

WVDP improves rail line to support safe, efficient waste disposal



Using a small excavator, workers replace railroad ties along a track within the West Valley Demonstration Project used to ship waste offsite for disposal. A railroad engineering company inspects the rail line annually, and employees at the site also assess the line each month to ensure it operates effectively.

Photo provided

By Olean Times Herald staff

WEST VALLEY — The Department of Energy and cleanup contractor CH2M HILL BWXT West Valley (CHBWV) have replaced six railroad ties along nearly 8,000 feet of track within the **West Valley Demonstration Project (WVDP)** following an annual inspection.

DOE resumed using the rail line in June to ship waste offsite for disposal. Shipping the waste by rail enhances safety by reducing vehicle traffic associated with completing the shipments via truck.

“The rail line will be used for the future demolition of the Main Plant Process Building and future cleanup work at the site,” said Linda Michalczak, CHBWV projects manager. “This rail line will continue to play an important role in the present and future cleanup of the site.”

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Train shipments increase efficiency by allowing more material to be shipped compared to trucking. The train shipments also cost less than truck shipments, saving taxpayer dollars.

“It represents a better method for waste disposition that’s safer and more efficient,” Michalczak said. “It will ultimately accelerate remediation efforts in the future.”

The project is shipping tens of thousands of cubic feet of soil crews had removed to make way for a unique groundwater treatment system that has been constructed. A structure used to store that soil also will be shipped for disposal by train.

WVDP worked with the Buffalo-Pittsburgh Railroad (BPRR) Administration to rehabilitate the Western New York Nuclear Service Center rail spur and BPRR’s main line prior to WVDP’s use. The WVDP continues to maintain the track inside the service center’s perimeter.