

The Buffalo News

Thursday, July 1, 2010

**Notice of Extended
Public Comment Period
for the Draft Focused
Corrective Measures
Study
for the State-Licensed
Disposal Area**

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Written comments should be mailed to Ms. Andrea Mellon, Senior Project Manager, NYSERDA, West Valley Site Management Program, 9030-B Route 219, West Valley, New York 14171. All comments received during the extended comment period will be considered during preparation of the final Focused CMS Report. Prior to the submitting the final Focused CMS Report to the EPA and NYS-DEC for their review and approval, NYSERDA will respond to any comments submitted by the public. A notice of the final Focused CMS Report will be sent to each interested citizen or organization submitting comments or requesting such notice.

Copies of the Draft Focused CMS are available for public review at NYSERDA's West Valley Site Management Program Office. The draft CMS also is available at: http://www.nyserda.org/publications/corrective_measures_study.pdf.

For information regarding this Draft Focused CMS, contact Andrea Mellon at (716) 942-9960, ext. 4054. The following website also may be accessed for additional information about NYSERDA's West Valley Site Management Program: http://www.nyserda.org/programs/West_Valley/default.asp

The Olean Times Herald

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The Springville Journal

Thursday, July 1, 2010

Volume 145, No. 26

West Valley Environmental Services donates to West Valley Central School

\$2,000 given to WVCS



FUNDING RECIPIENTS — Front row, from left: Aaron Ignatowski, Lizzie Heim, Tyler Lux, Nick King, Matt Proctor, and Matt Grigsby; back row: Hillary Bowen, Mary Gold, John McKibbin.

West Valley Environmental Services donated \$2,000 to the West Valley Central School on May 25.

Hillary Bowen, district superintendent and Mary Gold, service learning grant coordinator, accepted the check on behalf of the school. Presenting the check were Ida Klahn, WVES communications and John McKibbin, WVES president and project manager. \$1,500 of the donation will go toward purchasing student agendas and \$500 will fund a Red Cross babysitting course, which will be offered at the school through the Mentoring and Service Learning Program on July 7.

In addition to this donation, WVES has also provided two scholarships in the amount of \$250 each that were awarded to two seniors in this year's graduating class. Graduation was held on June 26.

The Springville Journal

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Volume 145, No. 26

West Valley nuclear site warehouse area is plutonium free

Bembia corrects last week's article

Editor:

In the June 17, 2010 issue, it was reported that the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) hosted members of the Ashford Town Board on a tour of the Bulk Storage Warehouse (BSW) located on the grounds of the West Valley nuclear site along Buttermilk Road. The article reported that there is a "plutonium burial site behind the building and the need to maintain proper buffer zones in that area." That statement is incorrect. While there is a scrap material landfill located to the south of the BSW, there is no plutonium, nor any radioactive material, buried in the ground in this landfill.

The landfill contains uncontaminated 55-gallon drums filled with cement that were used during operations at the facility. All the containers were scanned to confirm that they were not contaminated with radioactive material and were buried with the approval of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

The landfill poses no threat to the public or the environment. NYSERDA is currently evaluating the possible release of the BSW and additional acreage around the building from its license with the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). Part of this evaluation is the consideration of leaving or exhuming the scrap material landfill.

It is expected that the NRC review of the property release application will take about a year from the time NYSERDA submits the application. Assuming NRC approval of the application, NYSERDA could then begin the process of dispositioning the property in accordance with the New York State Public Authorities law.

Paul Bembia,
Director of the
West Valley Site Management Program for NYSERTA

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The Buffalo News

Tuesday, July 06, 2010

Earth tremor should send strong environmental signals

I am disappointed that the earth tremor, from an earthquake in Quebec, made a very small impression on anyone here. It should have disturbed many. Each day we see in the Gulf of Mexico that the science and technology we rely on to survive is not as valid as once we thought.

In West Valley on Cattaraugus Creek, millions of tons of radioactive waste and the ground it has infected sits ready to spill into the creek, propelled even by a minor earthquake. We sit on two major fault lines here and such seismic activity is far from a remote danger.

If the material reached the creek, it would flow into and render Lakes Erie and Ontario and the Niagara River radioactive bodies of water. About 40 million people could lose access to fresh, safe water forever.

Yet federal and state agencies periodically boot the problem up the road a few more years with endless studies and no action, with our elected representatives barely more than witnesses.

The very poisonous radioactive mess sits—a sinister malignancy in tanks, boxes and barrels and the surrounding soils it has contaminated—and it waits as another decade brings us closer to the ultimate catastrophe.

Art “Happy” Klein
Tonawanda

The Springville Journal

Thursday, July 22, 2010

Volume 145, No. 29

West Valley water rates to increase

Notes from the July 14 meeting of the Ashford Town Board

Bob Runge, owner of the Crystal Hose Water Co., addressed the Ashford Town Board during their July 14 meeting to let them know that the possible 571 percent increase in water rates was a figure taken from old documentation. According to Runge, a more realistic figure would be a total cost of between \$600 and \$700 per residence per year.

After acknowledging that the Crystal Hose Water Co. and the town board were working together through the office of State Senator Catharine Young to reduce the cost, Town Supervisor Chris Gerwitz once again stated his board's mantra: "We want quality water at a fair price!" Residents are currently paying \$180 twice a year for Crystal Hose water.

Runge indicated that Young's office is hoping to turn July's paperwork into an October grant. The grant monies would be used to offset the cost of Cattaraugus County mandated tests and equipment updates. Runge also said that the town would not see an increase in water costs any earlier than November 1.

In other town board news:

- Crystal Abers, director of Economic Development, Planning and Tourism for Cattaraugus County, gave the board a brief presentation of her organization's capabilities. The EDPT is a government agency interested in working with municipalities to identify and assist areas of economic potential. They also publish guides and brochures, run Web sites and provide a tourism trailer.

Abers is particularly interested in having the town of Ashford work with her group to identify businesses and vacant properties that could benefit from EDPT's assistance.

- Paul Bembia, program director for NYSERDA, announced his organization's decision to move forward on efforts to secure the release of the bulk warehouse and land from the West Valley nuclear license. The estimated cost to have the scaled-back release reviewed by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission will be \$500,000. The process is expected to take one to two years.

- Klahn Builders has finished the construction work on the judges' storage area within the community center. Gerwitz says that all that remains to be done is "a little stain and a little paint."

- Joe Neamon has been hired as town constable and dog control officer. Neamon resides on Block Road in the town of Yorkshire and his term will run through the end of the year.

- Cattaraugus County would like the town of Ashford to take over the year-round upkeep of Henrietta Road, Buttermilk Road and Gulf Road. Board members Charlie Davis and John Pfeffer, along with Highway Superintendent Tim Engels, will look into the situation.

- Bids for the Fox Valley project were to be opened July 21.

- The Board voted to hold a public hearing on Monday, August 9, at 7:30 p.m. Two areas of concern will be addressed — unsafe housing laws and W.E.C.S. (wind energy). The meeting is scheduled to be held at the community center.

- Code Enforcement Officer Gary Perkins reported issuing nine building permits during the month of June. June's

permits were valued at \$165,000, bringing the year-to-date figure to \$630,400.

- Engels reported that School Street has been ground and that approximately two inches of asphalt will be added.
- Engels also said that the holes at the corner of Ahrens Road and Route 219 are the responsibility of the state. The holes have been reported.

The next Ashford board meeting will be held August 11 at 7:30 p.m. at the community center.

Buffalo News, August 4, 2010

Communities ▶ Southern Tier

Hutchinson recognized with leadership award

Updated: August 04, 2010, 7:10 AM

LITTLE VALLEY—Michael Hutchinson of Gowanda was given the 2010 Brooks-Patterson Community Leadership Award by the Cattaraugus County Planning Board at its annual meeting last week in the Seneca Allegany Casino Events Center in Salamanca.

Hutchinson was chosen for his outstanding leadership and years of dedicated service in community planning and development in Gowanda.

Hutchinson's service includes 35 years with the village as public works superintendent. He now oversees all operational planning, supervisory and management aspects of the village's water, sewer and highway departments.

He worked with several agencies and others to facilitate the village's recovery from the August flood in 2008.

As Hutchinson accepted the award he said, "I am humbled and inspired." He also has served on the Gowanda School Board, as a Town of Collins water commissioner and as a member the West Valley Citizens Task Force.

WIVB Channel 4 News, Buffalo

Nuke site worker was decontaminated

Updated: Wednesday, 04 Aug 2010, 11:12 AM EDT
Published : Wednesday, 04 Aug 2010, 11:12 AM EDT

- AP

WEST VALLEY, N.Y. (AP) - A worker at a New York nuclear cleanup site had to be decontaminated after moisture seeped through her protective clothing while she was cleaning a floor.

Spokesman John Chamberlain says the West Valley Demonstration Project employee was inside a building Sunday to clean up after water from a ventilation duct leaked during a power outage.

The contamination was detected on the worker's lower legs when she left the area. She was decontaminated with soap and water.

Authorities say there was no release to the environment or impact on the public.

The site south of Buffalo housed a nuclear fuel reprocessing operation from 1966 to 1972. Uranium and plutonium were extracted from spent fuel. Cleanup has been ongoing since the 1980s.

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City & Region

West Valley Project employee is decontaminated

By **Jay Rey**

NEWS STAFF REPORTER

A worker at the West Valley Demonstration Project had to be decontaminated after moisture seeped through her protective clothing while she was cleaning a floor on Sunday.

It was the second time in less than three months that a worker had to be decontaminated at the nuclear cleanup site in Cattaraugus County.

The worker was in the main building cleaning up the floor, where condensation leaked out of a ventilation duct from a June power outage, said Sonja Allen, a spokeswoman for West Valley Environmental Services, which is contracted by the Department of Energy to conduct the cleanup.

It was warm, the worker was perspiring and the sweat soaked through her protective clothing, contributing to the contamination, Allen said Wednesday.

The contamination was detected on the worker's lower legs when she left the area. She was decontaminated by washing with soap and water, Allen said.

"They conducted some follow-up radiological checks and confirmed the skin contamination was removed, and there was no internal contamination," Allen said.

The contamination was contained to the building, Allen added, and there was no release to the environment or impact on the public.

On May 21, contamination was detected on four West Valley workers, while piping was being removed from the plant and placed in heavy plastic bags, according to Bryan Bowers, project director with the Department of Energy.

It was later discovered one of the bags had a tear.

Contamination was detected on the forearm and stomach area of one worker, and the ring finger of another. Contamination also was detected on the shoelace of one of the workers, Bower said.

A number of procedural corrections have been made since the May incident, and after Sunday, further safety measures are being considered, Allen said.

Allen said such incidents are unusual, but added that the work gets more challenging as the cleanup continues.

West Valley was the site of the nation's only privately operated commercial nuclear fuel processing facility. The operation separated reusable uranium and plutonium from spent fuel, which came from both commercial and federal nuclear reactors.

The facility was shut down in 1972. Cleanup has been ongoing since the 1980s.



Robotic arm successfully tested at West Valley Demonstration Project"

By:Elizabeth O'Neil"

Date: 2010-08-11"

West Valley Demonstration Project has successfully been testing a fully-robotic arm for decontaminating a highly radioactive cell in" their main plant. They announced at their August 3 meeting that they plan on starting the work this week and are using a new" technology to remove the contamination. "Nitrocision Technology" is a spray that delivers -250 degrees of liquefied nitrogen at an" extremely high pressure to remove contamination from cell surfaces and vacuums up the collection. It has met aggressive performance" testing standards and when using the robotic arm it completely removes the possibility of human contamination."

Since the main plant must be completely decontaminated and removed; three more cells have been successfully decontaminated and" vessels removed from their site. Asbestos plant removal is approximately 50 percent complete and low level waste is almost 90" percent completely processed. An update of the tank ventilation pipe above and under ground is over half way complete and this will" replace old contaminated pipe that is contaminated. This new ventilation system will vent and dry any exhaust from waste storage so" leaks would be contained in the tanks and not leak out.

Installation of the North Plateau Barrier wall will start this fall. It will use a unique piece of construction equipment where a deep" trench is sliced out and a permeable wall will be built approximately 850' in length. This will help keep ground water away from" contamination and the University of Buffalo has been working with West Valley for over a year to test the material and make sure that" this will be a valued benefit for the project."

The site characterization plan that has been developed by NYSERDA and DOE is still in phase 1, and both want to gather public and" private input before a plan can be finalized. These studies will cover areas like ground erosion, water flow of contamination and" how these could impact Lake Erie. The new twist that has people second guessing this "plan" is a three-member independent" scientific panel. This panel of experts has a major say in what areas of the property should be studied and the panel also can "move"" agencies to progress towards a decision when they disagree. These scientific mediators, two out of three, have worked for both the" agencies in the past. The public comments joked as West Valley still was unsure as how to hire them so they would not "feel" as they" were working directly for one agency over another. This panel and phase 1 studies are not finalized and still are open for public" comment."

The data collection that goes along with phase 1 decommission plan is being conducted by Argonne National Laboratory. Basic surface soil contamination and subsoil contamination that is present and where it is not will be deemed clean through many different sampling methods. These "clean" areas could be released in the future. These plans of sampling include soil, sub soil and water. To help with areas that could be possibly contaminated; the lab used air photos from the past to see what was staged in areas that may have not been otherwise known to West Valley. They also will walk the land areas to see contamination through a radiological meter. The lab seems to have a good handle on their work but with the winter coming sooner than they would like, sampling may not be started till next spring.

The Erdman Brook Erosion project was successfully completed. They diverted a channel away from a slope that created soil erosion and also discovered a small underground waterfall. They moved the stream to the bottom of the slope, dried up the old channel and used heavy stone and fabric to prevent soil erosion during heavy flow. The Department of Environmental Control requires a buffer to control other creeks and streams from erosion prone areas to keep contaminated soils from entering clean waterways. This one successful project will continue as West Valley addresses other areas of the facility.

Another successful milestone was a large tank and waste removal from T-1 facility. The waste and tank have been completely removed from this site. Building sampling was done to confirm the successful decontamination of this facility.

In the future, a warehouse and some property may be released for public sale. The warehouse may be a test case for other areas of the site that may be released from West Valley's control in the future. Physical samples have been taken and results indicate the public may be allowed purchase the property. The property has to be removed from their Nuclear Regulatory Control (NRC) license before that can happen and removal cost is approximately \$800,000. They have also stated on the NRC license that they did request to maintain the West Valley site for the next 10 years but can maintain the waste storage for up to 30 years if needed. They also added that they would like more of the public to attend their meetings so they do not keep making decisions without public input. They do not like to "Decide, Inform and then Defend" their issues.

The next public meeting is set for November 9 at 6:30 p.m. at the Ashford Office Complex. The possibility of a site walk before that meeting is being considered and would be announced if it were to take place.

August 11, 2010, [Newswise.com](http://www.newswise.com)
Study Results Support Nuclear Waste Disposal at Western New York Site

Released: 8/11/2010 12:00 PM EDT

Source: [Society for Risk Analysis \(SRA\)](http://www.sra.org)

Newswise — Engineering and scientific experts associated with U.S. and New York state energy agencies announced they have developed an improved method of predicting scenarios where people might be exposed to radiation from nuclear waste disposal sites. The study was funded by the New York State Energy Research and Development Agency and focuses on a buried nuclear waste disposal facility at West Valley, New York. The scientific analysis supports a decision to continue management of waste at the site for another decade.

Researchers say their approach represents a first-of-its-kind method of analysis that considers the full scope of possible scenarios, likelihoods, and consequences that might be a threat to the disposal site. Using this approach, the authors concluded, “that a release resulting in a dose of 100 millirems in one year, or more, is extremely unlikely during the next 30 years of operation of the New York State managed disposal area at the Western New York Nuclear Service Center.” By comparison, the public is exposed to approximately 300 millirems a year of cosmic radiation in the atmosphere with no visible health effects. Five basic release mechanisms were considered involving hypothetical releases of radionuclides by liquid, solid, or air pathways.

The study was designed to answer the three basic risk questions: “What risk scenarios can occur?” “What is the likelihood of each scenario?” and “What are the consequences of the scenarios individually and collectively?” By analyzing and assigning probabilities to these questions, the team was able to make sophisticated safety determinations that considered high probability and low consequence events, as well as low probability and high consequence events.

According to lead researcher Dr. B. John Garrick, “a general theory of quantitative risk assessment is emerging that is applicable to any kind of risk.” The approach -- while focused in this case on safety decisions of where and how to dispose of nuclear materials at hazardous waste facilities -- “has broader applications to other types of risk scenarios and outcomes,” according to Dr. Garrick.

This new application of quantitative risk assessment is detailed in the article “Quantitative Risk Assessment of the New York State Operated West Valley Radioactive Waste Disposal Area” in the August issue of the journal *Risk Analysis*, published by the Society for Risk Analysis. In addition to Garrick, who is a pioneer in the risk sciences and the current Chairman of the U.S. Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board, authors include John W. Stetkar, an independent consultant and member of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission’s Committee on Reactor Safeguards, and Paul J. Bembia, Program Director, West Valley Site Management Program, New York State Energy Research and Development Authority.

The researchers say their approach is unique for this application in that it integrates four key criteria in its analysis, including: 1) the frequency of disruptive events and natural processes that cause a release of radioactive materials from the disposal area; 2) the type and amount of radioactive material that might be released during each scenario; 3) the movement, composition and potential dilution of radioactive contaminants in the environment; and 4) the potential for public exposure to radioactive materials and the possible dose of that exposure. In addition, the analysis ranks the importance of each contributing scenario, which facilitates taking corrective actions, implementing effective risk management, and perhaps more importantly, quantifies the uncertainties associated with the various factors.

The team acknowledges that the largest uncertainties surround the frequency of very large releases. “It’s important to understand that the key uncertainties are driven by such phenomenon as extreme rainfall, severe storms, runoff, flooding and earthquakes and other phenomena in the subsurface and on the surface, “according to Garrick.

Risk Analysis: An International Journal is published by the nonprofit Society for Risk Analysis (SRA). SRA is a multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, scholarly, international society that provides an open forum for all those who are interested in risk analysis. Risk analysis is broadly defined to include risk assessment, risk characterization, risk communication, risk management, and policy relating to risk, in the context of risks of concern to individuals, to public and private sector organizations, and to society at a local, regional, national, or global level. www.sra.org

Springville Journal, Thursday, August 12, 2010

Robotic arm successfully tested at West Valley Demonstration Project

By:Elizabeth O'Neil

Date: 2010-08-11



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Since the main plant must be completely decontaminated and removed; three more cells have been successfully decontaminated and vessels removed from their site. Asbestos plant removal is approximately 50 percent complete and low level waste is almost 90 percent completely processed. An update of the tank ventilation pipe above and under ground is over half way complete and this will replace old contaminated pipe that is contaminated. This new ventilation system will vent and dry any exhaust from waste storage so leaks would be contained in the tanks and not leak out.

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Robotic Arm (continued)

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The next public meeting is set for November 9 at 6:30 p.m. at the Ashford Office Complex. The possibility of a site walk before that meeting is being considered and would be announced if it were to take place.

Town of Ashford Passes Wind Energy Law

By: W. Chris Proctor

Date: 2010-08-18

Forty-eight hours after a public hearing on the Wind Energy Facilities law, officials used the regularly scheduled town board meeting of August 11 to vote the measure into effect. The law regulates the placement of Wind Energy Conversion Systems so that public health, safety and welfare will not be jeopardized.

It also guarantees the town a slice of the pie. Article six of the newly adopted law contains a section on fees and fines. Up until now, a WECS company could have dealt directly with a landowner. That will no longer be the case.

The Wind Energy Facilities Law passed by a vote of 3 to 1. Supervisor Chris Gerwitz, Councilman Charles Davis and Councilman Bill Heim voted in favor, while Councilwoman Beverly Hess voted against it. Councilman John Pfeffer was absent.

The board also passed a law entitled "Requiring the Repair or Removal of Unsafe Buildings." The measure was approved by a 4 to 0 vote of the board.

In other matters:

- A Beech Tree Road resident again asked the board about the possibility of reducing the speed limit on a section of her road from 55 miles per hour to 45 mph. Highway Superintendent Tim Engel has checked the site and indicated that it's a tough decision, because the approaching sight distances of 500 feet and 700 feet are within a normally acceptable range.

Engel said he would check with West Valley Central School and get their feedback. It was noted that a school district's opinion on speed limit changes can negate normally time-consuming red tape.

- **New York State Energy Research and Development Authority's Paul Bembia detailed for the board how one West Valley Nuclear worker came in direct contact with contamination in the process building on August 1.**

Contaminated water had seeped around the ventilation system during a storm and was lying on the floor. The employee was wearing protective clothing and kneepads while working on her hands and knees. Her knee slipped out of the knee pad onto the contaminated floor and moisture went through the protective clothing at the knee joint.

The employee was cleaned up and has shown no sign of bodily contamination to date.

- **Bembia also reported that NYSERDA is visiting Congress in an attempt to secure the additional funds needed to finish the phase 1 cleanup. The figure cited by Bembia is \$80 to \$85 million with a minimum of three to four years to complete.**

- The board approved partial reimbursement of cell phone charges when the phone is used by a designated town employee for town business.

- Board member Beverly Hess brought a right-to-farm issue to the board's attention. She included a placard stating "No farmers, no farms, no food." Hess said she displayed her sign at the Cattaraugus County Fair and then presented the Town Planning Board with a right-to-farm letter.

As a follow-up, Hess had figures showing that the town had 31 (if not more) farms on the bulk milk truck pickup route in 1970. Today the number of farms has dwindled to seven.

- The board approved normal expenses and two town employees to attend upcoming professional assemblies. Judge Richard Preston will be attending the New York state Magistrates Conference, while Engel will be going to the 81st Highway Exposition.
- Building Inspector Gary Perkins issued nine permits last month, valued at \$9,800 in added assessment. The year-to-date figure stands at \$640,215.
- Town Clerk Patricia Dashnaw reminded the board that New York state has mandated that townships take over the sole responsibility for dog licensing. She noted the added costs to her office, including the required computer program, and gave January 1 as the date by which the town must be ready.
- State Senator Catherine Young is scheduled to attend the next town of Ashford board meeting on September 8 at 7:30 p.m.