SPRINGVILLE JOURNAL
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Ashford continues progress on master plan

07-14-2017

ASHFORD—The Town of Ashford's master plan will focus on three main areas as it lays the groundwork for the future.

The Route 219 corridor, the Route 240 corridor in the Hamlet of West Valley and the **West Valley Demonstration Project** site will be the main focus of the plan. Supervisor Charlie Davis said the plan will greatly help the town continue growing.

Karl Kalbacher, director of environment, economics and grant services for the Ferguson Group, echoed Davis' statement, adding it will also help the town receive grants. The town recently signed a contract with the Ferguson Group to develop the master plan.

Kalbacher said the firm is currently laying the foundation and collecting information on the town in order to provide a suggested plan to stakeholders, the public, elected representatives, the planning board and other interested parties.

"If you are a business and you are seeking to expand into a geographic area, you want to know the rules of the road," Kalbacher said. "You want to know what you are going to be allowed to do, how much land is available for you to build, what type of workforce is there, what type of infrastructure is available or not available … it's laying the framework for site selectors."

Davis said the town is looking to better the areas within Ashford that will set up a future for the town.

"We are going to write our story of where we were, where we are now and where we want to be and we need to tell our story," Davis said. "I want the people in the town to understand that we are working hard to move this stuff forward and get the master plan completed."

He continued to say the town will be better positioned to receive grants for development. Creating the master plan is essential to continuing the growth of Ashford, he said.

"One of the things that most people don't understand is that if you don't have a master plan, you don't have the nuts and bolts and things you need to get grants and get things accomplished within the town for infrastructure and all the rest of the stuff," Davis said.

As the process to complete the master plan continues, Ashford Planning Board Chairwoman Andrea Mellon said there will be opportunities for Ashford citizens to give their input and suggest changes and additions to the finished master plan now, and in the future.

"As the skeleton is starting to be laid out, there will be opportunities for the public to weigh in on it … they can weigh in as we are starting to put the meat on it so that the whole thing is put together as a master plan for everyone," Mellon said.

"Every three years, five years, seven years, we revisit the master plan and we constantly try to meet the communities needs," Ashford Planning Board member John Allen added. "Ten years from now, the whole community profile could change … once we get the master plan in place, other people from the outside can look and see what we have and what we have to offer and the people on the inside can have a vision of where we want to go."

If anything continues to go as planned, Kalbacher said the plan will be completed in six to nine months.

SPRINGVILLE JOURNAL

Ashford board updated on proposed solar farm

July 20, 2017

ASHFORD—The Ashford Town Board received updates about the proposed community solar farm project during their meeting July 12.

New York State Energy Research and Development Agency West Valley Program Director Paul Bembia spoke about recent changes in the regulatory framework for new distributed generation facilities within the state, which applies to the proposed Ashford solar farm at the Western New York Nuclear Service Center property.

The New York State Department of Public Service introduced a new approach to assigned value to the energy produced from these distributed generation facilities. Previously, an operator of the facility received a simple credit for the number of kilowatts generated by the facility and delivers to the grid.

The new policy identifies a dollar amount for the energy generated by the facility and delivered to the grid, which now also takes into account factors like when the power is delivered to the grid, where power is delivered and how much carbon emissions are lowered by the power derived to the grid.

Bembia said NYSERDA is evaluating the new approach to see if it will have an impact on the economics of the project and will update the town as they complete their evaluation.

In regard to the West Valley Demonstration Project, Bembia said demolition of the vitrification facility is still on track to start in August. The demolition is set to take around six to nine months and there will be over 400 truckloads of demolition material leaving the site.

Resident Beverly Hess of Hess Farms spoke to the board about some recent issues with sheriffs coming to their farm after turning out the cattle into the barnyard and saying they were going to call the SPCA. Hess told the board she wants to inform the public that her farm and the others in the Ashford area are doing everything correctly, so they don't have to constantly deal with this hassle.

"How do you combat this ignorance of these people going by?" Hess asked. "We have done something and I'm not pleased with what we have been doing. We haven't turned the cows out, we've let the brush and the trees grow up to hide our barnyard and fences, our cattle run behind the barn, we have let the weeds grow up in the fields where we keep the excess feed … I don't know what more we can do and it's just something we have to combat, but how you tell these people who know nothing about cattle. That is the question we have."

The next Ashford Town Board meeting will be held on Wednesday, Aug. 9 at 7:30 p.m. at the Ashford Community Center, located at 9377 Route 240, in West Valley.

SPRINGVILLE JOURNAL

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Town audit looks good

July 20, 2017

CONCORD—The Town of Concord is in good financial standing, according to Laura Landers, CPA. Landers presented her report at the July 13 Town Board meeting, when she also reviewed the audit.

The funds are operating on a positive balance, Landers said, except the General Fund which is operating with a "slight deficit." Landers explained the deficit was planned, but did use some of of the fund balance. The town used money from one fund to cover costs in another, Concord Supervisor Gary Eppolito explained.

"We borrowed from one fund to use in another," he said. "That was planned … we'll do that from time to time … it always gets paid back."

Cybersecurity within the town was discussed as well. Landers recommended the board consult with their risk and technology audit team to review cybersecurity policies. There is potential access to payroll and online banking information, as well as social security numbers if the town's system is compromised. Deputy Supervisor James Krezmien agreed to look into the matter with Eppolito and Denise Ciszak, bookkeeper.

Mary Jane Miess spoke during public comment, notifying the board people are unaware of the increase of days that lunch is being served at the Senior Center. She also reiterated the need for a full-time director, noting the center wasn't meeting the "socialization needs" of the seniors in town.

Kern Road, Transit Line Road, Scoby Hill Road, Randall Drive and the upper and lower extensions of East Avenue Extension have been oiled and chipped, Highway Superintendent Dennis Dains reported. Despite the wet summer, he said, the department has been able to complete their work in "record time." Culverts on Davis Hill, Spaulding and Manchester roads will be replaced.

The board passed a resolution supporting the application of funding for the watershed management plan on behalf of Concord.

"The water quality of Cattaraugus Creek is particularly vital due to its length, number of feeder streams that empty into it and its proximity to the West Valley Demonstration Project," the resolution reads in part. "The Concord Town Board is cognizant of the need to be good stewards of the environment and therefore have been an active member of the Erie County Water Quality Committee as well as other environmental and farmland protection committees and recognizes the need to protect our most precious resource."

Robin Sion has agreed to join the Town's Comprehensive Master Plan Committee after it was recommended by residents there should be a female voice.

The Town Board will next meet Aug. 10 at 7 p.m. in the Town Hall, 86 Franklin St., Springville.

OLEAN TIMES HERALD

Seneca president calls for removal of all West Valley wastes

By RICK MILLER, Olean Times Herald

Aug 9, 2017 Updated 2 hrs ago

Seneca singers Darlene Spruce and Nicky Thompson entertain a group of about 60 people participating in a Round Dance at the Buffalo History Museum's Indigenous People's Day program Tuesday.

BUFFALO — Seneca Nation President Todd Gates called Tuesday for the removal of all nuclear waste at the West Valley Demonstration Project.

Gates, who is a member of the West Valley Citizens Task Force, spoke at the Buffalo History Museum at an Indigenous Peoples Day program. The program was hosted by the Indigenous Women's Initiative, The Western New York Peace Center and the Buffalo History Museum.

Gates read a proclamation from the Seneca Tribal Council recognizing Indigenous Peoples Day and a Nuclear Free Future.

"Indigenous Peoples Day recognizes the important contributions of our ancestors to what is now North America," Gates said. "This year's celebration also honors the ten-year anniversary of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples."

In talking about nuclear wastes upstream from the Cattaraugus Territory, Gates reminded the roughly 60-person audience that "we rent this land" and it is our responsibility to pass it on to future generations.

The question is, he said, "Where are we going to put it (nuclear waste)?"

Gates also touched on climate change.

“We need to wrap our minds around climate change. It is a responsibility not only to ourselves, but to the world in general,” he said.

Another speaker, Lynda Schneekloth of Interfaith Climate Justice, noted the West Valley plant extracted plutonium from spent nuclear fuel rods from 1966 to 1972. It left liquid radioactive waste that has since been solidified, but the main process plant, underground tanks and two low-level waste landfills remain.

”We don’t have any idea of what to do with it,” she added.

Gates was quick to note that Indian territories have often been targeted for nuclear waste disposal or storage sites.

“We believe the property belongs to the future,” said Agnes Williams, coordinator of the Indigenous Women’s Initiatives. She said areas of the country, often on Indian reservations, have been sacrificed for the mining of uranium ore and for waste disposal.

People are needed to help on the environmental impact statement of the next phase of the cleanup at West Valley, Williams said.

Later, outside the museum, Gates said he is very concerned about a probabilistic assessment underway on the possibility of leaving some wastes buried in the ground at West Valley. These wastes have a half life of 10,000 years, he said.

“We want a full cleanup,” the Seneca president told reporters. “Where are we going to put it? It is disportionately aligned with native lands. We have to fight for what is ours.”

In his role as a member of the West Valley Citizens Task Force, Gates said the Department of Energy “has an opportunity to make an example of this place (West Valley). Show them what it takes to contain it. It’s going to take billions.”

Gates said the Department of Energy had cut the annual West Valley cleanup funding from more than $100 million to $63 million, drawing out the cleanup process.

“We want it out of there. Let’s get it out of there,” he said.

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

THE SALAMANCA PRESS
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Seneca president calls for removal of all West Valley wastes

By Rick Miller, County Reporter
Aug 9, 2017

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WBFO 88.7 NPR News & more
Buffalo's NPR News Station

Nuclear issues cloud 10th anniversary of Indigenous Peoples Declaration

By MIKE DESMOND · AUG 9, 2017

Preservation of the environment dominated Tuesday's celebration of Indigenous Peoples Day at the Buffalo History Museum. It was a celebration of the 10th anniversary of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

CREDIT WBFO'S MIKE DESMOND

The declaration was adopted by the U.N. General Assembly in September 2007 by a majority of 144 states in favor, 4 votes against - including the United States and Canada - and 11 abstentions. According to the U.N., it "establishes a universal framework of minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of the indigenous peoples of the world and it elaborates on existing human rights standards and fundamental freedoms as they apply to the specific situation of indigenous peoples."

The nuclear issue is important locally because of the West Valley Demonstration Project in Cattaraugus County, which left behind a vast amount of nuclear material. Congressman Brian Higgins objected to nuclear waste being trucked from Canada to South Carolina via the Peace Bridge, a strategically important bridge over a vital waterway.

"Now you're going to allow trucks carrying nuclear waste to go over that bridge," Higgins said. "It could potentially contaminate one of the most

important waterways that connect Lake Erie and Lake Ontario, an important source of drinking water, an important source of fresh water."

Lynda Schneekloth, with the Interfaith Climate Justice Community, cited the efforts of Indigenous peoples to block some construction projects potentially damaging their lands, like a controversial pipeline in the West.

"The recent actions at Standing Rock, because it was a great reminder and a way to stand in the way of the forces of destruction," Schneekloth said. "We stand there with persistence. We stand there with the attitude of protection and with love of the our Earth and with singing and dancing and prayer, we will not be overcome."

Prayer for peace and unity
CREDIT WBFO'S MIKE DESMOND

Seneca Nation President Todd Gates said Indigenous peoples must be conscious of environmental issues because of cultural values in planning for future generations.

"As president, it's just a role I'm filling now. There's somebody who will come and take my place and, hopefully, we develop the leaders of the future and I wish there were younger people here to realize this," Gates said. "Because we have to tell them the truth about what's going on and how do we move forward and how do we protect this Earth that has sustained us for this long."

The event included musical performances, a movie and a lantern ceremony on the shore of Mirror Lake as darkness fell.

WBFO 88.7 NPR News & more
Buffalo's NPR News Station

Senecas want radiation in Cattauraugua Creek gone 'right now'

By MIKE DESMOND · 1 HOUR AGO

GOOGLE MAPS

Cattaraugus Creek flows through much of the Seneca Nation's Cattaraugus Territory, along the southern border of Erie County. It carries radiation from West Valley and the president of the Seneca Nation wants it removed.

The radiation in the Buttermilk Creek tributary comes from the former Nuclear Fuel Services plant, better known these days as the West Valley Demonstration Project. That federal effort is supposed to clean up the heavily radioactive waste in the closed re-processing center, which it is doing slowly as money comes in.

It is not dealing with a lot of buried radioactive waste around the actual facility. Seneca President Todd Gates said determining what to do has gone on way too long.

"I've been on the Citizens Task Force for about 20 years, officially, and been involved even longer, but my concern is right now, we're going through a Record of Decision where they're looking at or doing probability assessments on and what they really are is leaving that stuff in place," Gates said.

Gates said he wants it gone, even if it means shifting it to somewhere else.

"We want it out of there," he said. "Everyone talks about cancer, but there's other things. There are thyroid problems. There's arthritis. I have arthritis. I have an artificial hip. Those are the side effects of long-term exposure to low-levels of radiation, which is there. They've identified hot spots along the watershed area."

He said American Indians have paid an exorbitant price for the nuclear age because so many reservations house nuclear waste or even radioactive waste from uranium mining and that is not fair.

It will not be cheap and it will not be simple, Gates said, but it has to be done on Indian land across the United States, not just on Seneca land. Gates said he is in Washington a lot on that issue.

"I go to Washington to fight for our Cattaraugus Creek watershed area that affects more than just us," he said. "There's other places out there that are more endangered than us, but we still have to fight for what's ours here in Western New York. There's other places out in Washington State, New Mexico, Savannah River, all these places and it's a little more contamination than we have."

Gates said that radiation will be a human health problem for thousands of years and it is time for a start in digging it all up and finding a new and controlled home.

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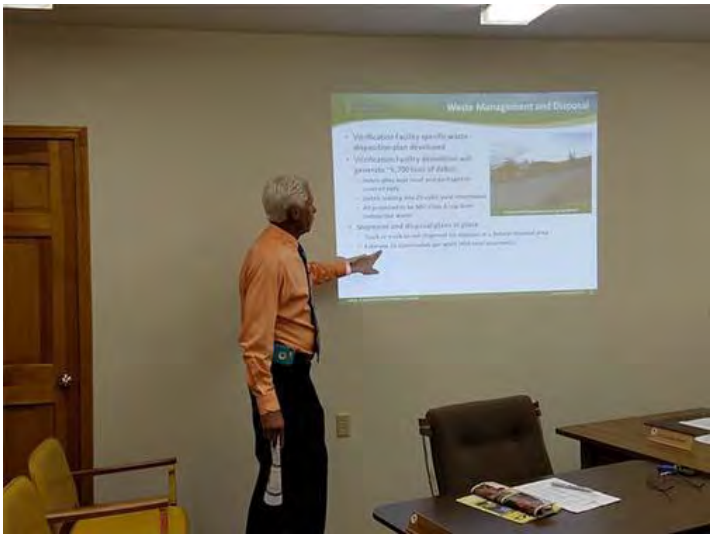
WVDP vitrification facility to soon be demolished



Deputy General Manager of CH2M HILL BWXT West Valley, LLC Scott Anderson makes a presentation to the Ashford Town Board.

August 17, 2017

ASHFORD—The Ashford Town Board heard an update about the upcoming demolition of the vitrification facility at the West Valley Demonstration Project site at its meeting Aug. 9.

Deputy General Manager of CH2M HILL BWXT West Valley, LLC Scott Anderson made a presentation to the board explaining the requirements and approach to the demolition of the WVDP vitrification building, safety precautions to both workers and residents and a schedule on the upcoming demolition.

Anderson talked about some of the regulatory requirements set up for workers and residents when it comes to exposure to radiation. The United States Department of Energy requires radiological worker to only be exposed to five rem, or roentgen equivalent man, per year. But at CHBWV, they have established a level of 500 millirem per year for the general workforce. For the public, the United States Environmental Protection Agency established emission standards for radionuclides in the air, which is set at 0.1 millirem per year.

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"Our objective in this whole thing is to ensure safe and environmentally safe demolition in keeping with as low as reasonably achievable principles and that is important for people to understand," Anderson said.

Anderson later talked about the preparations for the demolition and what CHBWV will be doing to make sure the process is safe for all parties. Before the demolition starts, CHBWV will be working on airborne dispersion modeling to figure out the quantity, type and location of contamination that can remain in a structure during demolition. Factors including contamination levels, contamination emission rates and meteorological conditions can all affect this model and CHBWV will be taking all necessary precautions to limit emission rates.

Demolition on the vitrification facility will be done with a hydraulic shear without the use of explosives to help control the spread of dust and other contaminants. Other safety measures including storm and surface water management, air monitoring both on and off site, using fixative daily, limiting the size of debris piles and frequent waste packaging and disposal will all be used during the process.

Demolition is set to start this month, and the entire process of taking down the building and shipment of waste should take around eight months to complete.

"To the site, it is going to be a big deal to see that go away," Anderson said.

In other board news:

– The Town of Ashford was approved as a clean energy community and was awarded a $50,000 grant.

– Highway Superintendent Tim Engels informed the board that work is being completed on roads throughout the town including Hillview Drive and School Street. Engels thanked Cattaraugus County for sending crews and equipment to help complete some of these road projects, which helped save money and time for the town.

– New York State Energy Research and Development Agency West Valley Program Director Paul Bembia reported that NYSERDA continues to work with the town on entering an agreement to develop a solar facility on the Western New York Nuclear Service Center.

The next Ashford Town Board meeting will be held on Tuesday, Sept. 19 at 7:30 p.m. at the Ashford Community Center, located at 9377 Route 240, in West Valley.

DOE disposing of uranium-233 waste stored at ORNL

oakridgetoday.com/2017/08/27/doe-program-disposing-uranium-233-waste-stored-ornl/

John Huotari

During training, workers removed a type of shipping cask that was expected to be used to transport 403 canisters of uranium-tainted waste from Oak Ridge National Laboratory to Nevada National Security Site northwest of Las Vegas. (File photo courtesy U.S. Department of Energy/Office of Environmental Management)

They haven't agreed on a final budget number, but the Trump administration and the U.S. House and Senate have proposed spending between about $33 million and $52 million in the next fiscal year to continue disposing of uranium-233 waste materials that are stored at Oak Ridge National Laboratory in a building that is the oldest continuously operating nuclear facility in the U.S. Department of Energy complex.

The uranium-233, or U-233, waste is now stored in secure vaults in Building 3019, which was built in the 1940s at ORNL. Removing the waste could allow ORNL to relax its overall security posture, which will reduce costs, eliminate nuclear safety issues, and make the campus more conducive to collaborative science, according to a U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee report published in July.

Some of the waste is from a 1960s research and development test in New York, and it is being shipped to the Nevada National Security Site, a former nuclear weapons proving ground about 65 miles northwest of Las Vegas. In interviews this summer, DOE officials in Oak Ridge declined to discuss the amount of that waste that has been shipped to Nevada or to say how long the shipments might continue. But they are making progress, said Jay Mullis, acting manager of DOE's Oak Ridge Office of Environmental Management.

Once all of those materials are shipped, the remaining U-233 at ORNL will be treated in "hot cell" facilities across the

street from Building 3019, at Building 2026. The DOE's Oak Ridge Office of Environmental Management owns both buildings.

Mullis said there is other U-233 waste stored in Building 3019, including from glovebox research at ORNL, from reactor plates, and from conglomerate materials.

Advertisement

CEUSP waste

DOE started shipping the U-233 waste materials that originated in New York and are now stored in Oak Ridge to the Nevada National Security Site in May 2015 after "productive discussions" with the state of Nevada, said Ben Williams, spokesperson for DOE's Oak Ridge Office of Environmental Management.

That waste is from the Consolidated Edison Uranium Solidification Program, or CEUSP. It contains radioisotopes of uranium from a 1960s research and development test of thorium and uranium reactor fuel at the Consolidated Edison Indian Point-1 reactor in New York. The test was sponsored by the Atomic Energy Commission, a predecessor to the U.S. Department of Energy.

The research and development test was completed in late 1968, and Nuclear Fuel Services of West Valley, New York, recovered the uranium, which was then considered to be a reusable nuclear material. The uranium was separated from certain other isotopes, fission products, and other constituents common to reactor fuel, according to a DOE analysis prepared in August 2014 .

The extracted liquid uranium (8,000 liters of uranyl nitrate) was shipped to ORNL for storage and possible reuse, the DOE analysis said. The other constituents remained at West Valley.

Cadmium and gadolinium were added to the liquid uranium to prevent a criticality reaction because the extracted material contained several isotopes of uranium, including U-233 and U-235, which are both fissile materials that can sustain a nuclear criticality reaction, the DOE analysis said.

The material was then managed in ORNL's Building 3019 for possible reuse.

But a "near-term use" still hadn't been identified by the mid-1980s. So for safety and security reasons, DOE solidified all 8,000 liters of the liquid uranyl nitrate at high temperatures into 403 individual small, ceramic-like uranium oxide monoliths, the DOE analysis said. Each uranium oxide monolith was bonded to the inside of a steel canister measuring about 3.5 inches in diameter by about two feet long. Individual canisters contained just a few kilograms of uranium each, including some U-232.

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In its August 2014 analysis, the U.S. Department of Energy said it had not identified any need for the CEUSP materials, and Building 3019 at ORNL, where the waste has been stored, has serious challenges. It is difficult to maintain that building, which is now about seven decades old, and to ensure that its security systems are adequate, the analysis said. DOE cited the concerns of both the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board and DOE's Office of Environmental Management.

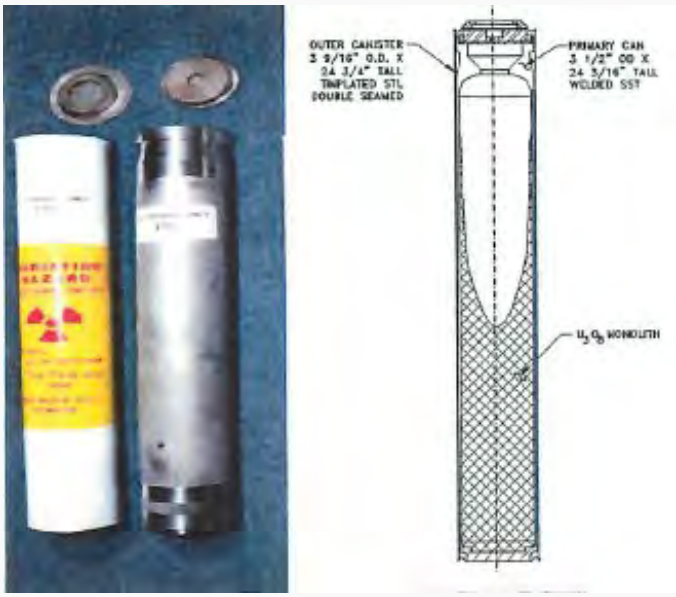
In 1997, the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board expressed its concern about the continued storage of the CEUSP low-level waste materials in Building 3019, and in 2010, the board reiterated that it does not consider long-term storage of this material in the "aging" building to be desirable. The Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board, or DNFSB, is an independent organization within the executive branch of the United States government.

Meanwhile, in 2007, DOE's Office of Environmental Management determined that the continued storage of U-233 in Building 3019 was a significant burden on safety, safeguards, security, and finances.

“Thus, DOE changed its management strategy for the CEUSP low-level waste material from one of storage for potential reuse to a search for an appropriate disposal location,” DOE said in its August 2014 analysis. “The Department shares the concerns of the DNFSB that continued storage of this waste in Building 3019 cannot be a long-term solution for the disposition of this waste. After the CEUSP low-level waste material and other material are removed from Building 3019, the building can be decontaminated and decommissioned.”

Low-level waste typically consists of containers of debris, trash, soil, equipment, tools, and personal protective clothing. The CEUSP waste is managed as special nuclear material that requires stringent management controls and procedures for both material protection (assuring protection of the material from theft or diversions) and physical security.

The Department of Energy has considered several locations for disposing of the waste, including at the Environmental Management Waste Management Facility, or EMWMF, on Bear Creek Road near the Y-12 National Security Complex. DOE also evaluated two commercial facilities that are licensed to dispose of low-level radioactive waste: Energy Solutions near Clive, Utah, and Waste Control Specialists in Andrews, Texas.



At left is an actual 24-inch steel canister. At right is a representation of the canister interior.

But other disposal locations were ruled out because of material protection and security requirements, the DOE analysis said. For example, the EMWMF in Oak Ridge does not have the right security to receive, unload, perform burial operations, or provide long-term surveillance of the CEUSP low-level waste, the analysis said. Also, among other negating factors, the EMWMF is categorized as a radiological facility and not as a certain category of nuclear facility, and disposing of the CEUSP low-level waste in Oak Ridge would “significantly exceed” the uranium isotope concentration limits for the Environmental Management Waste Management Facility.

The Nevada National Security Site is the only DOE or commercial site currently authorized to accept the CEUSP waste for disposal, the analysis said.

DOE considered downblending the CEUSP low-level waste materials before disposing of them. Downblending would have involved dissolving the low-level waste and mixing it with another waste or depleted uranium. That would lower the U-233 and U-235 concentrations, but it would increase the volume of the waste to be disposed from about 100 cubic feet to almost 30,000 cubic feet, the DOE analysis said.

“Downblending would require construction and operation of a new, heavily shielded processing facility,” the analysis said. “The downblending process would also increase worker exposure to radiological doses and require the expenditure of additional funds for structures and processes to minimize the health risks to workers associated with the increased exposures.”

Cargo container on a typical transport vehicle.

DOE had proposed shipping the waste from Oak Ridge in its existing ceramic-like form, encased in the stainless steel canisters and placed into rugged shipping casks designed to protect workers and the public from radioactivity. The casks would be loaded into steel cargo containers and secretly shipped 2,000 miles on flatbed trucks from ORNL to a 740-acre section of the Nevada National Security Site known as Area 5, where low-level radioactive waste has been disposed of since 1961. The waste would be buried 40 feet below the ground and covered with soil, other low-level waste, and capped by eight feet of soil.

“With the soil covering the disposal trench, the dose rate would be indistinguishable from background radiation,” DOE said in its analysis, which was approved August 7, 2014, by Mark Whitney, who was then the department’s acting assistant secretary for environmental management.

“Collectively, the approach of time, distance, and shielding would ensure that members of the public as well as DOE site and transportation workers would be protected during all phases of CEUSP low-level waste material loading, transportation, and emplacement in the disposal facility,” the analysis said. DOE would keep the waste shielded, maintain distance restrictions around the low-level waste, and limit the amount of time people are near the containers.

DOE agreed to have armed security personnel from its Office of Secure Transportation accompany the CEUSP low-level waste from Oak Ridge to Nevada. The Department of Energy said it had conducted extensive safety analyses to ensure the waste could be transported safely. The timing and routes of the shipments would not be disclosed.

With progress reported on the shipments, it’s not clear how many of the ceramic-like uranium oxide monoliths have been shipped from ORNL to Nevada.

Advertisement

In 2010, the DNFSB reported that the CEUSP materials made up almost three-quarters of the U-233 inventory in Oak Ridge. That same year, the safety board reported that there were more than 1,000 containers “in the scope of the Uranium-233 Disposition Project” that stored several chemical forms of materials.

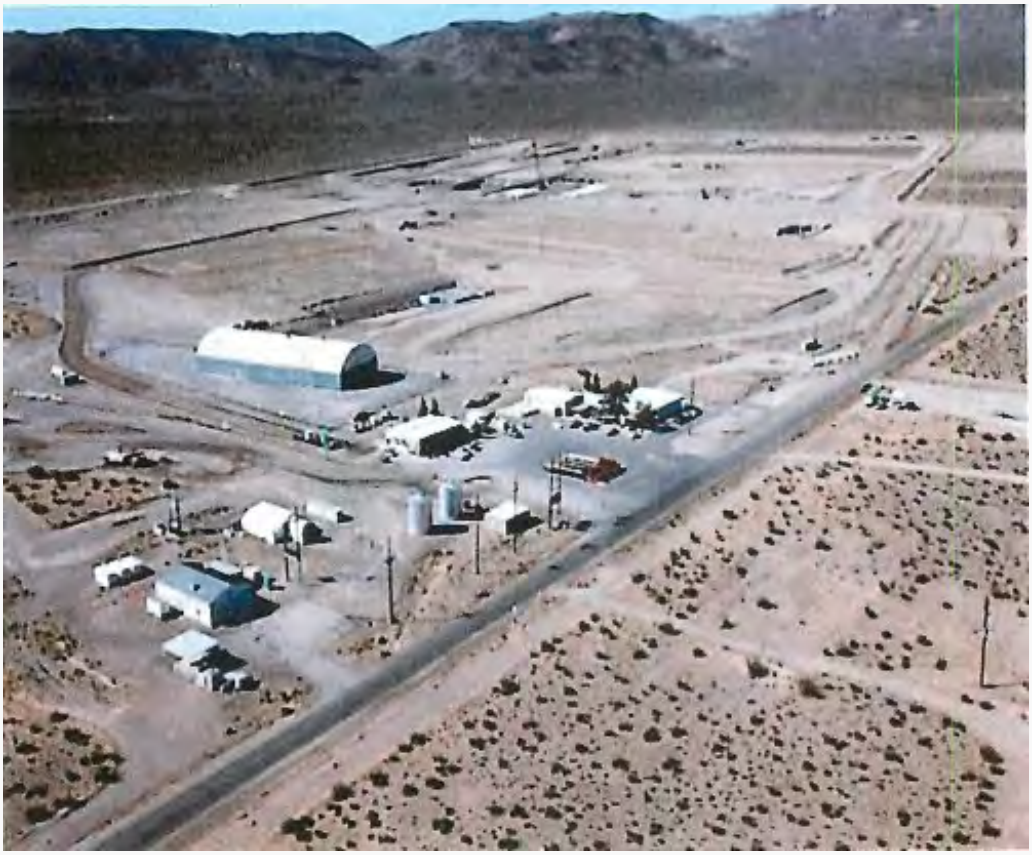
It’s not clear how those amounts and percentages have changed in the roughly seven years since.

Mullis said he can’t discuss amounts or how long it will take to treat and dispose of the U-233 waste at ORNL, but progress is being made.

It's not clear if the non-CEUSP waste will, like the CEUSP waste, also be shipped to Nevada.

Oak Ridge Today last reported on the CEUSP waste in December 2014, when former Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz and Nevada Governor Brian Sandoval announced a working group to "advance shared interests" at the Nevada National Security Site. Among other topics, that group of state and federal workers was expected to discuss contentious waste-related issues that included concerns over shipping the low-level radioactive CEUSP waste from Oak Ridge to the federal landfill in Nevada. The working group was announced in a six-page agreement, a memorandum of understanding signed by Moniz and Sandoval.

Nevada had reportedly balked at the shipment plan in mid-2013, and Sandoval had expressed concerns about shipping the CEUSP waste to the 1,360-square-mile Nevada National Security Site in a June 2013 letter to Moniz. Among the concerns was categorizing the low-level waste by exception—essentially defining it by what it is not (high-level radioactive waste, transuranic waste, spent nuclear fuel, or by-product material). Nevada officials had reportedly grown concerned that the proposed uranium waste shipments might open the door for other exotic forms of nuclear waste. Nevada also reportedly had concerns with proposed transportation routes and methods, engagement with affected local governments and Native American tribes, worker health and safety, and environmental protection.



The Area 5 Radioactive Waste Management Site at the Nevada National Security Site northwest of Las Vegas is pictured above.

U-233 budget proposals

The budget submitted to Congress by the Trump administration in May requested roughly $33.8 million for the U-233 disposition program in Oak Ridge in fiscal year 2018, which starts October 1 (see pages 13 and 167 here). That funding request, a decrease from fiscal years 2016 and 2017, was in part to continue the required surveillance and maintenance and other activities at Building 3019 to "maintain a safe and secure condition." It was also to finish

disposing of the waste materials from New York and continue the planning and implementation of U-233 processing.

The president's budget request supports preparing Building 2026 at ORNL for the processing of U-233 materials from Building 3019, according to DOE's fiscal year 2018 congressional budget request for its Environmental Management program (see pages 11 and 17 here).

A few months after the president's budget request was released, a Senate energy and water appropriations bill recommended $50.3 million for the cleanup of Building 3019 (see page 102 here).

"Removal of legacy material from this building, an aging facility in the heart of the Oak Ridge National Laboratory central campus, must remain a high priority for the Department (of Energy)," according to a report on the Senate appropriations bill. "Removal of the Uranium 233 will enable the overall security posture at the laboratory to be relaxed, which will reduce costs and eliminate nuclear safety issues, and make the campus more conducive to collaborative science. The (Senate Appropriations) Committee encourages the Department to seek opportunities to expedite cleanup of Building 3019, including public private partnerships that may reduce the overall cost of cleanup."

At about the same time, the House energy and water appropriations bill recommended $52.3 million to "expedite plans to dispose of U233 at the Oak Ridge Reservation."

There was $35.9 million for the U233 disposition program in Oak Ridge in fiscal year 2016 and $43.3 million in fiscal year 2017, according to the DOE budget request for fiscal year 2018 and the U.S. House appropriations report (see page 167 here and page 140 here).

U.S. Senator Lamar Alexander, a Tennessee Republican, is chair of the Senate Energy and Water Development Subcommittee, and Representative Chuck Fleischmann, a Tennessee Republican whose district includes Oak Ridge, is vice chair of the House Energy and Water Subcommittee.

Pavement collapse near Building 3019B

In June, the DNFSB reported a pavement collapse near Building 3019. DOE said the pavement collapse was a significant distance from the area where the uranium-233 is stored.

The collapse of about 36 square feet of pavement was near Building 3019B, which is an inactive facility, according to the DOE Oak Ridge Office of Environmental Management.

The DNFSB said the area of the building that was affected is near a deactivated hot cell, but it is structurally separate from the part of the building where the legacy U-233 materials are stored. DOE said the hot cells in the facility were not affected, and they do not contain radioactive material.

"There were no immediate safety hazards to personnel, but as a precaution, the area was barricaded until crews made repairs," DOE said.

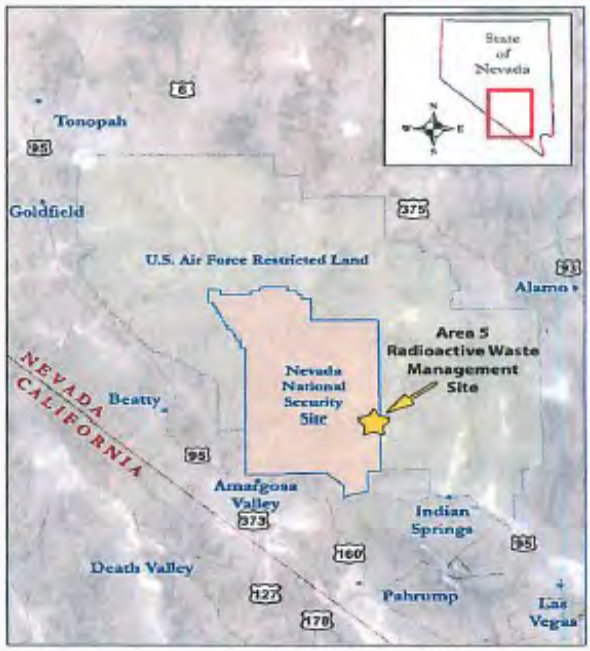
While the affected area was much smaller, a larger area, measuring approximately 50 feet by 25 feet, was excavated to provide a safe working area for repairs.

The DNFSB said the excavation work was done by workers from UT-Battelle, which manages ORNL for DOE's Office of Science.

UT-Battelle and Isotek Systems LLC, a contractor to DOE's Oak Ridge Office of Environmental Management, determined that the pavement collapse was caused by leaking sections of underground storm water and sewer lines that caused soil in the area to wash away.

"They also noted, via video taken by a subcontractor, that the impacted area extended some distance below the foundation of the facility," the DNFSB said.

DOE said the extent of erosion under the facility was approximately five feet by seven feet, and it did not extend under the hot cells in Building 3019B.



Area 5 Radioactive Waste Management Site Map

"The area was also a significant distance from the U-233 storage area," DOE said.

Isotek management declared a potential inadequacy in a safety analysis due to the possible impact to the safety-significant hot cell structure and restricted access to the affected area of the facility, the DNFSB said.

In mid-June, Isotek workers filled the excavated space, including the areas under the Building 3019 facility, with grout.

"Isotek is also planning work to further stabilize the ground in the immediate vicinity of the facility," the DNFSB said. "Isotek safety basis staff are developing the unreviewed safety question determination and the evaluation of safety of the situation."

DOE said a safety evaluation is conducted as a normal procedure when a potential changed condition occurs at a nuclear facility.

"The evaluation determined no additional controls are required to maintain nuclear safety in the Building 3019 Complex," DOE said in its response, which was provided by Williams, the spokesperson for DOE's Oak Ridge Office of Environmental Management.

UT-Battelle replaced the storm water and sanitary sewer lines that collapsed, DOE said.

"The grout is the first step in the final repair, and follow-on restoration activities are being planned," DOE said.

Uranium-233 is a radioactive isotope of uranium that does not exist in nature but can be produced by bombarding thorium-232 with neutrons.

You can see the August 2014 analysis here. It is a supplement analysis related to a National Environmental Policy Act review and an environmental impact statement.

More information will be added as it becomes available.

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PAHRUMP VALLEY TIMES

Radioactive waste to travel through Pahrump

Posted August 30, 2017 - 7:00am

By Daria Sokolova
Pahrump Valley Times (Pahrump, Nevada)

Low-level radioactive waste will soon travel through Pahrump as part of the shipping campaign to the Nevada National Security Site, officials said.

Nye County will receive low-level waste from the West Valley Demonstration Plant in New York state.

The waste will be mostly made up of building debris consisting primarily of concrete rubble with some steel. In addition, shipments will include minor components of soil, piping, lightweight building debris and miscellaneous materials, officials said.

The West Valley Demonstration Project is a nuclear waste remediation plant.

The waste will be permanently buried in engineered disposal cells at the Area 5 Radioactive Waste Management Complex at the Nevada National Security Site. The projected volume is 390,000 cubic feet, and the shipments are estimated to be transported in 450 intermodals at up to 900 cubic feet each.

Kelly Snyder, public affairs specialist for the DOE at the Nevada site office, said that all of the department's packaging and transportation activities must comply with U.S. Department of Transportation and DOE safety requirements.

"In FY 2016, 1,110 shipments of waste were safely transported to the NNSS [Nevada National Security Site] for disposal with no DOT-recordable packaging or transportation accidents," Snyder said in an email.

The U.S. Department of Energy's records show that the Area 5 Radioactive Waste Management Complex received 579,799 cubic feet of waste in the third quarter of 2017.

West Valley Demonstration Project

The Department of Energy is currently conducting phase 1 decommissioning activities, including waste processing and shipping, asbestos removal, and planning for the removal of the highly contaminated Main Plant Process Building of the West Valley Demonstration Project, according to the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority, a public benefit corporation that works on advancing energy solutions.

As part of the removing of the main process building, officials are relocating 275 high-level radioactive waste glass canisters to a new dry-cask interim storage facility that has been constructed on site.

PAHRUMP VALLEY TIMES

As of January 2016, 20 canisters have been relocated to the interim storage pad. Relocation of the remaining canisters was expected to be completed by January 2017.

More than 98 percent of the liquid high-level waste was removed from the underground waste storage tanks and solidified into 19,000 drums of cemented low-level waste and 275 high-level waste glass canisters, after the solidification of the high-level waste was completed in 2002, according to the New York group's website.

The 19,000 drums of cemented low-level waste were successfully shipped to the Nevada National Security Site for disposal, while the high-level waste glass canisters in stainless-steel containers are stored in a shielded cell in the former reprocessing plant.

Waste transportation

Snyder said that shipments to the Nevada National Security Site have to comply with the DOE's regulations.

"The waste will be packaged and shipped in compliance with all applicable DOT regulations. Prior to shipment, radiological surveys will be completed to ensure the waste from West Valley meets applicable DOT radiological conveyance limits," Snyder said.

The campaign is scheduled to begin approximately in early October and is expected to be completed in early summer 2018.

The waste will be transported via train to Parker, Arizona and will then be trucked to the Nevada National Security Site via California Highway 62, Interstate 40, Nevada Highway 164, Interstate 15, and Nevada Highway 160.

The shipments will go through Needles, Searchlight, Primm, Blue Diamond and Pahrump.

Contact reporter Daria Sokolova at dsokolova@pvtimes.com. On Twitter: @dariasokolova77

PAHRUMP VALLEY TIMES

Special to the Pahrump Valley Times. The low-level radioactive waste from the Nevada National Security Site will be permanently buried in engineered disposal cells at the Area 5 Radioactive Waste Management Complex at the Nevada National Security Site. The projected volume is 390,000 cubic feet, and the shipments are estimated to be transported in 450 intermodals at up to 900 cubic feet each.

Special to the Pahrump Valley Times Low-level radioactive waste will soon travel through Pahrump as part of the shipping campaign to the Nevada National Security Site from West Valley Demonstration Project in New York state, officials said. The waste will be permanently buried in engineered disposal cells at the Area 5 Radioactive Waste Management Complex at the Nevada National Security Site.

PAHRUMP VALLEY TIMES

Special to the Pahrump Valley Times in this photo are the disposal activities at the Area 5 Radioactive Waste Management Complex at the Nevada National Security Site.

SPRINGVILLE JOURNAL

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Town of Ashford earns Clean Energy Community Designation

August 31, 2017

ASHFORD—The Town of Ashford announced it has been designated a Clean Energy Community by the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority, recognizing its leadership in reducing energy use, cutting costs and driving clean energy locally.

Announced by Governor Cuomo in August, the $16 million Clean Energy Communities initiative supports local government leaders across the state to implement energy efficiency, renewable energy and sustainable development projects in their communities. Clean Energy Communities advance Cuomo's Reforming the Energy strategy by demonstrating the importance of communities in helping New York reach its Clean Energy Standard of 50 percent of the state's electricity coming from renewable energy resources by 2030.

The Town of Ashford received the designation for completing four of 10 high-impact clean energy actions identified by NYSERDA as part of the Clean Energy Communities initiative.

To earn the Clean Energy Community designation, the Town of Ashford completed the following high-impact clean energy actions:

– The benchmarking of municipally owned buildings over 1,000 square feet within the town.

– Adoption of the New York State Unified Solar Permit.

– Installation of electric car charging stations within the town.

– Completion of the Energy Code Enforcement Training.

Cities, counties, towns and villages that complete at least four of 10 high-impact clean energy actions are designated Clean Energy Communities and are eligible to apply for funding of up to $250,000 with no local cost share with the option of receiving up to 25 percent paid in advance to support additional clean energy projects. At least two of the four actions must have been completed after Aug. 1, 2016.

For more information on Clean Energy Communities, visit www.nyserda.ny.gov/cec.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY | OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

EM Update | Vol. 9, Issue 17 | Sept. 12, 2017

West Valley Takes 'First Bite' of Vitrification Facility in Historic Demolition

Demolition of the Vitrification Facility begins with the "first bite" on Sept. 11.

WEST VALLEY, N.Y. – EM West Valley Demonstration Project (WVDP) workers kicked off the first-ever demolition of a vitrification facility in the DOE complex on Sept. 11.

They've been getting ready for the historic teardown for years, removing hazards through decontamination and deactivation work.

“We’re well prepared for demolition,” said Scott Chase, the facility disposition project operations manager for cleanup contractor CH2M HILL BWXT West Valley, LLC (CHBWV). “It’s been two years in the planning, and we’ve looked at it from multiple directions.”

Workers will demolish the radiologically “cleanest” areas first, such as the perimeter aisles, then move to the facility’s other areas, such as the vitrification cell, which housed all of the major radioactive process equipment. This strategy minimizes the potential for cross-contamination of facility areas and reduces the cost of decontaminating equipment and materials transferred from one area to another.

Crews will control the potential spread of contamination through water misting, encapsulation fixatives, regular housekeeping activities, adherence to established work practices, and full-time monitoring by

radiological control technicians. WVDP will use 16 air monitoring stations located outside the site boundary and others placed around the demolition area to monitor for potential migration of contamination.

CH2M HILL BWXT West Valley Facility Disposition Project Operations Manager Scott Chase was hired to test the pumping system used to transfer high-level waste from the site's underground tanks to the Vitrification Facility, pictured in the background.

Once used to solidify about 600,000 gallons of high-level waste (HLW) liquid and sludge, the 11,000-square-foot, 50-foot-tall concrete structure — one of the site's major remaining facilities — is reinforced with structural steel and sided with sheet steel. Its walls and roof are between 2 and 4 feet thick. Demolition will generate an estimated 6,500 tons of waste for shipment to an offsite licensed disposal facility.

As Chase oversees the teardown, scheduled for completion in eight months, he'll remember the many past and present employees who are part of the facility's legacy.

"Vitrification was an incredible accomplishment that involved a lot of people from beginning to end," said Chase, who joined the WVDP workforce in 1993 as a test engineer. "We got there because of the brains of the people involved. The operators came up with suggestions, the engineers refined the designs, and the mechanics made it happen."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY | OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

EM Update | Vol. 9, Issue 17 | Sept. 12, 2017

Demolition equipment is staged in front of the Vitrification Facility.

Chase was hired to test the pumping system used to transfer HLW from the site's underground tanks to the vitrification facility. The facility produced 275 canisters of vitrified waste, ending operations in 2002.

A cohort of employees including Chase arrived at the WVDP in the 1990s. They worked to stabilize and remove the site's waste, and now they are taking the site apart, building by building.

Chase recalled a significant event last December when employees made the first manned entry into the cell in more than 20 years. Workers had decontaminated the facility to the point to allow manned entries.

WVDP Project Director Bryan Bower noted the important roles nearly all employees had in successfully vitrifying the waste.

"As we move into the demolition phase of this project, we recognize the positive impact vitrification had on the area and look forward to completing our mission at West Valley," Bower said.

For Chase, Bower, and present and former WVDP employees, demolition of the facility will close the book on a long and successful legacy. It's a legacy to which the old slogan still applies: "Safety and Vit – What a Fit!"

-Contributor: Cynthia Dayton

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NYSERDA Opens Deer Hunting

ASHFORD – The New York State Energy Research and Development Authority will offer its annual archery deer hunting program at the Western New York Nuclear Service Center, Oct. 1 through Nov. 16. Roughly 1,500 acres will be open for hunting, participants must register online.

Scouting will be available Sept. 16 through Sept. 24, registration is required for scouting also. Crossbows will be allowed the last two weeks of archery season.

NYSERDA's program is open to anyone with a valid 2017-18 New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Big Game or Sportsman License, and allows up to 50 hunters each day on a first come, first served basis. Hunters must complete an online application to participate in the program.

As per DEC regulations, licensed junior bow hunters may hunt deer with a parent or guardian present. For additional information, visit www.NYSERDA.ny.gov/deer-hunting or contact deer hunting coordinator Alita Dueringer at 942-9960 ext. 4990.

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ALFONSE D'AMATO

Can natural disasters help restore national unity?

Posted September 7, 2017

Alfonse D'Amato

Hurricane Harvey was a brutal reminder that storms happen. We Long Islanders who lived through Hurricane Sandy, like Louisianans who lived through Hurricane Katrina, can only shudder to think what our fellow Americans in Texas are going through right now.

The utter devastation that flowed from these storms is proof that in many ways we are all at the mercy of Mother Nature. But what these disasters also prove is that the U.S. is truly one indivisible country, and that when one part of America is hurting, all Americans must help.

One of the best exemplars of that imperative is Long Island's own native son, U.S. Rep Peter King. When Hurricane Sandy hit — and 10 years earlier, when terrorists struck the World Trade Center on 9/11 — King sprang into action and worked tirelessly to secure aid for our battered but not beaten state. The success of his efforts hinged largely on the fact that his career in Washington has established him as a man who puts the good of the nation above party or region. King's reputation as a congressman who can empathize with the needs of his fellow lawmakers paid off greatly for New York as we rebuilt from Sandy and the Sept. 11 attacks.

That's why it was so good to hear King be among the first to call for a national effort to assist Texas with its storm rebuilding efforts. It's an example for other Washington elected leaders who haven't always been so broad-minded about helping people in other parts of the country. Someone like Texas Sen. Ted Cruz, who refused to support Sandy aid because he thought it was too generous to New York, must now hope (and pray) that more of his colleagues are like Peter King than himself.

We need more of our leaders in Washington to find ways to put aside petty politics and work together for the good of the nation. The political sniping that's been going on in D.C. isn't good for the country. When Democrats and Republicans act like bitter enemies rather than just political opponents, they do real harm to our national unity. But when they work for the common good, great things can happen.

I learned that very early in my Senate career. I've always considered myself a proud New Yorker and a loyal Republican. But because for most of my years on Capitol Hill one or the other of the two houses of Congress was in Democratic hands, I had a choice to make: party or people first? I always tried to come down on the people's side.

Sometimes that meant working with fellow members of Congress with vastly different outlooks and constituencies from mine. Many of the powerful senior members of Congress in those days were old-line Southern Democrats like Sen. Robert Byrd of West Virginia, or Rep. Tom Bevill of Alabama, who chaired a powerful House committee that oversaw appropriations for all major infrastructure projects across the country. They had about as much in common with me as bagels have with cornbread.

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But when a terrible environmental problem arose in western New York at an abandoned nuclear waste site, I went to Bevill for help. It just so happened that he had championed a major public works project in his part of the country, the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway, to improve navigation in the nation's interior. I had supported the project, against the vociferous complaints of Eastern environmentalists, because I felt that the decisions of local representatives should be respected. Thank goodness I did, because when I went to Bevill to request the billions of dollars needed to remediate that dangerous nuclear site, he came through for New York, recalling that I had shown his region the support I thought it deserved. Today, Tennessee-Tombigbee has proven to be a boon to the Alabama economy, with none of the dire environmental consequences naysayers had predicted, and the environmental mess at the West Valley Demonstration Project, near Niagara Falls, has been steadily cleaned up.

That same sort of respect for and cooperation with other points of view and regional diversity is what is so missing right now. Just look at the ideas for tax reform bubbling up in Washington. Some leaders with a particular grudge-for-no-good-reason against New York are toying with the notion of eliminating both the federal tax deduction for state and local taxes and the home mortgage interest deduction. These two moves would disproportionately affect states with higher housing costs and higher state and local taxes. Now, I'm not defending New York's higher taxes, but getting whacked by both Albany and Washington would only hurt our taxpayers more.

Luckily, there may just be enough members of Congress like Peter King to bring the same responsible leadership to tax reform that they've brought to other challenges facing America. For whether it's rebuilding from natural disasters or terrorist attacks or just trying to lighten our federal tax base and spur economic growth, what's good for all is best.

Al D'Amato, a former U.S. senator from New York, is the founder of Park Strategies LLC, a public policy and business development firm. Comments about this column? ADAmato@liherald.com.

THE SALAMANCA PRESS
PROUDLY SERVING CENTRAL AND WESTERN CATTARAUGUS COUNTY SINCE 1867

Demolition underway at WVDP

- By Rick Miller, County Reporter
- 09-19-2019 3 hrs ago

Demolition has begun on the vitrification facility at the West Valley Demonstration Project in the town of Ashford. The facility operated from 1996 to 2002 to solidify 600,000 gallons of high-level radioactive liquid waste. The demolition is scheduled to be completed in April 2018. Submitted photo

WEST VALLEY — Demolition has begun on a major building at the West Valley Demonstration Project, site of the federal-state cleanup at the first commercial nuclear fuel reprocessing plant in the United States.

The vitrification facility, where more than 600,000 gallons of radioactive liquid waste were processed into glass that filled 275 stainless steel containers, started coming down on Sept. 11. It operated between 1996 and 2002.

The stainless steel containers with radioactive glass logs are now stored in 56 concrete casks on a nearby concrete pad.

The demolition is a systematic process that will take several months, according to a spokesman for contractor, CH2M HILL BWXT West Valley LLC. It is scheduled to be completed by April 2018.

“It’s been a long time coming,” spokesman Cynthia Dayton, of CH2M HILL’s communications department told the Olean Times Herald Monday. “We’re all excited.”

THE SALAMANCA PRESS
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On Thursday afternoon, officials from the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), CH2M HILL BWXT West Valley and others will participate in a ceremony marking the milestone in the cleanup.

The program will be held under a tent set up in the parking lot, with a view of the 10,700 square-foot vitrification facility. The open house for employees and invited guests will include a planned 15-minute view of demolition.

Outside steel walls on the east and west sides of the 50-foot-tall building were the first to fall to two large excavators on Sept. 11. Much of the building's interior consists of reinforced concrete.

"The start of demolition is a significant accomplishment for the CHBWV team and the U.S. Department of Energy," said Bryan Bower, West Valley director for the DOE. "The WVDP is the first site in the DOE complex to design, construct, operate, shut down — and now demolish — a vitrification facility."

Bower noted the WVDP workforce's vitrification experience has proven a valuable asset for the DOE, which operates another vitrification facility at the Department's Savannah River Site in South Carolina.

"Some of the very people that helped construct and operate the vitrification facility are now supporting its demolition," Bower said.

The nuclear fuel reprocessing plant operated from 1966 to 1972, processing 640 metric tons of spent nuclear fuel rods. Nuclear Fuel Services walked away from the plant in 1972 after closing for plant upgrades that became too expensive for the plant to be profitable. Under contract, the company turned the 2,000-acre site over to the state — radioactive waste and all.

The West Valley Demonstration Project Act of 1980, was passed by Congress and signed into law by Pres. Jimmy Carter. So far, $2.9 billion in state and federal funds have been spent on the cleanup.

"Extensive preparations were completed inside the facility prior to commencement of demolition, including removing vitrification process components, piping and hazardous materials, performing surface decontamination, isolating mechanical and electrical systems and sealing penetrations to prevent contamination migration during demolition," according to a press statement. "The demolition plan and safety precautions were extensively reviewed prior to receiving approval to proceed with demolition."

Debris is being loaded into waste containers soon after it is generated to minimize debris piles, and is being shipped off-site to a federal low-level waste disposal facility. Water is being used to spray the building to keep dust down.

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

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Ashford board discusses roundabout at Peters Road

09-22-2017

ASHFORD—The possibility of a roundabout at the Route 219 and Peters Road intersection was discussed at the Sept. 19 Ashford Town Board meeting. Justin Booth, from Complete Streets, will be attending the next Planning Board meeting to discuss the intersection, reported planning board member Andrea Mellon.

Supervisor Charles Davis said Complete Streets was the company that pushed for roundabouts in Hamburg and was interested in the idea at Peters Road.

Councilman Richard Bernstein questioned whether a roundabout would work for the number of tractor trailers that drive that section, Mellon said the roundabout can be made large enough to handle big trucks. Councilman William Heim agreed with Mellon, citing a roundabout in Irving, which has worked for tractor trailers and helps keep traffic moving.

“With the semis, it works amazing … it’s amazing how much it increases the traffic flow,” Heim said.

Along with helping with traffic, Mellon said adding a roundabout would be a positive piece in the future betterment and development of the Town as the Ashford, as the Master Plan continues to get closer to completion.

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"The roundabout there would help us not only from a traffic and vehicular standpoint, if we are looking at the long term goals for the Township of Ashford, how does it help the traffic pattern of 219, how does it slow the traffic, make it safe, how does it make it more aesthetically pleasing for the people living in the area … it's all part of that master plan growth and development," Mellon said.

In trying to help grow the Town of Ashford, Davis shared a letter the town sent to Congressman Tom Reed asking for assistance in helping the town get past the hardships that the West Valley Nuclear Plant has caused. Some of the areas of help include getting $1.5 million in direct impact aid for the town, continuing funding to complete the mission of the West Valley Demonstration Project Act, reclassifying transuranic waste to defense waste at the WVDP and continuing to support cleanup efforts from the United State Department of Energy Environmental Management at the WVDP.

"The presence of this facility continues to be a black mark on our town and community," the letter to Reed's office reads, in part. "While the rest of Western New York enjoys an improved economy, we continue to see massive declines in population, homes sales continue to be stagnant and the perception and image of our town is still mocked as waste valley."

Councilman John Pfeffer added to the comments from Davis, asking residents to get in contact with Congressman Reed's office for support of H.R. Bill 2389, which would reclassify waste at the WVDP to waste resulting from atomic energy defense activities. This reclassification would help open a path for early removal of high level waste from the facility and help decrease the burden on taxpayers for high level waste disposal fees.

In other news:

– Budget Officer William King presented the tentative 2018 budget to the board. The total appropriations for the 2018 budget will be $1,867,008 and the tax levy is set to be at a zero percent increase at $435,360. The board later approved the tentative budget to be adopted at the preliminary budget.

– The board held a public hearing and later passed a local law for the "Town of Ashford, West Valley Water District Rules and Regulations."

The next Ashford Town Board meeting will be held on Wednesday, Oct. 11 at 7:30 p.m. at the Ashford Community Center, located at 9377 Route 240, in West Valley.

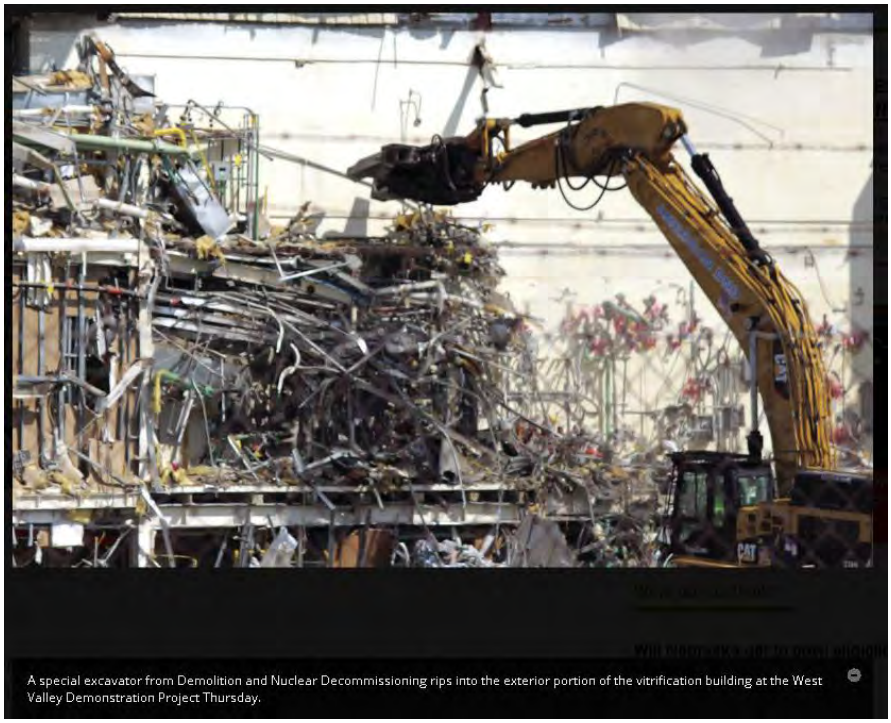
OLEAN TIMES HERALD

WVDP Ceremony Marks Start of Vitrification Facility Demolition

- By RICK MILLER, Olean Times Herald, 09-22-2017

Bryan Bower (left), director of the West Valley Demonstration Project for the U.S. Department of Energy, talks with others attending Thursday's ceremony marking the beginning of demolition of the vitrification facility that turned radioactive liquid waste into glass. Others from left are: Stacy Charboneau of the DOE Environmental Management Office; Willis Bixby, who was DOE director at West Valley when the facility was constructed in the early 1990s, and former Ashford Supervisor Bill King.

Rick Miller/Olean Times Herald



A special excavator from Demolition and Nuclear Decommissioning rips into the exterior portion of the vitrification building at the West Valley Demonstration Project Thursday.

OLEAN TIMES HERALD

WEST VALLEY — The start of the demolition of the vitrification facility at the West Valley Demonstration Project was marked by a celebration Thursday.

As U.S. Department of Energy and New York State Energy Research and Development Authority officials spoke beneath a nearby tent, huge excavators from Demolition and Nuclear Decommissioning continued to tear into the 50-foot-tall vitrification facility.

It helped turn 600,000 gallons of high-level radioactive liquids into glass now contained in 275 10-foot-tall stainless steel canisters. The canisters, still highly radioactive, but unable to leach from the glass sit in 56 concrete containers on a pad adjacent to the nuclear cleanup site.

A remote misting system keeps water focused on parts of the building being demolished, said DOE site director Bryan Bower.

“It’s just as effective with a lot less water,” he said.

A berm around the building will contain water from any storm events, Bower said. It can be pumped to waiting tanks and will be tested for any contaminants. Any contaminated water will be put through the treatment plant if necessary.

Former Ashford Supervisor Bill King, 81, who also served on the West Valley Citizens Task Force and worked at the plant when it was processing spent nuclear fuel rods, was also present at the ceremony that officially opened the vitrification facility in 1996. It pretreated the liquid wastes from the acid process used to reclaim plutonium from spent nuclear fuel rod casings, then mixed the reduced liquids into molten glass.

King showed a souvenir, a piece of blue glass with a “V” pressed into it to signify “vitrification.”

“I never thought I’d see this come down,” King told Bower before the ceremony.

OLEAN TIMES HERALD

Jeff Bradford, president and general manager of the contractor, CH2M HILL BWXT West Valley, said the ceremony was to celebrate the success of the start of another major milestone in the cleanup that has cost the state and federal governments nearly $3 billion.

“It takes years of planning and extremely dangerous work,” Bradford told workers and others attending the ceremony. “My hat’s off to the guys doing the work on the inside. We have to do it in safety and in compliance.”

Brad Frank, a program manager for the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority, said he toured the vitrification facility while it was being built as a high school student. He commended those involved.

After testing, the vitrification facility was in use from 1996 to 2002, when the last of the 275 canisters was filled.

The end of the vitrification mission included turning all the liquid wastes into glass — another first in the United States — but closing and decommissioning the building and its equipment, including the melter.

Now comes the last stage, the controlled demolition of the building and packing the pieces into containers for disposal at low-level and other appropriate facilities.

Former DOE site director Willis Bixby, now retired, was at the site when the vitrification facility was constructed and initial testing was underway.

King, the former Ashford supervisor, credited Bixby with initiating the transparency policies and the safety culture pioneered at the WVDP.

“It’s quite a legacy,” King said, noting DOE sites across the country have groups similar to the West Valley Citizens Task Force.

Demolition starts of US vitrification plant

22 September 2017

Following two years of planning, demolition of the West Valley Demonstration Project (WVDP) vitrification facility in New York State began last week. The work is scheduled to be completed in eight months.

Demolition underway at the WVDP vitrification facility (Image: DOE)

WVDP is an environmental remediation project at the site of a former commercial nuclear fuel reprocessing centre located about 40 miles (64km) south of Buffalo, New York.

The vitrification facility was constructed and operated in the 1980s as a non-radioactive testing area for the vitrification melter. Following successful completion of melter testing, the facility was expanded and converted to a full-scale remotely operated vitrification facility. It operated between 1996 and 2002, processing over 2200 cubic metres of high-level waste (HLW) liquid and sludge to produce 275 stainless steel canisters of solidified HLW. WVDP repurposed the facility in 2007 for remote waste processing prior to deactivation.

CH2M Hill BWXT West Valley LLC (CHBWV), was selected by the US Department of Energy (DOE) to conduct Phase I decommissioning activities at the WVDP under an 8.6-year, $461.4 million contract that began in August 2011. Since taking over control of the site, the CHBWV team has been leading

cleanup and facility demolition activities and is actively engaged in removing radioactive waste, contaminated equipment and obsolete structures from the 81-hectare site. The vitrification facility was declared demolition-ready on 16 March.

Demolition work began on 11 September, the DOE's Office of Environmental Management announced the following day.

The facility is 40 meters long by 31 meters wide and 15 meters tall. Its concrete structure is reinforced with structural steel and sided with sheet steel. Its walls and roof are between 0.6 and 1.2 meters thick.

Demolition of the facility will generate an estimated 6500 tonnes of low-level waste, which will be shipped to an offsite federal disposal facility.

Workers will first demolish the radiologically "cleanest" areas of the facility, such as the perimeter aisles, before starting on the facility's other areas, such as the vitrification cell, which housed all of the major radioactive process equipment. This strategy, the DOE said, minimises the potential for cross-contamination of facility areas and reduces the cost of decontaminating equipment and materials transferred from one area to another.

Workers will control the potential spread of contamination through water spraying, encapsulation fixatives, regular housekeeping activities, adherence to established work practices, and full-time monitoring by radiological control technicians. WVDP will use 16 air monitoring stations located outside the site boundary and others placed around the demolition area to monitor for potential migration of contamination.

Scott Chase, the facility disposition project operations manager for cleanup contractor CHBWV, said: "We're well prepared for demolition. It's been two years in the planning, and we've looked at it from multiple directions."

WVDP project director Bryan Bower said, "As we move into the demolition phase of this project, we recognise the positive impact vitrification had on the area and look forward to completing our mission at West Valley."

The WVDP vitrification facility is one of only two such facilities to operate in the USA.

Researched and written
by World Nuclear News

U.S.News BEST STATES

Demolition of Building Underway at Western NY Nuke Site

A building that has been central to the decades-long cleanup of a western New York nuclear site is being demolished.

Sept. 25, 2017, at 12:11 a.m

AP

WEST VALLEY, N.Y. (AP) — A building that has been central to the decades-long cleanup of a western New York nuclear site is being demolished.

Crews this month began tearing down the vitrification facility at the West Valley Demonstration Project. The reinforced concrete structure is where more than 600,000 gallons of high-level radioactive waste were solidified into glass for disposal.

Debris from the building demolition is being loaded into waste containers and shipped offsite to a federal low-level waste disposal facility. The process is expected to continue through the spring.

The 3,300-acre site 30 miles south of Buffalo housed the nation's first commercial nuclear reprocessing facility from 1966 to 1972.

Cleanup has been ongoing since Congress passed the 1980 West Valley Demonstration Project Act.