

Olean Times Herald

Wednesday, February 02, 2011

W. Valley group supports chambers of commerce

WEST VALLEY — West Valley Environmental Services LLC (WVES) recently renewed its commitment to the local business community through support of both the Springville Area and West Valley chambers of commerce. The company actively participates in the Springville Chamber with a representative serving as vice president on the board of directors.

At the West Valley Chamber of Commerce's monthly dinner on Jan. 13, John McKibbin, president and project manager, presented Chamber President Chuck Couture with a \$2,000 check. Mr. Couture gratefully accepted the check remarking, "This check helps the WV Chamber of Commerce support other community and school organizations. Most recently, the Chamber sponsored a breakfast for the Boy Scouts and leaders who made the nutcrackers which hung from the utility poles during the holiday season."

Following the Springville

Area Chamber of Commerce's annual dinner awards program on Jan. 15, WVES Environmental, Safety, Health and Quality Assurance Manager Jack Gerber presented a \$2,000 check to Chamber President David Field. Mr. Field stated that, "This money will allow the chamber to continue providing services such as insurance benefits, employee safety seminars, guest speakers and a wide variety of workshops to its growing membership."

The WVDP is an environmental cleanup and waste management project located about 35 miles south of Buffalo. The project is conducted by the U. S. Department of Energy (DOE) in cooperation with the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority. WVES manages and operates the WVDP under contract to DOE. The WVES team is comprised of URS, Jacobs Engineering, Environmental Chemical Corporation (ECC), and Parallax.



Discussions on phase one of cleanup to begin at West Valley Demonstration Project

By: Matt Sargeant

Date: 2011-02-02

Members of the West Valley Citizen Task Force met on Wednesday, Jan. 26 to summarize the past year of work at the West Valley Demonstration Project and to look ahead at the coming year. CTF held 10 meetings during 2010. These meetings included presentations and discussions concerning radiation safety, the tank and vault drying system and the recently installed permeable treatment wall on the northern plateau.

At the start of this new year, WVDP is ready to begin discussions concerning the first phase of cleanup on the site. During its meeting, CTF explored several options as to how it will have these discussions and how the public can be included in the meetings that will be held in the near future.

Brian Bower, the Department of Energy-WVDP project director, sees WVDP's quarterly meetings as an opportunity to go over the phase one studies. "We are trying to get [a phase one study meeting] scheduled as quickly as possible," he said. "We think that, with the discussions we've had, what better quarterly discussion meeting to have than going over the phase one studies?" WVDP held that quarterly meeting on Tuesday, Feb. 1.

According to Paul Bembia of New York State Energy Research and Development Authority, "it's just a question of how these meetings fit together" that will determine how and when the phase one studies will be discussed.

"We may get to the point where it makes more sense to meet more frequently or not meet for a quarter, depending on what's going on," he said.

"If we do one of the meetings in place of a CTF meeting," Bembia added, "we'd like to open it up to the public. We'd call it a 'phase one studies meeting' rather than opening that up to a CTF meeting. We want to make sure everyone has an opportunity to interact."

"If the public comes and has a question, they could dedicate a CTF meeting to that," suggested Bower. "CTF is open to the public. I see that those [meetings] don't have to be competing – they can be complimentary."

Bembia agrees and sees using the CTF slot for the phase one meetings as an efficient use of the CTF members' time. "The CTF is scheduled every month," he said. "We could use that time that everyone has every month rather than trying to schedule another time when everyone else is available. We're flexible and will try to make it work out for everyone."

While other issues surround WVDP, the "focus is going to be on those phase one studies for some time," says Bembia.

Springville Journal, Thursday, February 03, 2011

CTF also went over ways to make information concerning WVDP more accessible to the public. Bower suggested recording CTF meetings and making them available online. "You can set up a camera [and] put it online for people in Washington, Albany and even Buffalo," he said.

"It's pretty tough for people to tune in and stay interested in what we're saying," countered Ray Vaughn of Environmentalists at Large. "What we do is too drawn out, too technical."

"Quarterly meetings might be good for the Web cam," said Kathy McGoldrick of Coalition of West Valley Nuclear Waste. "It's something to think about."

Sonja Allen of West Valley Environmental Services LLC said it would be "easy" to have a CTF corner in the WVES quarterly newsletter. "We could [publish] it more often if necessary," she said.

Lee Lambert of the Greater Buffalo League of Women Voters suggested meetings on live television. "A newsletter is just something else for [the public] to have to pick up and read," she said. "When it's actually a presentation, it's more interesting for someone to watch that. A live, actual meeting gets more attention than sending a letter, unless you have a specific number of people who want that letter; then they'll read that."

Justin Karter, a representative of Senator Charles Schumer, was in attendance at the CTF meeting. He expressed the Senator's interest in WVDP. "The Senator's office has a commitment to attend the West Valley meetings. We recognize it as an important issue," he said.

More information regarding CTF can be found on its Web site, www.westvalleyctf.org.

Springville Journal, Thursday, February 03, 2011



Mercy Flight donation will help maintain care

By:Press Release

Date: 2011-02-02

On January 19, the West Valley Demonstration Project continued its support for Mercy Flight Incorporated by presenting a check to Samantha Ryan, Development Manager from Mercy Flight WNY.

With the recent donation of \$5,000 from the West Valley Demonstration Project and in addition to their many years of support, Mercy Flight is able to continue to maintain the highest quality of care to the WNY community. We are so grateful to the support we receive throughout the community to keep Mercy Flight a Beacon of Hope....When Minutes Matter," said Ryan.

In 1997, the WVDP and Mercy Flight signed an agreement formalizing the relationship that provides air ambulance service to the Project site in northern Cattaraugus County.

While the need to call on Mercy Flight services to the Project has not arisen, staff from the air ambulance service has taken part in joint emergency planning and exercises to ensure readiness.

West Valley Environmental Services reaches out to local chambers of commerce

West Valley Environmental Services LLC recently renewed its commitment to the local business community through support of both the Springville Area and West Valley chambers of commerce. The company actively participates in the Springville Chamber with a representative serving as vice president on the board of directors.

At the West Valley Chamber of Commerce's monthly dinner on January 13, John McKibbin, president and project manager, presented Chamber President Chuck Couture with a \$2,000 check. Couture, when accepting the check, remarked, "This check helps the West Valley Chamber of Commerce support other community and school organizations. Most recently, the chamber sponsored a breakfast for the Boy Scouts and leaders who made the nutcrackers which hung from the utility poles during the holiday season."

Following the Springville Area Chamber of Commerce's annual dinner awards program on January 15, WVES Environmental, Safety, Health and Quality Assurance Manager Jack Gerber also presented a \$2,000 check to Chamber President David Field. Field stated that "this money will allow the chamber to continue providing services such as insurance benefits, employee safety seminars, guest speakers and a wide variety of workshops to its growing membership."

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KEEPING THE MONEY LOCAL — Top photo: President and Project Manager of WVES John McKibbin (left) presents a check of \$2,000 to West Valley Chamber of Commerce President Chuck Couture. Bottom photo: WVES Environmental, Safety, Health and Quality Assurance Manager Jack Gerber (left) presented a \$2,000 check to Springville Chamber President David Field.



SUPPORT FOR LOCAL HEROES — WVDP representatives present a check to West Valley Fire District 1. From left: Mary Crandall, chief 3; Eric Boberg, fire commissioner; Paul Bembia, NYSERDA; Christopher Eckert, DOE; Jim Blankenhorn, WVES; Don Worrall, fire commissioner; Don Williams, fire commissioner and Kevin Murray, fire chief.

Support shown for West Valley Fire District by WVDP.

Representatives from the U.S. Department of Energy, the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority and West Valley Environmental Services LLC presented a check for \$70,000 to West Valley Fire District 1 from the partners at the West Valley Demonstration Project.

West Valley Fire District Chief Kevin Murray stated, "The West Valley Demonstration Project has been an integral partner in procuring the safety equipment and vehicles needed to provide emergency services in the community. Top on the list for this year is replacing the existing ambulance and procuring new safety equipment for the fire police and a bailout rope system that would be essential for use at the WVDP site, especially in the upper floors of the main plant process building."

The check presentation ceremony was held on January 26 at the West Valley Fire Hall on Route 219 in Ashford Hollow. Project officials made the donation to help ensure that the fire district has the equipment necessary to provide fire and emergency services for the project and all its neighbors.

Bertrand Chaffee receives support from loyal WVDP

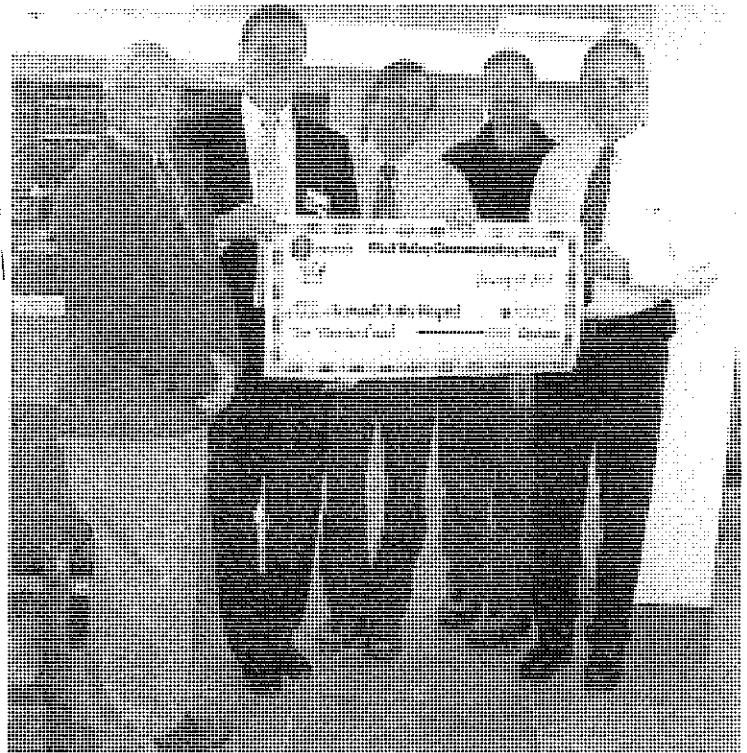
Representatives from the U.S. Department of Energy, the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority and West Valley Environmental Services LLC presented a \$10,000 check recently to Springville's Bertrand Chaffee Hospital from the partners at the West Valley Demonstration Project.

"Bertrand Chaffee Hospital is grateful to the West Valley Demonstration Project for its continued support. The previous project has now been completed – renovation of the hospital's lobby and the addition of a coffee shop. This year the hospital is looking to make much needed repairs to the parking lot," said Nils Gunnerson, Bertrand Chaffee Hospital CEO.

The check presentation ceremony

was held on January 19 at Bertrand Chaffee Hospital in Springville. Project officials made the donation to help ensure that the hospital remains a viable source of medical care for the project and all its neighbors in the southern tier.

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GIVE AND IT SHALL BE GIVEN UNTO YOU — Nils Gunnerson, Bertrand Chaffee Hospital CEO, accepted a \$10,000 check from Jack Gerber, WVES environmental, safety, health and quality manager on behalf of WVDP. Pictured, from left: Paul Bembia, NYSERDA program director; Gunnerson; Bryan Bower, DOE-WVDP director; Christopher Eckert, DOE and Gerber.

The Buffalo News

Tuesday, February 15, 2011

Budget holds good news, bad news for WNY Hopes Raised For Bridge Plaza But Heating Aid For Needy Faces Sharp Cuts

By **Jerry Zremski**

News Washington Bureau Chief

WASHINGTON -- President Obama's proposed budget for the coming fiscal year offers a mixed bag of possibilities and problems for the Buffalo area, topped by the possibility of funding for the Peace Bridge inspection plaza on the city's West Side and a 50 percent cut in aid for low-income heating assistance.

Rep. Brian Higgins, D-Buffalo, said Monday that a White House aide, who called a day earlier, had noted that the proposal includes two huge pots of money that could help to fund the \$300 million plaza.

The legislative affairs staffer contacted Higgins "to let us know that the White House considers the Peace Bridge a high-priority project," Higgins said.

While the Homeland Security Department recently revealed that it is not funding additional border projects, the White House aide noted that the Peace Bridge could receive funds from two Transportation Department sources: a \$2.2 billion line item for border crossing improvements or a new "infrastructure bank" for high priority projects.

That prospect is just one reason why the Buffalo Niagara region could end up a

winner, to some extent, in a spending plan that makes many losers.

Funding would increase for nuclear cleanup work -- although the **West Valley Demonstration Project** would suffer a major reduction -- and a major Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station construction project would go forward.

But the area would get its share of cuts.

Most importantly by far, funding for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance program -- which served 180,000 Erie County households last year -- would be cut by half.

Community development block grants, which bring Buffalo about \$17 million a year, would go down 7.5 percent. Funding for Great Lakes projects would drop as well.

In general, though, "the president gave us a framework that prioritizes job creation in America, while meeting the necessary challenges that come with cutting costs," Higgins said.

Republicans in the House -- who are sure to change Obama's spending plan radically -- disagreed.

"To see increased spending proposed for 2012 is a nonstarter and a denial of the

perilous state of the nation's finances," said Rep. Tom Reed, R-Corning.

Higgins, though, said that despite its dismal political prospects, the Obama spending plan includes important elements that could survive -- such as the money that could be used for the Peace Bridge plaza.

It includes \$25 billion to be apportioned among states for critical highway infrastructure projects -- including \$2.2 billion specifically targeted toward land ports of entry facilities such as the Peace Bridge.

In addition, the proposal includes \$30 billion over six years for a National Infrastructure Bank to invest in projects of regional or national economic significance.

Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood told reporters last week that he was concerned about the condition of U.S. border crossings and had told his staff to "see what we can do."

And Higgins termed the call from the White House "a very significant statement about the importance of the Peace Bridge."

The spending plan includes other, isolated tidbits of good news for Western New York.

Spending on cleaning up five local Manhattan Project nuclear sites, for example, would increase by nearly \$5 million, largely the result of a \$4.5 million increase for the Linde Air Products site in the Town of Tonawanda.

The Army Corps of Engineers requested and received that increase because it is switching contractors and ramping up work at the site, said Linda Houston, the project manager.

But funding for the corps' maintenance projects on the Black Rock Channel and Tonawanda and Buffalo harbors would decline, to \$2.3 million from \$2.7 million.

In Cattaraugus County, funding for the **West Valley Demonstration Project** would fall to \$38 million from \$58 million. Specific cuts at the facility have not yet been determined, Reed's office said.

Elsewhere in the defense budget, the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station would not receive funding for new projects. But the spending plan calls for constructing a \$5.7 million firing range that Congress had approved years ago.

That's about all the good news for the Buffalo area in the spending plan -- which, most ominously of all, cuts low-income home energy aid in half to save \$2.5 billion.

The program brought \$53.2 million to Erie County households last year, and advocates for the poor said the cut would be devastating.

"I agree with the president that we need to reduce spending and make targeted investments in the future, but many of these cuts I see as inappropriate," said Rep. Louise M. Slaughter, D-Fairport. "There's no need to go after working-class families trying to heat their homes, especially as this winter has proven to be one of the coldest on record."

Beyond that, "It's not necessary to slash funding to programs that allow economic development in our upstate cities," Slaughter said.

But the Obama plan also does just that, reducing community development block

grants -- which fund an array of city programs -- by 7.5 percent.

A 7.5 percent cut in Buffalo's block grant allocation would amount to a reduction of about \$1.3 million. Common Council members said any cut would hurt the poorest neighborhoods. The city plans to lobby Congress in hopes of restoring block grant funding.

The Council will meet in special session at 11 a.m. today (Tuesday) to approve the city's application for federal anti-poverty aid. A public hearing will be held at 6 p.m. (Tuesday) in the auditorium of the Central Library to explain the submission. The Council held a series of public hearings before finalizing the application.

Tough times dictated, though, that Obama cut even some of his own priorities, such as his much-touted Great Lakes Initiative, for which funding would dip by a fourth to save \$125 million.

"Scaling back our efforts means it will take longer and cost more to address urgent threats to the Lakes, communities and businesses," said Jeff Skelding, campaign director for the Healing Our Waters-Great Lakes Coalition.

For the first time, however, the budget does devote a line item to fighting the threat posed by the Asian carp, setting aside \$2.9 million to combat the invasive species.

While Obama's proposed budget covers the fiscal year that will begin Oct. 1, Congress has yet to finish work on a spending plan for the current year. That was to have been completed before last Oct. 1. Instead, the government has been operating under a series of temporary funding measures.

That makes Obama's budget just another chapter in a complex budget battle on Capitol Hill.

House Republicans want to dramatically cut spending in the current fiscal year.

They will start debate today Tuesday on a plan that would return domestic spending to 2008 levels and reduce outlays by \$61 billion through Sept. 30.

That plan slashes some cherished Obama priorities -- such as the high-speed rail program he suggests expanding in his budget -- as well as many key local programs such as the port dredging projects and community development block grants.

If Republicans and Obama cannot agree by March 4, when the latest stopgap spending measure will expire, the government could shut down.

Later in the spring, Congress will debate whether to extend the nation's debt ceiling.

Finally, after those battles are settled, lawmakers will turn to -- and certainly radically change -- the spending plan Obama released Monday.

News Staff Reporter Brian Meyer contributed to this report.

The Springville Journal

Thursday, February 16, 2011

Volume 146, No. 7

Ashford and West Valley residents approach town board with building code concerns

By:Nora Mihalik

Public comment at the Ashford Town Board meeting on Wednesday evening, Feb. 9, was lengthy and spirited. Ron Klahn gave his take on roofing permits and building code enforcement.

If permits are required for new roofs or re-roofing, the town could be responsible for any ensuing problems, said Klahn. “You don’t want the liability,” he insisted. Building Inspector Gary Perkins explained that anything in the state code book can require a permit, but Klahn said that he wanted to see a resolution passed “right now” that would eliminate the need for roofing permits. Supervisor Chris Gerwitz said that a resolution would not be necessary, as the board was not going to require those permits in the town.

Klahn also had concerns about the use of different building codes for possible future residents who do not believe in electricity or bathrooms. For example, he cites the fact that some groups are not subject to the requirements of stamped plans, liability certificates or workman’s compensation. Klahn wants to know if anything can be done locally to enforce the same building codes on every building, regardless of the preferences or religious beliefs of the builders/owners.

Perkins said that there is a separate section of the code book that deals with houses without bathrooms. Also, no board of underwriters inspection is required if there is no electricity. A state code engineer inspects these homes he says. Councilman John Pfeffer said the board needs to take a strong look at this with its lawyer. Councilman William Heim says that this is a state issue, but added that he understands Klahn’s concerns and agrees. West Valley resident Art Munson asked if Perkins could provide the code section and number that deals with the separate codes for buildings without bathrooms. He said that he wonders if the town is able to write a local law about it, and if so, could they enforce that law. Also, Munson asked if the town would enforce a roofing permit requirement; the answer was a resounding no from several board members.

NYSERDA Program Manager Tom Attridge said that there will be a public meeting at the Ashford Office Complex on February 23 regarding the phase one studies, which will be done while buildings are being taken down. That is expected to take 10 years.

Pete Boberg asked why Cattaraugus County has not yet downsized its legislature, as other counties have. He was told that the redistricting, which will take place soon, may cause a drop in the number of legislators.

Munson questioned whether the town could pass a law to ban hydraulic fracturing in the town, as Buffalo has done. There are concerns because the process is not subject to clean air or clean

water acts and the constant heavy truck traffic would damage town roads. According to Gerwitz, there is already a law requiring a bond for damage. Pfeffer suggested that this be discussed at the next work session.

Gerwitz said that he had planned to attend the now-canceled February 16 meeting regarding the closing of the Route 219 bridge for repairs. He said there was a previous consensus that the bridge should remain open during repairs, but expects that it won't be done that way. Pfeffer expressed concern about the time it takes for fire trucks and ambulances to get through without use of the bridge.

In other matters:

- Gerwitz says that Fox Valley Road repair bids will now be taken. Legal notice will be published in the Springville Journal and the bids will be opened at the board meeting on March 9 at 8 p.m. Specs can be requested from E&M Engineering out of Bradford, Pa. There was general agreement that highway funding needs to be increased to cover road repairs. Gerwitz presented, for signatures, an agreement to spend highway funds on road repairs.

- Trash pick-up will be scheduled for the end of April as it was last year and will be bid out starting in March.

- Councilwoman Beverly Hess said she has heard that the town is not “user friendly.” She solicited suggestions from residents by leaving a clipboard and pad at the Ashford Hollow General Store asking for ideas on how to improve the town. The list she compiled included such items as low income housing, recreational area, grocery store, keeping local businesses and closing West Valley Central School.

- Pfeffer asked if permit fees needed to be read aloud and was told no, since they are a matter of public record.

- Highway Superintendent Tim Engles stated that his department will need a new excavator, pick-up truck and loader. He will begin looking for these and hopes to get a package deal.

The next regular town board meeting will be March 9 at 7:30 p.m.

The Republican budget-cutting bill

What it would mean for Buffalo

Published: February 18, 2011, 12:45 AM

Updated: February 18, 2011, 12:50 AM

Aid to the poor

* Head Start programs would be cut by \$1.1 billion nationwide, meaning nearly 12,000 children in New York State — more than a fifth of the total in the state — could be kicked out of the program.

* Low Income Home Energy Assistance, which served 180,000 Erie County households last year, would be cut 11.5 percent.

* WIC — the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children — would be cut by about 15 percent.

Education and health sciences

* Pell Grants for college students would be cut by \$466.2 million statewide, meaning an average reduction of \$863 per student.

* Roswell Park Cancer Institute would lose about 10 percent of its federal funding.

* The University at Buffalo stands to lose at least \$17 million in research funding.

Energy and the environment

* The Brownfields Redevelopment Program, which could help revive 1,800 acres in South Buffalo, would be eliminated.

* The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative would lose \$250 million — more than half its funding.

* The West Valley Demonstration Project would lose \$20 million of the \$58 million it had expected.

Infrastructure

* New York's high-speed rail project would have to return the \$160 million in funding that it has received.

* Border security funding for infrastructure and technology would be cut by \$350 million.

Miscellaneous federal funding

* AmeriCorps would lose all its federal funding.

* The City of Buffalo would lose upwards of half of the \$17 million it expected to receive from the Community Development Block Grant program, and other local communities would lose funding as well.

* The Darwin Martin House and other local historical sites would no longer be able to get funding from the Save America's Treasures program, which would be eliminated.

* Family planning clinics would lose all their federal funding.

* WNED and WBFO would lose about 10 percent of their funding thanks to the elimination for federal money for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

Sources: House Appropriations Committee, local congressional offices and the recipients of federal funds listed.

Comments

There are no comments on this story.

GOP's bill to cut budget would hit WNY hard

Funding for state, city, UB imperiled by House push

By Jerry Zremski

Published: February 18, 2011, 12:49 AM

Updated: February 18, 2011, 12:50 AM

WASHINGTON — New York State would have to give back its high-speed rail funding.

The City of Buffalo and the University at Buffalo would lose millions.

Research programs at the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus would take a big hit, and the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative would be cut by more than half.

And it would happen all at once under a massive budget-cutting bill that neared passage in the Republican-controlled House on Thursday.

The wide-ranging bill would shrink everything from the Head Start program for local youngsters to the **West Valley Demonstration Project**. Federal funding for family planning clinics and public broadcasting would be eliminated entirely.

Those proposals are included in a bill aimed at funding federal programs through Sept. 30, and they are separate from the debate over the fiscal 2012 budget that President Obama proposed Monday.

The funding bill is the new House Republican majority's first stab at controlling a federal budget that has run up trillion-dollar-plus deficits in the last several years.

"When we say we're going to cut spending, read my lips: We're going to cut spending," House Speaker John A. Boehner, R-Ohio, told reporters Thursday.

The spending bill, expected to pass by the end of this week, could lead to a showdown with the Democratic Senate and the Obama administration, which oppose the House Republicans' hard line on spending.

If Congress and the president cannot agree on a way to fund the federal government for the rest of fiscal 2011 by the time a temporary spending measure expires March 4, a government shutdown could result.

Thursday, Boehner sounded perfectly willing to let that happen.

"I am not going to move any kind of short-term [funding resolution] at current levels," Boehner said.

Aiming to cut about \$61 billion in federal spending without touching defense, Social Security or Medicare, Republicans offered deep cuts in just about everything else and tweaked their cuts through a series of amendments during marathon legislating sessions in recent days.

Republicans described the bill as tough but necessary medicine.

"All areas must be brought under scrutiny as we face one of the most dire fiscal situations in our nation's history," said Rep. Tom Reed, a Corning Republican who successfully pushed amendments to defund a trust fund for Presidio National Park and a sewer project in Tijuana, Mexico.

"Whether it is \$1 or \$1 billion, we must take a hard look at all government spending to see what can be eliminated," Reed said.

Western New York's Democratic lawmakers said, though, that the cuts the GOP is pushing would undermine economic growth not only now, but for years to come.

Among the investments that would be repealed entirely would be Obama's signature high-speed rail initiative, which Rep. Louise M. Slaughter, D-Fairport, has made a top priority.

"This is a critical time in America's history, and if we are to compete with nations like China, to create jobs in the United States and win the global marketplace, we must support our own nation with smart, targeted cuts that will lower the deficit but invest in American jobs," said Slaughter, who sees high-speed rail as a big job producer for New York.

The spending-reduction bill would hurt the Buffalo area in numerous other ways, too, said Rep. Brian Higgins, D-Buffalo.

"It's proposing to make \$61 billion in cuts that disproportionately hurt Buffalo and Western New York and other older, historic communities that are trying to redefine themselves" through investments in the health sciences and technology, he said.

Higgins said he was especially concerned about proposed cuts in federal research funding that are exactly the opposite of what Obama is proposing in his 2012 budget.

Those research cuts could gravely harm the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus, Higgins said.

Roswell Park Cancer Institute stands to lose about 10 percent of its federal funding under the bill, said Candace S. Johnson, deputy director. The cancer center had received \$59 million in active federal funding as of Feb. 1.

Meanwhile, UB expects to lose between \$17 million and \$18 million of its federal research funding if the cuts go through, said Alexander N. Cartwright, the university's vice president for research.

Beyond cutting investments in the future, the budget bill includes a sharp reduction in community development block grant funding for streets, sidewalks and other projects in Buffalo and other cities, Higgins said.

The city has been expecting to receive about \$17 million in funding under that program this year. Under the GOP bill, however, "let's assume half of that will be lost," Higgins said.

Environmental programs take a big hit, too.

Great Lakes cleanup efforts would be delayed under the huge cut that the Republicans propose, said Jeff Skelding, campaign director of the Healing Our Waters-Great Lakes Coalition.

But the Department of Energy does not yet know exactly what the impact of a \$20 million cut would be at West Valley, the Cattaraugus County nuclear waste site, a department spokesman said.

In Buffalo, though, public broadcasters are pondering the possible impact they would feel through the loss of all their federal aid.

"It could have an impact on jobs," said Michael G. Sutton, executive vice president and chief operating officer of the Western New York Public Broadcasting Association.

During a prolonged debate on the House floor in recent days, Democrats have argued that the American people — though interested in bringing the nation's finances in line — don't want so many programs to be cut so much so fast.

"Unlike some within the Republican Party, the American people are not looking to completely cripple the federal government and leave the nation to the corporate elite," Slaughter said.

Republicans said, however, that last November's election that brought them to power was a referendum on big government.

"To reduce uncertainty and create a better environment for job creation, we need to cut wasteful spending," Boehner told reporters.

This means that everyone will have to sacrifice, Reed told reporters on a conference call earlier this week. "Nothing has been left untouched," he said. "Everyone is taking a haircut."

Programs that are important to Reed's Southern Tier district will be cut, too, the congressman acknowledged.

"There will be some short-term pain that will cause long-term prosperity," he said.

Rep. Harold D. "Hal" Rogers, R-Ky., chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, said the bill "reverses a trend of out-of-control Democrat spending over the last two years that has increased overall discretionary funding by 24 percent."

"Never before has Congress undertaken a task of this magnitude, but never before have we been faced with a deficit crisis of this scale," Rogers added.

Rogers contended that the cuts were "responsible" and "judicious."

But UB's Cartwright said the budget reductions would hit Buffalo especially hard.

"This area," he said, "is in need of every bit of resources it can get."

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WKBW - TV Buffalo, New York

[Print this article](#)

Seneca Nation Leaders Meet With Gov. Cuomo's Staff

Originally printed at <http://www.wkbw.com/news/local/Seneca-Nation-Leaders-Meet-With-Gov-Cuomos-Staff-116684724.html>

By WKBW Programming
February 22, 2011

ALBANY, NY, Feb. 22, 2011 – (release) Seneca Nation of Indians President Robert Odawi Porter and other Seneca leaders today met with Gov. Andrew Cuomo's staff in Albany in the first face-to-face meeting on issues dividing their governments.

Porter, along with other Seneca leaders and the governor's staff, met for 95 minutes at the Capitol.

"We had an interesting first meeting. We committed to meeting again. We discussed the multitude of issues that confront the Nation and invited further dialogue. We explained to the governor through his key staff that our treaties and sovereignty will not be compromised," Porter said.

"Our message to the governor was: What's good for the Seneca Nation is good for Western New York and, ultimately, the state as a whole."

Also attending the meeting was Council Chairman Richard Nephew and Nation Chief Counsel Chris Karns. Prior to meeting with the executive branch, the Seneca leaders also met with staff of the Senate Republican majority. Secretary to the Governor Steve Cohen attended part of the meeting, which was with Counsel to the Governor Mylan Denerstein.

"The Seneca Nation is fully committed to engaging in meaningful dialogue with the governor on these very important issues, which extend beyond the longstanding tobacco tax dispute," said Nephew. "This is also yet another opportunity for the Seneca to educate and inform the leaders in New York State on the significant treaty relationship we have with the United States, to remind them what those obligations entail and to revisit the more contemporary agreements that have been made with the Seneca. It goes without saying that those agreements – the treaties and compacts – must be honored and fulfilled."

Porter today also released contents of a letter he delivered to Gov. Cuomo's staff when the two met briefly in Jamestown after the governor's speech there Jan. 13. The letter basically outlined the agenda and subjects for discussions at today's meeting.

In the letter, the president called for working together for the future growth and success of Western New York.

Porter, elected the same day as Cuomo last November, wrote:

“The lesson of the Nation’s success is simple – when the state accepts and recognizes the Nation’s sovereignty and treaty rights, good things happen for both Senecas and non-Indians alike. Conversely, when the state pursues short-sighted policies that disrespect the Nation’s unique status, both our governments suffer,” Porter wrote in his 3½ -page January letter.

In the January letter, Porter listed “The Challenges,” and “The Opportunities.”

The challenges include: Violation of treaty-protected rights; taxation of commerce with non-Indians; violation of “exclusivity provision” under Nation/State Casino Compact; illegal use of Nation lands by New York State Thruway; Southern Tier Expressway “Unkept Promises;” New York State Police and the New York State Racing and Wagering Board Regulatory Overcharges; **West Valley Nuclear Contamination;** New York State Criminal and Civil Jurisdiction; Ganondagan State Historic Site, near Rochester.

For opportunities, he listed the potential benefits on the regional and upstate economies of long-term agreements. Porter concluded:

“By definition, the Seneca people are permanent residents of what is now called Western New York. Since we anticipate that New Yorkers will also remain resident in our area for quite some time, we therefore have a long-term interest in the future growth and success of this region – an interest that I know you and I have in common.”

Specifically on the challenges, Porter wrote:

- Violation of treaty rights: “In 2010, Gov. Paterson and the State Legislature initiated a new effort to assess state excise taxes on the tobacco commerce occurring on Nation lands. The Nation views this effort as an affront to our sovereignty and a violation of our treaty-protected right to the ‘free use and enjoyment of our lands.’ In addition, the state’s effort violates the Buffalo Creek Treaty of 1842 that expressly recognizes our immunity from the application of state taxes in our territory.”
- Casino compact: The Nation requests that the state withdraw its recently filed arbitration request to allow for a discussion of this dispute between the two sides.
- New York State Thruway: In 2007, the Nation cancelled the state’s 1954 easement to a three-mile stretch of the Thruway on Cattaraugus Territory land in Irving due to state non-compliance, and instituted toll charges. Those now total \$75 million, which the state Thruway Authority has ignored. The Nation requests discussions begin about the balance owed and fulfillment of state commitments.
- Southern Tier Expressway: The state failed to meet obligations to the Nation set out in 1976. Discussions should begin to settle these failed promises.
- State gambling regulation charges: The state overbilled the Nation since the start of the compact, now overcharging the Nation \$48 million. On Dec. 22, the two sides reached a conceptual agreement on a settlement. This should be finalized.

· **West Valley.** The state and the Nation should work together to move the U.S. Government to

ensure a healthy environment for everyone living in the area potentially affected by radioactive contamination.

- Criminal and civil jurisdictions. The Nation would like to begin a dialogue with the state about criminal jurisdiction and civil lawsuits in state courts involving Indians. This frustrates Nation self-government and costs the state extra money.

- Ganondagan. The state operates a historic site near Victor, NY that is the historic birthplace of the Seneca Nation. The Nation, state and private parties contributed funds -- \$2 million in the Nation's case -- to build an interpretive center on the site. The Nation would like state commitment for operating support and a role for the Nation in perpetuity.

In his first letter to the governor, Porter said:

“As you take office, I wanted to offer you the opportunity to establish a peaceful, long-term relationship between the Seneca Nation and the state. While our treaty relationship is with the United States government, not the state, I believe that the reality of our daily interaction is such that it is important for the Seneca Nation to have a direct and productive relationship with state officials as well as federal officials. I hope you agree.”

Jamestown Post-Journal

February 23, 2011

Seneca Nation, Governor's Office Sit Down For Talks

February 23, 2011 - By Sharon Turano sturano@post-journal.com

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Discussions have begun about a "multitude of issues" facing the Seneca Nation of Indians and state of New York.

A news release from the nation reports staff from the two governments met Tuesday and adds they will continue such sessions. State gubernatorial spokespeople could not be reached to comment.

Seneca President Robert Odawi Porter said he and other Seneca leaders met with gubernatorial staff for about 95 minutes in Albany.

"We explained to the governor and his key staff that our treaties and sovereignty will not be compromised," said Porter, adding the message Seneca leaders wanted to portray is that "what's good for the Seneca Nation is good for Western New York, and ultimately, the state," he said.

Porter said Senecas also met with Republican majority staff members of the state Senate.

"The Seneca Nation is fully committed to engaging in meaningful dialogue with the governor on these very important issues," said council Chairman Richard Nephew, who also attended the meeting.

Prior to the session, Porter said he released contents of a letter delivered to Gov. Andrew Cuomo previously outlining the agenda for Tuesday's session. Porter said he called for "working together for the future growth and success of Western New York." Improving the area, he said, is a desire both he and the governor have in common.

Challenges to do so, he said, include: state attempts at collecting excise taxes on goods sold to non-Indians on Native American land, which Porter described as "an affront to our sovereignty." He also requested the state withdraw its arbitration request pertaining to a dispute about three nation-run casinos in Western New York, opting for discussion about an exclusivity portion of the agreement and billing for state regulatory affairs instead. Porter said he also wants talks about the state Thruway going through the nation's Cattaraugus territory.

Porter also said discussions should be held to settle promises the nation alleges the state has not kept pertaining to the Southern Tier Expressway going through its Allegany Territory. Porter said the state and nation should also work together regarding concerns the nation has about the [West Valley](#) Demonstration Project, criminal and civil jurisdiction and a state commitment for Ganondagan, a historic site recognizing the birth place of the Seneca Nation.

Porter said he hoped to establish "a peaceful, long-term relationship" between the state and nation.

"I believe that the reality of our daily interaction is such that it is important for the Seneca Nation to have a direct and productive relationship with state officials," he said.

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Dear U.S Department of Energy (West Valley Demonstration Project):

It's public knowledge that Department of Energy is evaluating bids from large corporations who want to be the next prime contractor at WVDP. We understand you are seeking to enhance stakeholder outreach while moving toward an end stage for the former nuclear reprocessing center. We applaud your efforts!

Although the process of selecting the next contractor is no doubt a complicated one, please don't allow potential suitors to forget the stakeholders that make our community special.

We wonder aloud... During this competition, how many of these potential suitors have stayed in local lodgings, eaten at local restaurants, or bothered to inquire about local charitable endeavors?

Corporations who make *millions* in profits each year on federal projects throughout the U.S. (including West Valley) should take the time and spend some of their profits in the communities that butter their bread! The eventual winner of this competition should demonstrate a willingness to be an active participant in our community. In plain terms, it means corporations who want to work here should spend their time and dollars here too! How else are they going to learn about our community?

Department of Energy... We're depending on you! During your evaluation process, please take into account how the bidders treat the community they want to do business in! **To date, they've all been absent!**

(Paid for by concerned citizens)

The Buffalo News

At town meeting, Reed pitches plan to rein in federal spending

By **Robert J. McCarthy and Gene Warner**

Published: February 26, 2011, 2:38 PM

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Key Links

Updated: February 27, 2011, 9:41 AM

ELLCOTTVILLE -- If Washington insiders convey a "this too shall pass" attitude these days over the budget-cutting message of freshman Republicans, Rep. Tom Reed has some news.

The Corning Republican on Saturday told 15 Cattaraugus County voters that reducing spending and trimming the deficit are ideas that will be dictated by practical economics. And the group of anything-but-inside-the-Beltway types seemed to like what they heard.

"There's a change in philosophy with this freshman class," Reed told his constituents during a town meeting in Ellicottville Town Hall. "We're there to do a job. And when the job is done, a lot of us just want to go home to our families."

"And we stand united," he added.

Reed is one of 87 GOP freshmen in the House of Representatives pushing a plan to cut \$61 billion from the federal budget. Many are now selling the idea in town meetings. The former mayor of Corning covered a variety of topics on Saturday, responding to questions from his Cattaraugus County constituents on everything from aid to Egypt to extending Route 219.

But he constantly returned to the subject of reining in federal spending, pointing to graphs and charts showing the \$14 trillion national deficit, an amount that will grow much larger over the next few years unless the problem is confronted immediately. "We have a three- to five-year period to fundamentally change the way we do business in America," he said. "We can turn the tide and get this thing manageable.

"But beyond five years, there is no turning back," he added, "because the debt just compounds itself."

The congressman also expressed empathy for Gov. Scott Walker of Wisconsin, who last week ignited a national firestorm over his plan to balance the state budget by cutting benefits of public employees and ending collective bargaining rights.

"The Wisconsin situation is becoming more and more of a reality across the nation," Reed said. "The governor of Wisconsin says enough is enough, and he's calling the question."

But while Reed found support in bucolic Ellicottville, the view was far different 60 miles to the north in Niagara Square, where Walker and Wisconsin's Republican lawmakers were the targets of more than 250 protesters and union backers during a noon rally.

The activist group MoveOn.org called the rally, claiming solidarity with Wisconsin's public employees and targeting what it described as an attack on workers rights and dangerous government budget cuts.

"It's to stand in solidarity with workers across the U.S., in Wisconsin, Indiana and Ohio, who are all under attack," MoveOn.org organizer John Buckley said. "They're trying to take away bargaining rights and make [workers] pay more for their health care and pensions.

"At the same time," Buckley added, "they're providing huge tax breaks for large businesses and giving tax breaks to millionaires and billionaires."

Buckley then picked up his bullhorn to address the crowd.

"If people say unions never did anything for them, ask them if they enjoy their two-day weekend," he told the crowd.

Others chimed in with the 40-hour work week and other union benefits, including pensions, health care and the collective bargaining rights threatened in Wisconsin. But the focus wasn't just on the Midwest.

"Are You Listening, Andrew?" one sign asked, in reference to New York Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo, who is considering cuts to the state job force to erase a \$10 billion deficit.

Back in Ellicottville, the mood was more subdued for Reed, the only member of Congress from Western New York who holds town meetings. Reps. Brian Higgins, D-Buffalo, and Rep. Louise M. Slaughter, D-Fairport, do not, while former Rep. Chris Lee, R-Amherst, only held town meetings via a telephone setup.

Dressed informally in a sweater, the congressman conducted the session in an easygoing manner -- far different from the high-energy style of his predecessor -- former Rep. Eric J.J. Massa, D-Corning.

He also made it clear he is committed to the town meeting concept, noting he had two others scheduled Saturday, in Belmont and Bath.

"We want to make sure we are accessible and that we have a dialogue back and forth," he said. "Come talk to us. We're interested in the dialogue; we're interested in the input."

Reed made it clear he can support some new spending proposals, but only if they provide a return on investment. He said he backs expensive ideas like extending Route 219 and continuing the program to stabilize nuclear waste stored at the former **West Valley Nuclear Reprocessing Center**.

The end of the old "earmark" process that resulted in soaring spending on pork barrel projects will guarantee all spending ideas get serious review, he said.

"True infrastructure spending? There's not a lot of opposition to that," he said. "But the project has to pass the objectivity test. What kind of return do we get on our investment?"

Other questions, submitted on cards before the meeting, seemed right up the conservative congressman's alley. Yvonne from Great Valley asked about efforts to prevent transporting concealed weapons across state lines.

Reed said he took "heat" for his support of gun rights from some quarters after his congressional colleague -- Rep. Gabrielle Giffords, D-Arizona -- was shot in the head in January.

"This is the time to stand up for individual, fundamental rights," he said.

"That's the way we are here in the boonies," replied a woman in the audience. "Enforce the laws we've got rather than create new ones."

A couple who proudly proclaimed their tea party affiliation nodded in agreement when Reed said freshman Republicans now demand that every bill come with an explanation of its adherence to the Constitution. And he said his classmates agree with concerns raised by Mark from Franklinville on the need to enforce immigration laws.

"We need to make sure our borders are secure and when people come here they come legally," he said. "Enforce the law -- there's a philosophy shift to make sure that's occurring."

Reed noted that Giffords was shot on Jan. 8 as she arrived to hold a town meeting.

"We don't change our way of doing business because of a lunatic in Arizona," he said, "but we ask you to be aware of security."

rmccarthy@buffnews.com and gwarner@buffnews.com

Comments

SORT: **NEWEST FIRST** | OLDEST FIRST

Springville Journal, Thursday, March 03, 2011

West Valley Demonstration Project to hire experts for phase one studies

By: Matt Sargeant

Date: Thursday March 3, 2011



There was no lack of public interest in the cleanup efforts of the West Valley Demonstration Project when the United States Department of Energy and the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority held an open meeting on Wednesday, Feb. 23. The meeting was facilitated by the Keystone Center (represented by Jeremy Kranowitz), which has been hired to assist in these meetings concerning WVDP. “We [Keystone] focus mostly on meeting facilitation, conflict resolution and education programs,” said Kranowitz.

Program Director Paul Bembia of NYSERDA and Bryan Bower, director of DOE, gave a PowerPoint presentation outlining the next step of WVDP’s cleanup plan. “The Department of Energy and New York state decided to move forward with the phase,” said Bower. “It’s much easier for me to tell you what [structures] we’re leaving,” he continued. “The remaining facilities will be the two disposal areas, the waste tank farm and the non-source area of the ground water plume. The permeable treatment wall will still be there, too.”

Phase one of the decommissioning of WVDP is approximated to take 10 years and will be the “most extensive site infrastructure and waste removal effort ever undertaken at [the] site,” according to the presentation. During this phase, DOE and NYSERDA will collaborate to come to an agreed decision as to how to execute phase two of the cleanup.

“We are in the process of selecting a contractor to do the first part of the work,” said Bower. “The largest efforts will be to remove high-level waste canisters that have been relocated to a new, on-site storage facility.”

WVDP is currently being funded for \$60 million per year. “That is both DOE and New York state funding,” said Bower. “We obviously would be having additional funds that we would be applying to the phase one process.”

To date, NYSERDA and DOE have laid the groundwork to begin the next step in the process. The agencies have agreed to split Phase one study costs 50/50, in accordance with their Second Supplemental Agreement.

Continued:
Springville Journal, Thursday, March 3, 2011

The process of the phase one decommissioning, as outlined in the presentation, will consist of “facility disposition” and “soil remediation.” Included in facility disposition are relocation of 275 HLW canisters, demolition of the Vitrification Facility and Main Plant Process Building, elimination of ancillary facilities and shipping low level waste. Removal of the “below-grade portion” of MPPB and VF, lagoons and Liquid Waste Treatment Facility, Remote Handled Waste Facility and remaining ancillary facilities are all part of soil remediation.

During these processes, phase one studies will be conducted until WVDP is ready to begin making decisions regarding the second phase. Some of the problems that will have to be solved for phase two are the permanent disposal of HLW canisters, closure for the Waste Tank Farm and decisions regarding the disposal areas.

Phase one studies will examine a number of “potential areas of study.” Some of the PAS listed were “soil erosion,” “groundwater flow and contaminant transport,” “catastrophic release of contamination and impact on Lake Erie” and “cost discounting and cost benefit analyses over long time periods,” along with several others. According to Project Manager Lee Gordon of NYSERDA, the agencies hoped to gain input on these PAS from the meeting before passing them on to subject matter experts, who have yet to be hired, for evaluation. Currently, potential SMEs for some PAS have been identified.

To complete the studies, WVDP will hire a group of SMEs and also an Independent Scientific Panel. The roles of these groups have already been determined, though individuals have not been chosen. The ISP will be a group of “nationally and internationally recognized scientists.” Their job will be to “provide guidance to SME, DOE and NYSERDA to keep [the] process moving” and to “evaluate whether [the] proposed studies would contribute toward reaching interagency consensus on phase two decisions.”

“These are not necessarily people in the nuclear industry,” Gordon clarified. “We’re looking for „science statesmen“ who come in and help guide things from this overall scientific soundness perspective. We’re not looking for experts in any particular field. We want people we believe can offer us an independent view of things, independent of both agencies and not feel [that they are] holding to DOE or NYSERDA or holding to any view or agency.”

“If the SMEs can’t agree,” added Bembia, “these people can help them in arguments. If there’s not consensus, we can go ahead and do those studies anyway or decide not to do them. One agency or the other can decide to do those studies. We still ultimately have the decision-making process – absolutely with public input. If we’re not reaching consensus, yes, you’re going to know about it.”

The two agencies have agreed to provide opportunities for the public to interact and provide input, promising “routine meetings with regulatory agencies and the public.” Gordon says, “There’s nothing definite on time frames right now. The meetings will be roughly every quarter. We care about and want to hear what you have to say.”

Written comments are the primary vehicle of interacting on issues regarding WVDP. Bower said they are preferred, because “that will make it easier for us to get it.”

Continued:
Springville Journal, Thursday, March 3, 2011

A panel consisting of Bembia, Bower, Gordon and Moira Maloney of DOE fielded numerous questions asked by those in attendance and a few who participated via teleconference. The panel explained that the next step in the process is to gather together SMEs and assured that public input will be considered for this endeavor.

“We have identified a number of individuals that the agency feels could fill these roles,” said Gordon. “We have not given contracts yet, which is why we don’t have lists up on our PowerPoint slide. We have a few people we feel could fit these roles.”

“We have not sat down and gone through each of these topics yet,” added Bembia. “We’re still at a point of working through these issues and getting input. We’re going to need to start identifying people for these groups but we don’t have them yet.”

Some in attendance expressed a desire to see a written mission statement for the phase one studies. “We have attempted some kind of litmus test,” said Bembia. “Discussions need to be targeted toward making sound phase two decisions. The mission is more than consensus – we need good outcomes as well.” Kranowitz suggested that the public “submit any suggestions toward such a litmus test.”

“This isn’t the one and only opportunity for public input,” concluded Bembia. “This is the beginning of a process.”

Written questions or comments concerning phase one of the cleanup at WVDP can be sent to either of the following contacts until March 25:

Paul J. Bembia
Program Director
West Valley Site Management
10282 Rock Springs Road
West Valley, NY 14171
pjb@nyserda.org.

Bryan Bower
Director of U.S. Department of Energy
West Valley Demonstration Project
10282 Rock Springs Road
West Valley, NY 14171
bryan.bower@wv.doe.gov.

The next WVDP meeting is yet to be determined.

UB REPORTER



WORD OF MOUTH

How do you like your pizza: thin or thick crust? And where's the best place to get it? ▶

LAST UPDATED: Thursday, March 3, 2011

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About UB Reporter

NEWS

Students presenting at SUNY symposium

By SUE WUETCHER

Published: March 3, 2011

Five UB graduate students will be presenting three research and academic posters at a SUNY graduate student symposium and exhibition being held next week in Albany.

The event, titled "Research That Matters: An Exposition of Graduate Research in SUNY and CUNY," is sponsored by the SUNY-wide University Faculty Senate. It will be held on March 8 in the Legislative Office Building in Albany, with key state legislators, as well as SUNY Chancellor Nancy Zimpher and other SUNY senior administrators, expected to attend.

"The opportunity for a representative sample of UB's graduate students to present their research directly to New York state legislators and senior SUNY officials is very meaningful," notes Myron A. "Mick" Thompson, associate provost and executive director of the Graduate School, which is coordinating UB's participation at the event. "The exposition will showcase the broad scope of our institution's research endeavors, convey the potential impact of that research on the lives of citizens of New York and beyond, and demonstrate the exceptional quality of our graduate student population.

"The event also provides a forum within which our graduate students can personally convey the importance of their educational experience at UB to key individuals who contribute support for the environment within which their scholarship, research and creative activity occurs," Thompson says.

Representing UB at the exposition will be:

- Pharmacy graduate students Lubna Abuqayyas and Yang Chen, whose presentation/poster is titled "Pharmacokinetic Strategies to Improve Drug Penetration into Solid Tumors." Their faculty supervisor is Joseph Balthasar, professor and director of the Center for Protein Therapeutics, Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences, School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences.
- Engineering graduate student Shannon Seneca. Seneca will present "Evaluation of Zeolite Permeable Treatment Wall for the Removal of Strontium-90 from Groundwater at **the West Valley** Demonstration Project." Her faculty supervisor is Alan Rabideau, professor in the Department of Civil, Structural and Environmental Engineering, School of Engineering and Applied Sciences.
- Neuroscience graduate students Henry Lin (MD/PhD candidate) and Katelyn Carr, whose presentation/poster is titled "Food Reinforcement and Obesity: Psychological Moderators." Their faculty supervisor is Leonard Epstein, SUNY Distinguished Professor in the

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departments of Pediatrics, Social and Preventive Medicine and Psychology, and chief of the Division of Behavioral Medicine, School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences.

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Post-Journal Jamestown, NY

Different Situations

Concerns At Japan Nuclear Sites Not The Same As West Valley Demonstration Project

March 17, 2011 - By Sharon Turano sturano@post-journal.com

WEST VALLEY - Environmental concerns emanating from operations at the West Valley Demonstration Project differ from those being dealt with in Japan, report area officials.

While all eyes are turned on nuclear energy and dangers surrounding it after an earthquake and tsunami in Japan, officials at the West Valley Demonstration Project are alerting area residents the situation is not the same here, despite having a nuclear facility in the area.

"It's apples and oranges," said John Chamberlain, technical adviser for West Valley Environmental Services. Despite the commonality of both facilities in Japan and West Valley dealing with radioactive material, there is no comparison between them, he said. Chamberlain said there is no reactor at West Valley, so there is no high-pressure system operating to cause explosion concerns, as is the case in Japan. Chamberlain said there has never been a reactor at West Valley, which was the site of a nuclear fuel reprocessing plant that closed in the 1970s. He said the plant took in used reactor fuel, dissolved it, and took out uranium and plutonium from the liquid to be put into new fuel. There was, he said, reactor fuel onsite at one time, adding that is now gone.

Chamberlain said the federal Department of Energy took over the site in 1982, when there were 750 assemblies of stored fuel on site with uranium. Some, he said, went to utility companies and others were sent to an Idaho storage facility.

Chamberlain said some radioactive waste is still onsite including contaminated buildings that were used during operations and 275 10-foot-tall canisters of solidified radioactive waste. There are disposal areas, he said, adding that is where radioactive waste was put in the ground and capped, along with underground tanks that had waste, which are empty and being dried.

Therefore, he said, there are environmental concerns at West Valley, adding, however, they are long-term ones and deal with what will happen in decades due to environmental changes such as erosion, movement of soil, earthquake potential and are not immediate concerns like explosions that are being seen in Japan.

Chamberlain said continual work is being done to get waste off-site and maintain and monitor what is there. Radioactive waste that does remain, he said, is being shielded so it is kept away from people. That does not mean there is no danger due to radioactive materials at the site, but he said long-term environmental concerns are being evaluated and are not the same as the immediate dangers in Japan.

Eric Wohlers of Cattaraugus County's Health Department agreed, stating, "there is no comparison."

He said Japan has actual fission or the splitting of atomic nucleus releasing energy, while West Valley stores radioactive waste that is shielded. Therefore, he said, there is no possibility of meltdown from a reactor here. He said two burial grounds at West Valley house equipment used with concerns surrounding erosion of creeks near them and questions about whether equipment buried should be moved or monitored onsite. The concern is water supplies being exposed to the radioactive stored material, he said. Although there are small faults in the area, he said, if an earthquake occurred here, he would not anticipate it to be of the magnitude of that in Japan, nor would there be resulting reactor concerns.

The site is being cleaned up by federal and state agencies. The demonstration project is located on the border of Cattaraugus and Erie counties. It is owned by the New York State Research and Development Authority, also working on the cleanup efforts.

DOE Releases Melter Draft Waste Evaluation for Comment

Comments will be accepted until April 27.

Mar 23, 2011

The U.S. Department of Energy recently released a Draft Waste Incidental to Reprocessing (WIR) Evaluation of a vitrification melter at the West Valley Demonstration Project (WVDP) for review and comment by the public, states, and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

This draft evaluation shows that the melter meets the criteria for “waste incidental to reprocessing” and may be managed and disposed of as low-level radioactive waste (LLW). It is an important step in DOE’s efforts to clean up the WVDP and meet its obligations under the WVDP Act of 1980.

DOE will consider comments before making a final evaluation and determination and before selecting the disposal location at either the Nevada National Security Site Area 5 Radioactive Waste Management Site in Nevada or the Waste Control Specialists Federal Facility Waste Disposal Facility in Texas, which are the only facilities that can accept such federal LLW.

The vitrification melter was used from 1996 through 2002 to solidify high-level waste that had been generated by commercial reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel at the Western New York Nuclear Service Center in West Valley, by Nuclear Fuel Services, Inc. DOE undertook the solidification activities pursuant to DOE’s responsibilities under the WVDP Act.

A *Federal Register* notice was published March 14. A 45-day public comment period runs until April 27. The document is available on the Web at www.em.doe.gov/pdfs/WVDP_Melter_Draft_WIR_Eval.pdf.

Comments can be sent via e-mail to melter@wv.doe.gov.

Source: Department of Energy

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