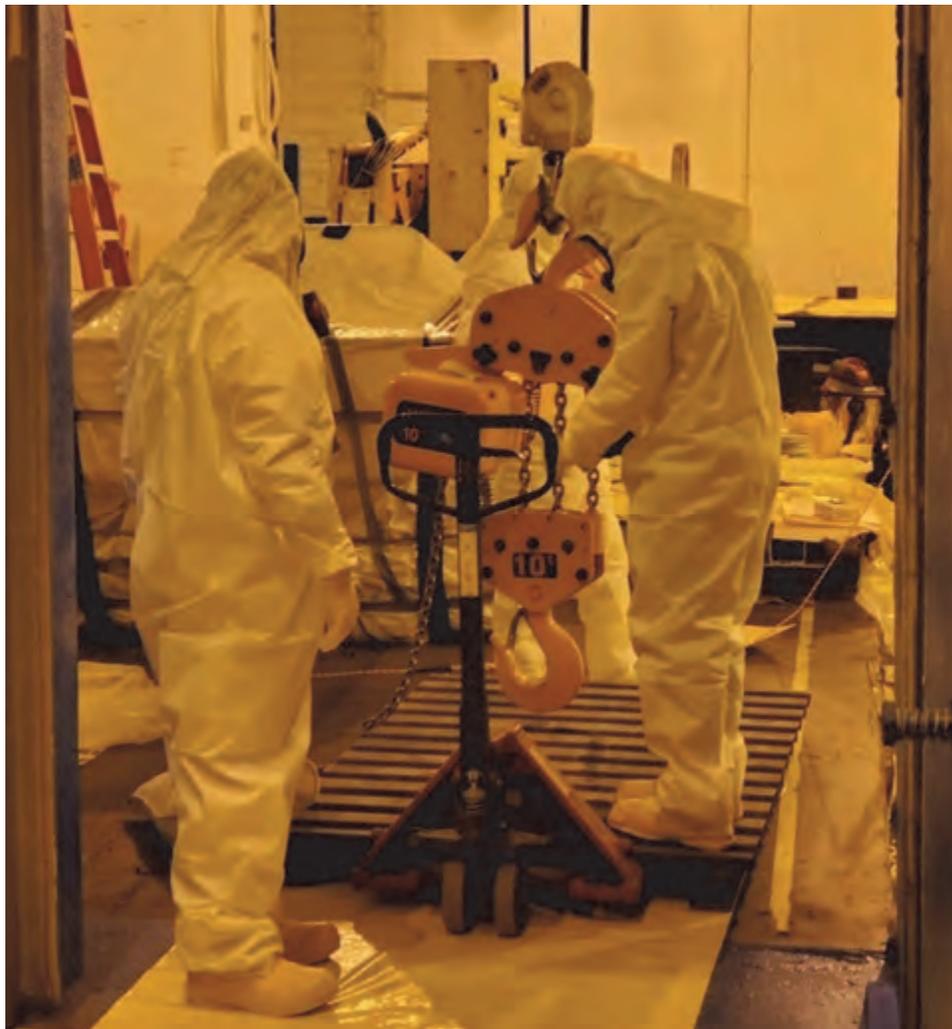
June 18, 2020

Employees performed annual inspections of a dam onsite as part of environmental monitoring.

Workers installed new trailers onsite for use as breakrooms, locker rooms, offices and meeting areas to increase social distancing efforts. They also installed other upgrades to site infrastructure, such as Plexiglas® shielding and reconfiguring breakrooms and meeting areas, to further protect workers from the potential spread of COVID-19.

“Our team continues to use their combined knowledge to safely maintain the site during essential mission critical operations,” CHBWV President John Rendall said. “I’m proud of their efforts, accomplishments and in the work they continue to do on this project.”

West Valley Prepares for Future D&D Under New Safety Protocols



Workers install a new hoist in the Main Plant Process Building to be used for moving waste boxes and drums and other work when the **West Valley Demonstration Project** returns to full operations.

WEST VALLEY, N.Y. – An EM facility disposition crew recently replaced a hoist in the Main Plant Process Building, marking the **West Valley Demonstration Project's (WVDP)** first work activity in which workers donned personal protective equipment while following safety protocols due to COVID-19.



Replacing the hoist in the Equipment Decontamination Room, as **WVDP** operated in an essential mission-critical posture, also signified progress toward a broader project — the future demolition of the Main Plant Process Building — included in EM’s priorities for 2020.

The new equipment will be used to shift an aerial lift into a chemical process cell and move boxes and drums filled with waste when the site returns to full operations and crews resume deactivation work inside a former reprocessing cell in the building.

Before replacing the hoist, employees discussed questions and concerns with supervisors and senior staff in a collaborative, inclusive manner. The discussions focused on how to maintain social distancing while helping one another don and doff personal protective equipment, including respirators.

The team agreed to a safe approach in which employees maintain six feet of distance when possible and wear face masks. Only one worker at a time is allowed to exit an area to avoid clustering, and they must cover the respirator exhalation ports with towels to reduce exhaled vapor droplets from escaping while the workers help each other put on equipment, among other things.

EM WVDP Safety and Site Programs Team Leader Jennifer Dundas commended the team members for their pre-job briefing and work.

“Encouraging employees to speak freely when confronting an issue or challenge is the best way to solve a problem,” Dundas said. “It fosters the sharing of ideas and allows everyone an opportunity to be part of the solution. In the end, their agreed-upon solution helped them to safely complete this work activity.”

Lessons learned from the project will be applied to future cleanup work at the site. The lessons include the importance of refocusing on safety, being aware of changing conditions and new protocols, and getting acquainted with procedures, work packages, and radiation work permits.

-Contributor: Joseph Pillittere