

Springville Journal

Ashford Board hears update about West Valley Demonstration Project's phase one studies

By:Nora Mihalik

Date: Thursday March 24, 2011

Paul Bembia, NYSERDA program director for West Valley Site Management, visited the Ashford Town Board to give an update on the West Valley Demonstration Project's phase one studies.

NYSERDA and DOE had a public meeting last month to get public input on the studies, Bembia said, at the Ashford Board's well-attended March 9 meeting. "NYSERDA and the DOE have some technical differences that have to be resolved regarding the EIS released in January of last year. They will continue discussions at the Citizen Task Force meetings and expect to have a phase one meeting every quarter for public input," he said, adding that all are invited to participate.

Funding is an issue for 2012 and the future, as federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds end this year. Bembia explained that the base funding of \$60 million will no longer be augmented by ARRA funds as it has been for the years 2009, 2010 and 2011. The right number is about \$80 million per year, Bembia added; funding has been available at about \$86 million over the last 10 years.

The EIS gave a figure of \$1 billion as the total project cost. At \$60 million per year, the project will be very much underfunded, meaning, according to Bembia, that it "will take longer than the scheduled 10 years to complete, and this will increase the total project cost."

Ashford Town Supervisor Chris Gerwitz said he has spoken with Representative Tom Reed, who is well aware of the problem, about the funding. "The lawsuit between the federal government and the state has been settled," said Bembia, "and we are all geared up and ready to go!"

In other matters:

- The sole bid for trash, tire and refuse removal was opened and a bid from Nu-Way Sanitation of Arcade of \$9,900 was accepted. "Actually I think that bid is less than last year," said Gerwitz. Pick-ups will be scheduled before Memorial Day.
- It was announced that the Connoisarauley Road Project has been completed.
- Gerwitz reported that Trident Insurance Brokerage, as a thank you, donated \$10,000 to Meals on Wheels. He said he has been invited to spend a day delivering meals and looking over the operation on March 23.
- The town's water company has been notified that they are in violation, and Gerwitz said he has been informed that the company is looking for a low or 0 percent interest loan. The company will keep the town posted on that.
- Gerwitz said he attended a February 24 meeting on Bertrand Chaffee Hospital, which highlighted the facility's upgrades and new equipment.
- Building Inspector Gary Perkins informed the board that the regional state code engineer will be at the next town board meeting to answer questions raised at the February meeting about building codes. Perkins said he was told, "You can build any house without water and without electric in it and otherwise, if things get tough, they write a variance out of Albany which overrides the rest of it." Gerwitz and Board Member William Heim said that the workman's compensation and liability questions also need to be answered. "The board would like to get to the bottom of all these questions," said Heim.
- Attendance at the annual conference for town clerks in Buffalo was approved for Ashford Town Clerk Patricia Dashnaw.
- Bids for the Fox Valley Road bridge were read and sealed. The total bids are as follows: Coldspring Construction: \$851,959; Kandy Company Inc.: \$1,644,644; H&K Services Inc.: \$878,290; Union Concrete and Construction Co.: \$848,469; Zolad's Construction Co.: \$1,353,878; Edbauer Construction: \$688,886; D&H Excavating: \$913,653 and L.C. Whitford Company Inc.: \$1,128,887. Glenn Cooley of E&M Engineering will look over all of the bids for accuracy in numbers and requirements, as will the highway committee, before officially awarding the bid at the town board work session on March 22.
- Highway Superintendent Tim Engles reported that West Valley School has requested the loan of a truck and driver to get a load of baseball sand. This request was approved.
- It was announced that the continuing Fish Fry Fridays was hosted by the Boy Scouts on March 11, and will be held at the West Valley School on March 25 and the fire hall on April 8.
- Board Member John Pfeffer announced that there will be a fire department recruitment drive open house on April 9 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. This is to "kind of make the point that it's not a beer swilling, beer drinking organization anymore; it's more of a professional, highly trained group of people," Pfeffer said.
- Engles reported on his trip to Albany for Advocacy Day. He said highway departments from across the state were represented there. According to board member Beverly Hess, there have been problems with suspension of mail delivery due to the snow blocking access to mailboxes.

The next Town of Ashford Board meeting will be held on April 13 at 7:30 p.m.

Preliminary Lessons From Fukushima For Future Nuclear Power Plants

Posted March 25, 2011 by [Barry Brook](#)

No *strong* conclusions can yet be drawn on the Fukushima Nuclear Crisis, because so much detail and hard data remains unclear or unavailable. Indeed, it will probably take years to piece the whole of this story together (as has now been done for accidents like TMI and Chernobyl [read [this](#) and [this](#) from Prof. Bernard Cohen for an absolutely terrific overview]). Still, it will definitely be worth doing this post-event diagnostic, because of the valuable lessons it can teach us. In this spirit, below an associate of mine from the [Science Council for Global Initiatives](#) discusses what lessons we've learned so far. This is obviously a huge and evolving topic that I look forward to revisiting many times in the coming months...



Guest Post by [Dr. William Hannum](#). *Bill worked for more than 40 years in nuclear power development, stretching from design and analysis of the Shippingport reactor to the Integral Fast Reactor. He earned his BA in physics at Princeton and his MS and PhD in nuclear physics at Yale. He has held key management positions with the U. S. Department of Energy (DOE), in reactor physics , reactor safety, and as Deputy Manager of the Idaho Operations Office.*

He served as Deputy Director General of the OECD Nuclear Energy Agency, Paris, France; Chairman of the TVA Nuclear Safety Review Boards, and Director of the [West Valley](#) (high level nuclear waste processing and D&D) [Demonstration Project](#). Dr. Hannum is a fellow of the American Nuclear Society, and has served as a consultant to the National Academy of Engineering on nuclear proliferation issues.

He wrote a popular article for Scientific American on smarter use of nuclear waste, which you can [download as a PDF here](#).

Background

On 11 March 2011, a massive earthquake hit Japan. The six reactors at Fukushima-Dai-ichi suffered ground accelerations somewhat in excess of design specification. It appears that all of the critical plant equipment survived the earthquake without serious damage, and safety systems performed as designed. The following tsunami, however, carried the fuel tanks for the emergency diesels out to sea, and compromised the battery backup systems. All off-site power was lost, and power sufficient operate the pumps that provide cooling of the reactors and the used-fuel pools remained unavailable for over a week. Heroic efforts by the TEPCo operators limited the radiological release. A massive recovery operation will begin as soon as they succeed in restoring the shutdown cooling systems.



It is important to put the consequences of this event in context. This was not a disaster (the earthquake and tsunami were disasters). This was not an accident; the plant experienced a natural event (“Act of God” in insurance parlance) far beyond what it was designed for. Based on the evidence available today, it can be stated with confidence that no one will have suffered any identifiable radiation-related health effects from this event. A few of the operators may have received a high enough dose of radiation to have a slight statistical increase in their long term risk of developing cancer, but I would place the number at no more than 10 to 50. None of the reports suggest that any person will have received a dose approaching one Sievert, which would imply immediate health effects.

Even ignoring the possibility of hormetic effects, this is approaching the trivial when compared with the impacts of the earthquake and tsunami, where deaths will likely come to well over 20,000. Health

impacts from industrial contamination, refinery fires, lack of sanitation, etc., etc. may reasonably be supposed to be in the millions. Even the “psychological” impacts of the Fukushima problems must be seen to pale in contrast to those from the earthquake and tsunami.

The radiological impact on workers is also small relative to the non-radiological injuries suffered by them. One TEPCO crane operator died from injuries sustained during the earthquake. Two TEPCO workers who had been in the turbine building of Unit 4, are missing. At least eleven TEPCO workers were taken to hospital because of earthquake-related physical injuries.

TEPCO has suffered a major loss of capital equipment, the value of which is non-trivial even in the context of the earthquake and tsunami devastation. They also face a substantial cost for cleanup of the contamination which has been released from the plants. These are financial costs, not human health and well being matters.

The Sequence of Events

Following the tsunami, the operators had no power for the pumps that circulate the primary coolant to the heat exchangers. The only way to remove the decay heat was to boil the water in the core. After the normal feed water supplies were exhausted, they activated the system to supply sea water to the core, knowing this would render the plant unfit to return to operation. In this way, the reactors were maintained in a relatively stable condition, allowing the water to boil, and releasing the resulting steam to the containment building. Since this is a Boiling Water Reactor (BWR), it is good at boiling water. Operating with the water level 1.7 to 2 meters below the top of the core, they mimicked power operation; the core normally operates at power with the water level well below the top of the core, the top part being cooled by steam. Cold water in, steam out, is a crude but effective means of cooling.

Before using sea water, according to reports, water levels are thought to have dropped far enough to allow the fuel to overheat, damaging some of the fuel cladding. When overheated, the cladding (Zirconium) reacts, claiming oxygen from the water. Water, less oxygen, is hydrogen. When vented to the containment and then to the outer building, the hydrogen built up, and eventually exploded, destroying the enclosing building. With compromised fuel, the steam being vented contains radioactive fission products. The design of BWRs is such that this venting goes through a water bath (in the Torus), that filters out all but the most volatile fission products.

With time, the heat generated in used fuel (both in the core and in the fuel pool) decreases. From an initial power of about 2% of full power an hour after shutdown (when the coolant pumps lost power) to about 0.2% a week later, the amount of steam venting decreases, and releases can be controlled and planned for favorable weather conditions.



A second concern arose because of the inability to provide cooling for the used-fuel pool in Unit 4, and later Unit 3. The Unit 4 pool was of concern because, for maintenance, the entire core had been off-loaded into the pool in November (it is believed that two older core loadings were also in this pool, awaiting transfer to the central storage pool). With only a few months cooling, the residual heat is sufficient to raise the temperature of the water in the pool to boiling within several days or weeks. There is also some suggestion that the earthquake may have sloshed some water out of the pool. In any case, the fuel pools for Units 3 and 4 eventually were thought to be losing enough water such that the fuel would no longer be adequately cooled. Since the fuel pools are outside the primary containment, leakage from these pools can spread contamination more readily than that from the reactor core. High-power water hoses have been used to maintain water in the fuel pools.

While many areas within the plant complex itself, and localized areas as far away as 20 Km may require cleanup of the contamination released from the reactors and from the fuel pools, there is no indication that there are any areas that will require long term isolation or exclusion.

Lessons Learned

It is not the purpose of this paper to anticipate the lessons to be learned from this event, but a few items may be noted. One lesson will dominate all others:

Prolonged lack of electrical power must be precluded.

While the designers believed their design included sufficient redundancies (diesels, batteries, redundant connections to the electrical grid), the simultaneous extended loss of all sources of power left the operators dependant on creative responses. This lesson is applicable both to the reactor and to fuel pools.

All nuclear installations will probably be required to do a complete review of the security of their access to electrical power. It may be noted that this lesson is applicable to many more activities than just nuclear power. Extended loss of electrical power in any major metropolitan area would generate a monstrous crisis. The loss of power was irrelevant to other activities in the region near the Fukushima plant because they were destroyed by the tsunami.

Other lessons that will be learned that may be expected to impact existing plants include:

Better means of control of hydrogen buildup in the case of fuel damage may be required.

In addition, detailed examinations of the Fukushima plants will provide evidence of the margins available in seismic protection. Detailed reconstruction of the event will give very helpful insights into the manner that fission product can release from damaged fuel, and their transport.

Applicability of Fukushima Information to MOX-fueled Reactors:

The core of Unit 3 was fueled with plutonium recycled from earlier used reactor fuel. Preliminary information suggests that the release of hazardous radioactive material, for this type of event, is not significantly different than that non-recycle fuel. More detailed examinations after the damaged cores are recovered, and models developed to reconstruct the events, will be necessary to verify and quantify this conclusion.

Applicability of Fukushima Information to Gen-III Reactors:

In the period since the Fukushima plants were designed, advanced designs for BWRs (and other reactor types) have been developed to further enhance passive safety (systems feedback characteristics that compensate for abnormal events, without reliance on operator actions or on engineered safety systems), simplify designs, and reduce costs. The results of these design efforts (referred to as Gen-III) are the ones now under construction in Japan, China and elsewhere, and proposed for construction in the U.S.

One of the most evident features of the Gen-III systems is that they are equipped with large gravity-feed water reservoirs that would flood the core in case of major disruption. This will buy additional time in the event of a Fukushima type situation, but the plants will ultimately rely of restoration of power at some point in time.

The applicability of the other lessons (hydrogen control, fuel pool) will need to be evaluated, but there are no immediately evident lessons beyond these that will affect these designs in a major way.



Applicability of Fukushima

Information to Recycling Reactors:

As noted above, Unit-III was fueled with recycled plutonium, and there are no preliminary indications that this had any bearing on the performance of this plant during this event.

Advanced recycling, where essentially all of the recyclable material is recovered and used (as opposed to recovery and recycle of plutonium) presents a different picture. Full recycling is effective only with a fast reactor. A metal fuel, clad in stainless steel, allows a design of a sodium-cooled fast reactor with astonishing passive safety characteristics. Because the sodium operates far from its boiling point in an essentially unpressurized system, catastrophic events caused by leakage or pipe failures cannot occur. The metal fuel gives the system very favorable feedback characteristics, so that even the most extreme disruptions are passively accommodated. A complete loss of cooling, such as at Fukushima, leads to only a modest temperature rise. Even if the control system were rendered inoperable, and the system lost cooling but remained at full power (this is a far more serious scenario than Fukushima, where the automatic shutdown system operated as designed) the system would self-stabilize at low power, and be cooled by natural convection to the atmosphere. Should the metal fuel fail for any reason, internal fission product gases would cause the fuel to foam and disperse, providing the most powerful of all shutdown mechanisms.

The only situation that could generate energy to disperse material from the reactor is the possibility of a sodium-water reaction. By using an intermediate sodium system (reactor sodium passes its energy to a non-radioactive sodium system, which then passes its energy to water to generate steam to turn the electrical generator), the possibility of a sodium-water reaction spreading radioactive materials is precluded.

These reactors must accommodate seismic challenges, just as any other reactor type. While there are many such design features in common with other reactor designs, the problem is simpler for the fast reactor because of the low pressure, and the fact that this type of reactor does not need elaborate water injection systems.

In light of the Fukushima event, one must consider the potential consequences of a massive tsunami accompanying a major challenge to the reactor. Since it may be difficult to ensure that the sodium systems remain intact under the worst imaginable circumstances, it may be prudent to conclude that a tsunami-prone location may not be the best place to build a sodium facility (whether a nuclear power plant or something else).

Conclusions:

The major lesson to be learned is that for any water-cooled reactor there must be an absolutely secure supply of power sufficient to operate cooling pumps. Many other lessons are likely to be learned. At this early point, it appears that design criteria for fuel storage pools may need to be revised, and hydrogen control assessed.

Given the severity of the challenge faced by the operators at Fukushima, and their ability to manage the situation in such a way as to preclude any significant radiation related health consequences for workers or the public, this event should be a reassurance that properly designed and regulated nuclear power does not pose a catastrophic risk to the public—that, overall, nuclear power remains a safe and clean energy sources.

Given the financial impact this event will have on the utility (loss of four major power plants, massive cleanup responsibilities), it will be worthwhile for the designers, constructors, operators, and licensing authorities to support a thorough analysis of what actually transpired during this event.

Jamestown Post-Journal, March 26, 2011

Comments Being Taken On Clean Up Of Melter

March 26, 2011

WEST VALLEY - Those wishing to comment on a federal evaluation for clean up of a melter used at the West Valley Demonstration Project can do so for the next 45 days at melter@wv.doe.gov.

The melter was used in clean up efforts from 1996 to 2002 at the site of the former nuclear fuel reprocessing plant that closed in the 1970s. The melter was used in vitrification processes that solidified high-level radioactive waste generated during commercial reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel when the plant was opened.

The federal government has ruled the melter can be disposed of as low-level radioactive waste in a document available at em.doe.gov/pdfs/WVDP_Melter_Draft_WIR_Eval.pdf.



Springville Journal, Thursday, March 31, 2011

DOE looks for funds for cleanup of West Valley Demonstration Project by 2020

By: Matt Sargeant

Much work remains to be done at the West Valley Demonstration Project site, but none of that can be done without proper funding. When the West Valley Citizen Task Force met on March 23, Bryan Bower, United States Department of Energy-WVDP project director, expressed the need for funding the project in West Valley.

In his presentation, Bower listed some of the benefits of the waste cleanup, saying, “We reduce risks and protect our workers, our communities and the environment through cleanup. Our work is urgent and essential.” He added, in his presentation, “We have demonstrated value for the American taxpayer by delivering significant progress in the past several years in reducing risks and the overall liability – but our work is not done.”

Bower stated, “Time is not on our side. Costs and risks increase over time,” and added that the site spends approximately \$20 million a year simply for facility maintenance. “That’s the minimum we need just to be here,” he said. “Anything above that goes to the decontamination [and] decommissioning that we’re doing.”

Part of Bower’s presentation included slides that were shown to Congress, illustrating DOE’s nationwide vision. “By 2020, [Environmental Management] cleanup will be virtually completed,” said Bower.

“Hanford will be the only large site remaining. Minor cleanup will remain at Savannah River, Portsmouth and Oak Ridge.” When cleanups started in 1989, there were 110 sites over 35 states that needed to be decontaminated. Now, only 18 sites over 11 states remain.

However, with the work that has been completed in West Valley, WVDP may be a lower national priority. While all sites receive funding for “essential activities to maintain a safe, secure and compliant posture in the EM complex,” according to the presentation, and other sites have such concerns as “radioactive tank waste stabilization, treatment and disposal,” the West Valley site is primarily dealing with “excess facility deactivation and decommissioning,” which is on the bottom of the program priorities.

Still, DOE hopes to complete WVDP cleanup by 2020, which would include the following goals:

- “Complete [high level waste] activities,”
- “Ship and dispose all low level and transuranic waste,”
- “Complete demolition of Main Plant Process Building, Vitrification Facility and Remote Handled Waste Facility,”
- “Disposition and demolish all [43] surplus facilities,”
- “Protect the groundwater,”

DOE looks for funds for cleanup of West Valley Demonstration Project by 2020 (*continued*)

- “Remove and dispose of all contaminated soils from Waste Management Areas,” and
- “Complete Phase 1 Decommissioning.”

Bower outlined some of the economic benefits at West Valley, including the fact that the project has created 84 jobs and saved 19 jobs with the \$63 million received in Recovery Act funds, \$45 million of which have been paid to date.

In addition, \$19 million in “Recovery Act prime and subcontracts [have been] awarded to small business,” while \$13 million of \$60 million “in base prime and subcontracts [have been] awarded to small business.”

“West Valley Demonstration Project is a sound investment,” Bower said. “An additional \$20 million annually [from 2012 to 2016] allows WVDP to complete its cleanup vision by 2020, saving \$120 million LCC and reducing the completion date by four years.

“Every taxpayer dollar invested in this project – both federal and state – is precious and provides significant economic benefit to the region with an emphasis on small business,” he added.

“We have not been at \$60 million since 1989, so it’s really not level funding,” Program Director Paul Bembia of the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority said. “The suggested \$20 million brings this time frame back four years. This is a good point if people want to write their elected officials. That’s a pretty decent argument there.”

Bower concluded, “As demonstrated by our outstanding safety and environmental record, we are committed to worker and public safety and protection of the environment.”

In other matters:• DOE is considering options for the disposal of greater-than-class-C low-level radioactive waste and GTCC-like waste to be documented in a Draft Environmental Impact Statement. A presentation was given via teleconference by Document Manger Arnold Edelman. The proposed action is to “construct and operate a new facility or facilities or use an existing facility for the disposal of GTCC LLRW and GTCC-like waste,” since there is no such facility in existence to date.

While DOE has no preferred alternative, the presentation listed several: no action, “a geological repository-Waste Isolation Pilot Plant,” “intermediate depth boreholes,” “enhanced near surface trenches” and “above grade vaults.” The first option risks potential long-term human health impacts but would require no transportation. The WIPP would result in a low impact but would require “an estimated 11,800 rail shipments or 33,700 truck shipments over 60 years, which could result in one to two non-radiological accident fatalities,” according to Edelman. The final three alternatives would have “low impacts for all resource areas except potential long-term human health impacts in some sites.”

DOE looks for funds for cleanup of West Valley Demonstration Project by 2020 (*continued*)

- Manger Laurene Rowell of West Valley Environmental Services, addressed the vitrification melter and its relation to waste incidental to the reprocessing process. WIR includes three criteria, which are removal of “key radionuclides to the maximum extent that is technically and economically practical,” management “to meet safety requirements” and meeting “Class C concentration limits.” The melter is stored on-site with two other vitrification vessels and does or can be made to comply with the three criteria.
- Bower said, “DOE is keeping a very close watch on what is happening in Japan.” Currently in the field are 39 DOE experts, who took approximately nine tons of monitoring equipment with them. The information being collected can be viewed at www.energy.gov/japan2011, which Bower said “probably the best way to keep an eye on how DOE is involved in the work that is going on in Japan right now.”
- Bower reported that the second supplemental agreement between DOE and NYSERDA was signed and can be viewed on NYSERDA’s Web site. The agreement is highlighted by a 50/50 cost share agreement between the two agencies.

The next CTF meeting is scheduled for April 27 at the Ashford Office Complex.

The meeting will be held at 7 p.m., as opposed to the usual 6:30 p.m. meeting time.

Springville Journal, Thursday, March 31, 2011

Voluntary work force reductions offered by WVES

By: Matt Sargeant

A number of individuals employed by West Valley Environmental Services may need to begin looking for new jobs in the coming months. Fortunately for the employees, that process can begin on their own volition. The conclusion of several projects at the West Valley Demonstration Project that were funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, which created 65 employment opportunities at the site, has brought about the need to eliminate positions. WVES looks to reduce its work force by about that same number.

In response to this need, WVES instituted a “Self-Select” program on March 21, which gives employees the chance to leave the company on their own free will, receiving “full separation benefits” in return. According to a notification sent out to stakeholders, three purposes are hoped to be achieved by the company through this plan: “first, it affords employees interested in retiring or seeking employment elsewhere the opportunity to do so,” “second, as employees voluntarily leave employment with WVES, it creates an opportunity for employees hired under [ARRA] to continue employment at WVDP,” and “last, but certainly not least . . . it may be possible to avoid or eliminate the need for involuntary separations.”

Separation benefits will include severance pay (which will depend on years of service), retraining support and extended health care coverage.

WVES President and Project Manager John McKibbin said he appreciates the work these people have put in, but realizes that changes need to be made. “The employees we hired under the Recovery Act were great additions to our work force,” he said. “Our experienced employees mentored the new employees, and the combination of experience and a fresh perspective were a winning combination. However, because the size of the work force must be reduced, WVES is committed to making the transition as smooth as possible for our employees and to safely completing our work scope at the WVDP.”

The SS program will be open to applications from employees for 15 days. After this time frame, the company will “re-evaluate staffing levels in various skill and expertise areas to determine if involuntary staff reductions are necessary to meet project needs,” according to the stakeholder notification. WVES will look for those individuals who will best benefit WVDP’s objectives as it looks to keep employees on board while still performing the necessary reductions.

Any questions can be directed to either Sonja Allen, senior communications administrator, at 942-2152 or Sonja.Allen@wves.org, or John Chamberlain, technical advisor, at 942-4610 or John.Chamberlain@wves.org.

Buffalo News, 03-31-2011

West Valley nuke project seeks 65 job cuts

By **Matt Glynn**

NEWS BUSINESS REPORTER

Published: March 31, 2011, 12:05 PM

West Valley Environmental Services, the prime contractor to the U.S. Department of Energy at the West Valley Demonstration Project, plans to cut 65 jobs as projects supported by federal stimulus dollars wrap up.

WVES said it is offering employees an opportunity to leave with full separation benefits, in hopes of achieving the job reduction target with few or no layoffs. WVES created 65 jobs as a result of the federal stimulus funds, which are due to run out in June.

Employees who leave under the "self-select program" will receive benefits including severance pay based on years of service, extended health care coverage and retraining support. Workers were given about two weeks to apply for the program.

More job reductions at the West Valley Demonstration Project could occur when the Energy Department chooses a new contractor to take over WVES' role, in the June to August time frame, according to WVES. WVES's contract expires June 30.

There are more than 320 jobs at the site and administrative offices, according to a notice filed with the state Department of Labor.

West Valley, in Cattaraugus County, 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.

mglynn@buffnews.com

WNED, Buffalo, Toronto, March 31, 2011

End of Stimulus Funds Leads to Layoffs at West Valley

Daniel Robison (2011-03-31)



BUFFALO (WNED) - Cleanup at the West Valley Demonstration Project will continue with fewer employees. The end of federal stimulus funding will result in 65 layoffs at the former nuclear waste reprocessing plant.

But officials say the loss in funding will not compromise the site's rehab - but will slow it down. So far, cleanup at West Valley has taken nearly 40 years and officials are hesitant to put an estimate on the number of decades it may still take.

West Valley spokesman John Chamberlain says more than \$60 million in stimulus funding sped up some aspects of the project, including the construction of a one-of-a-kind a underground water filter that absorbs radioactive contamination. But he says much of the site still needs attention.

"The labor force has to match up with the amount of funding that's available and they will adjust the scope of work and how fast you move forward on that work based on how much funding there is," Chamberlain says.

West Valley also faces a likely cut to its base budget, Chamberlain says, as some Congressional versions next year's spending plans reduce the site's operating funds.

"That budget obviously hasn't been decided upon and we all know the situation that's going on with the federal budget. That's what we're in for. It is less we have received in past years when you count in the stimulus money, especially the last few years," Chamberlain says.

If those cuts are made law, Chamberlain says additional layoffs could occur. West Valley's stimulus-related layoffs will be complete by June 30.

In the 1960s, West Valley was the first plant in the country to attempt to recycle nuclear waste. Complications and changing economic conditions led its shuttering in 1972.

The Buffalo News

Friday, April 1, 2011

West Valley contractor eliminating 65 jobs Workers were hired with stimulus funding

By **Matt Glynn**
NEWS BUSINESS REPORTER

The prime contractor to the U.S. Department of Energy at the West Valley Demonstration Project is cutting its work force by about 20 percent.

West Valley Environmental Services says it needs to eliminate 65 of its 325 jobs as federal stimulus dollars tied to specific projects come to an end. The cuts will leave the contractor with about 260 jobs at the Cattaraugus County operation.

Additional reductions could follow when a new prime contractor takes over this summer and decides how many employees it needs at West Valley.

West Valley Environmental is trying to eliminate the 65 jobs with few or no involuntary layoffs, by offering a voluntary separation program to workers. Employees have until Monday to apply for the program, said John Chamberlain, the company's technical adviser.

Employees who leave under the "self-select program" will receive benefits including severance pay based on years of service, extended health care coverage and retraining support.

About \$64 million in federal stimulus dollars was awarded to accelerate certain projects at West Valley over a three-year period. Those funds expire in June.

"We have to get to the right employment to match that," Chamberlain said. The 65 jobs represent the same number of positions created with the stimulus funds.

The work force at West Valley could shrink some more. The Energy Department is about to select a prime contractor to succeed West Valley Environmental to carry out the next phase of work under a seven-year contract. That work will include some demolition.

"There could be another round of layoffs, or there might not be. We don't know," Chamberlain said. The answer will not come until the new contractor is in place this summer and evaluates the work force.

West Valley, just south of Springville, 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.

Employment at West Valley rose through the 1980s and early 1990s, peaking at about 1,000 people in the mid-1990s, according to data from West Valley Environmental. Employment there has fallen over the past 15 years, dropping below the 400-person mark about five years ago. The company has been the prime contractor since 2007. About half of the site's current work force comes from north of Cattaraugus Creek, Chamberlain said.

WCAX.COM

Government contractor plans to cut 65 jobs as federal stimulus dollars end

Associated Press - April 1, 2011 3:05 AM ET

WEST VALLEY, N.Y. (AP) - A western New York government contractor says it will cut 65 jobs as projects supported by federal stimulus funds wrap up.

West Valley Environmental Services is the prime contractor to the U.S. Department of Energy at the West Valley Demonstration Project, 36 miles southeast of Buffalo. The company says it's offering employees an opportunity to leave with full separation benefits in hopes of achieving job reductions with few or no layoffs.

The company created 65 jobs as a result of federal stimulus funds, which end in June. A notice filed with the state labor department says there are more than 320 jobs at the site.

West Valley was the site of the nation's only privately operated commercial nuclear fuel processing facility. The facility was shut down in 1972. Cleanup has been ongoing since the

Columbus, Indiana

Contractor at NY nuclear cleanup site cutting work force by 65; jobs tied to stimulus money

- THE ASSOCIATED PRESS
- First Posted: April 04, 2011 - 6:06 am
Last Updated: April 04, 2011 - 6:06 am

WEST VALLEY, N.Y. — The main contractor working to clean up a western New York nuclear site says it will eliminate 65 jobs with the end of some federal stimulus funding.

West Valley Environmental Services hopes to avoid forced layoffs by offering a voluntary separation program that would include severance pay based on years of service, along with extended health coverage and retraining help.

A spokesman says workers have until Monday to apply for the "self-select" program.

Right now, 325 people work for the contractor at the Cattaraugus County site. The number's being reduced because stimulus funds awarded to accelerate some projects over a three-year period expire in June.

The site 30 miles south of Buffalo housed the nation's first commercial nuclear reprocessing facility from 1966 to 1972. Cleanup has been under way since 1980.

Forbes.com

Contractor at NY nuke cleanup cutting work force

Associated Press, 04.04.11, 11:05 AM EDT

WEST VALLEY, N.Y. -- The main contractor working to clean up a western New York nuclear site says it will eliminate 65 jobs with the end of some federal stimulus funding.

West Valley Environmental Services hopes to avoid forced layoffs by offering a voluntary separation program that would include severance pay based on years of service, along with extended health coverage and retraining help.

A spokesman says workers have until Monday to apply for the "self-select" program.

Right now, 325 people work for the contractor at the Cattaraugus County site. The number's being reduced because stimulus funds awarded to accelerate some projects over a three-year period expire in June.

The site 30 miles south of Buffalo housed the nation's first commercial nuclear reprocessing facility from 1966 to 1972. Cleanup has been under way since 1980.

Contractor at NY nuke cleanup cutting work force

Published: April 4, 2011, 6:06 AM

[0 Comments](#)

[Tweet](#)

Updated: April 4, 2011, 6:09 AM

WEST VALLEY, N.Y. (AP) - The main contractor working to clean up a western New York nuclear site says it will eliminate 65 jobs with the end of some federal stimulus funding.

West Valley Environmental Services hopes to avoid forced layoffs by offering a voluntary separation program that would include severance pay based on years of service, along with extended health coverage and retraining help.

A spokesman says workers have until Monday to apply for the "self-select" program.

Right now, 325 people work for the contractor at the Cattaraugus County site. The number's being reduced because stimulus funds awarded to accelerate some projects over a three-year period expire in June.

The site 30 miles south of Buffalo housed the nation's first commercial nuclear reprocessing facility from 1966 to 1972. Cleanup has been under way since 1980.

[Add your comment](#)

Copyright 1999 - 2011 - The Buffalo News copyright-protected material.

Business First of Buffalo, April 15-21, 2011 Issue

West Valley site plans to cut employment by 65

Earlier this month, West Valley Environmental Services Co. LLC offered employees an opportunity to voluntarily leave the company and receive full separation benefits.

The offer coincided with the completion of projects funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, according to spokesman **John Chamberlain**.

“WVES anticipates the need to reduce the current work force by approximately 65 positions – the same number of jobs created by Recovery Act funding,” he said.

The Self-Select Program accomplishes three objectives:

- It affords employees interested in retiring or seeking employment elsewhere the opportunity to do so.
- As employees voluntarily leave WVES, it creates an opportunity for those hired under the Recovery Act to continue employment at the West Valley Demonstration Project.
- If the size of the work force can be successfully reduced through attrition and the Self-Select Program, it may be possible to avoid or eliminate the need for involuntary layoffs.

Dunkirk OBSERVER, April 19, 2011

Higgins explains 'no' vote on 2011 spending plan

April 19, 2011

Congressman Brian Higgins has announced he has voted no on the 2011 federal spending bill, calling the plan particularly bad for Western New York priorities.

Higgins said, "We need a budget that is fiscally responsible and creates jobs, instead what was before us today is a job killer for Western New York. It cuts medical research dollars which support jobs along our Medical Campus, threatens public safety by cutting police jobs in our communities, stifles economic development with Block Grant and waterfront development cuts and leaves Western New York Seniors out in the cold by slashing HEAP money. The federal government should be a partner in this region's economic recovery and we will continue to fight to see that happen."

Summary of Cuts in H.R. 1473 that Impact WNY

Medical Research

Cuts National Institutes of Health by \$260 million, which is severely inadequate given the rate of inflation and will result in fewer grant applications awarded, potentially impacting Roswell Park, the University at Buffalo, and Hauptman-Woodward Medical Research Institute. (H.R. 1 proposed a \$1.6 billion cut.)

Cuts Center for Disease Control by \$69 million.

Health Care

Cuts Community Health Centers by \$600 million. This could stifle efforts locally to expand access to health care in both Erie and Chautauqua counties. (H.R. 1 proposed a \$1 billion cut.)

Economic Development/ Jobs

Cuts Community Development Block Grants by \$950 million, which will reduce funding for Buffalo, Cheektowaga, Lackawanna, Dunkirk, and Jamestown. This will abruptly decrease the funds available to communities across Western New York for economic development and neighborhood revitalization. (H.R. 1 proposed a \$2.5 billion cut.)

Cuts the Brownfields Redevelopment Program by \$18 million. The South Buffalo Brownfield Opportunity Area contains 1,800 acres of underutilized land alone. (H.R.1 eliminated the program.)

Cuts non-defense environmental clean-up funding by \$20 million, which means less funding will be available for West Valley.

Cuts Youthbuild and Job Corps initiatives by \$23 million, affecting local organizations such as Chautauqua Home Rehabilitation and Improvement Corporation (CHRIC) and Cassadaga Job Corp. H.R. 1 proposed \$102.5 million.

Cuts Dislocated Worker Assistance by \$125 million, Green jobs innovation fund by \$40 million, AmeriCorps by \$23 million, Economic Development Assistance programs by \$9 million

Corporation for Public Broadcasting is funded at \$445 million, maintaining current funding levels. H.R. 1 eliminated funds for CPB.

Education

Cuts summer Pell Grant program grant funding, hurting institutions with a large number of Pell Grant awards like Trocaire. (Does not contain a 15 percent cut to the maximum Pell Grant award. Maximum Pell grant award maintained at \$5,550.)

Funds Head Start at \$7.6 billion, \$340 million above the enacted level and \$1.4 billion above H.R. 1. This prevents 218,000 low-income children from being removed from Head Start. Each year, over 50,000 New York children and families participate in Head Start.

Title I no cut to the Title I education grant that would have cost 10,000 jobs

Transportation and Water Infrastructure

Cuts WNY waterfront development by \$11 million by rescinding earmarks: over \$5 million in authorized by the transportation bill in 1987 and \$6 million authorized in 1991 would be rescinded unless at least 10% of the funding has been sent out to contract by September 30, 2011.

Cuts Army Corps of Engineers by \$575 million despite the current backlog. This makes it less likely we will dredge our harbors or initiate major water projects.

Cuts State Drinking Water and Waste Water Infrastructure funds by \$997 million, making it difficult for Buffalo to eliminate CSO's and other WNY localities to build or upkeep their infrastructure.

Cuts Great Lakes Restoration Initiative \$175 million, affecting an resource that generates jobs for over one million people, with a \$125 billion impact on the nation's economy.

Rescinds \$2.5 billion in highway contract authority.

Cuts \$650 from Federal Highway Investment and \$293 from "Surface Transportation Priorities"

Cuts High Speed Rail funding by \$2.9 billion, making it tougher for Empire Corridor to secure funds turned away by other states

Public Safety

Cuts the Community-Oriented Policy Services (COPS) Hiring Program by \$296 million. Police departments in both Erie and Chautauqua Counties have benefited from this program, including the City of Buffalo and the City of Lackawanna.

Cuts the Urban Area Security Initiative by \$162 million. This will reduce the amount available for preparedness by Erie County and its local governments.

Cuts FEMA Flood Map Modernization funds by \$38 million, making it more difficult for us to push for the elimination of WNY neighborhoods from the requirement to purchase flood insurance.

Cuts State and Local Law Enforcement Assistance by \$415 million.

Cuts Juvenile Justice Programs by \$148 million

Veterans and Seniors

Cuts Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) funding by \$390 million. This funding is directed to low-income families and seniors on a fixed income to help them heat their homes. During the 2009-2010 HEAP season, the program provided 203,237 benefits totaling \$51.9 million in assistance to residents in Erie County and 31,818 benefits totaling \$9.1 million in Chautauqua County.

Reduces funding the Department of Energy can dedicate to weatherization assistance.

Cuts construction of veterans facilities by \$277 million

Cuts for veterans supportive housing vouchers by \$25 million.

Springville Journal, Thursday, April 21, 2011

Ashford Board meeting provides a crash course in worker's compensation

By: Nora Mihalik

Date: 2011-04-20

All in attendance at the most recent Ashford Town Board meeting came away having learned a great deal from Steve Carbone, acting director of the Stakeholder Outreach and Education Division of the NYS Workers' Compensation Board and Raymond H. Jordan, senior public health sanitarian from the Cattaraugus County Health Department. The board had invited these gentlemen to attend its April 13 meeting to answer questions and provide information to those in the audience. A New York state code engineer was also invited but did not attend.

Board Member William Heim addressed the mandate for contractors to provide workman's compensation insurance for employees. He said, "Workman's comp. has gone up 41 percent ... for some people ... [depending on job classification]," and questioned why some groups are exempt from that mandate. Carbone stated that the general increase was 11 percent.

He then provided information packets on the Prove it to Move it Program, which outlines the compliance requirements for workers' compensation and disability benefits needed for permits, licenses and contracts. Carbone explained how any municipality providing a hazardous employment permit or license must "get proof of compensation or the fact that they're legally exempt, from the applicant, on forms that [are] authorized." He also outlined how the name on the permit determines liability for everything including adherence to building codes. Some of the exemptions include a sole proprietor's doing all of the work alone and legal partnerships where all work is done by the partners.

There are hazards to the partnership exemption, he pointed out, as "partnerships are like a marriage. You are financially liable for everything your partners do [however]; that is a true legal „work around“ that is acceptable."

Another exemption is a one- or two-person corporation where one or two officers own all of the stock. "In all of those cases," Carbone said, "they have to be doing all of the work themselves, no sub-contractors and nobody else at the job site." Regarding church groups or non-profits, Carbone explained that after they prove they are exempt, they can have as many volunteers as they want doing the work, whereas, with a for-profit, a volunteer is an employee per the law.

Carbone explained how 2007 reform legislation gave some teeth to enforcement of the workers' compensation law. Non-compliance can now rise to a felony level with penalties starting at \$72,000. There is a whistle blower form online at www.WCB.State.NY.US, he said, where anyone can inform the compensation board of known or suspected violations, which the board will then investigate.

Carbone said that there are still some loopholes in the law and advised that business groups band together and contact their legislators to try to close those loopholes in order to insure a level playing field.

Resident Art Munson asked about tree removal contractors and was told by Carbone that they also needed workers' compensation coverage. By law, the owner of the timber is liable under section 56, he explained, so if the timber is sold to the contractor before tree removal, the contractor assumes liability.

Resident Dave Jones, owner of Southern Tier Building Performance Analysts, asked if he had to carry workers' compensation when using subcontractors or if that was the subcontractors' responsibility. Carbone answered that "the GC [General Contractor] is liable for all claims of uninsured contractors," and all employees are the GC's direct employees.

Springville Journal, Thursday, April 21, 2011 (continued)

He detailed that, since 1985, all homeowner's insurance policies for owner-occupied one, two, three or four-family residences carry a compensation rider for employees under the compensation law who work fewer than 40 total hours per week. This provides unlimited workers' compensation coverage if, for example, a worker building a deck on an owner-occupied house is injured "as long as that contractor was working less than 40 hours a week, he was doing a renovation to your home, not a minor repair. But," he said, "people doing painting or minor repairs ... are not employees [under the compensation law]."

Additionally, if no building permit is required for a job like siding a house, workers' compensation coverage is still required, according to Carbone.

Jordan explained that, according to the state sanitary code, no building permit or certificate of occupancy should be issued for a residence unless there is an adequate sewage system in the plans. An outhouse, composting toilet, incinerating toilet and pit privy are acceptable alternate systems, he said. A system for handling "grey water" is still needed. Heim asked what would happen if the health department was informed of homes that did not have a grey water system. "We would investigate," said Jordan. He said the design flow is calculated at a minimum of 110 gallons per bedroom of the dwelling.

Heim also asked if the lack of a grey water disposal system is ever subject to enforcement by the health department. Jordan said that legal actions have been taken, and "the law has supported our position." If there is no voluntary compliance, then, as a last resort, there can be a hearing. Jordan said, "We have put condemnation posters on homes and we have condemned homes for the lack of sewage systems." The sheriff's department would enforce any condemnation notice. The health department and code enforcement officers work closely together, Jordan said, and the town boards have to back their code enforcement officer.

In other matters:

• Paul Bembia, NYSERDA program director, reported that the facility is still focused on having the federal appropriation increased to \$85 million for WVDP for 2012.

• Gerwitz said that the slide on the north side of the new Thornwood Drive will be fixed when the weather improves. He also reported that the Fox Valley job is being held up by FEMA. He wrote to FEMA to get the funding back up and called Congressman Thomas Reed, who is "putting pressure on them."

Gerwitz estimated that it costs the town about \$10,000 per year to go around.

- The trash pickup is scheduled for the week of April 25 and tires will be collected on that Saturday.
- Highway Superintendent Tim Engles said that the excavator repairs have not been done yet, as the town is waiting for the mechanic. He also said that the Riceville Road cattle pass is getting bad, but he thinks it could be saved for several more years.

The next Ashford Town Board meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 11, at 7:30 p.m.

Buffalo News, Saturday, April 23, 2011

15 take buyouts at West Valley

By **Matt Glynn**

NEWS BUSINESS REPORTER

Updated: April 23, 2011, 6:27 AM

Fifteen employees of West Valley Environmental Services are taking voluntary separation packages, meaning as many as 50 additional employees will be laid off to reach a job-reduction target.

The company, the Energy Department's prime contractor at the West Valley Demonstration Project, announced in late March that it would cut 65 of its 324 jobs as federal stimulus funds tied to specific projects come to an end.

It offered a "self-select" separation program in hopes of minimizing the number of layoffs required at the Cattaraugus County site.

"Management is evaluating the remaining skill set to determine what positions will be eliminated," said John D. Chamberlain, technical adviser for the company.

Layoff notifications will go out in June, Chamberlain said. The last day of work for all the affected employees, whether laid off or leaving voluntarily, will be June 30.

Additional job reductions could follow when the Energy Department this summer selects a new prime contractor to handle the next phase of work. The new contractor will decide how many workers it needs.

West Valley, just south of Springville, 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.

mglynn@buffnews.com

Springville Journal, Thursday, April 28, 2011



New business on Waverly Street
By:Springville Journal Staff
Date: Thursday April 28, 2011

Pictured, cutting the ribbon for Waverly Street's new business, SN3, are, front row, from left: Doug Stitzel, vice president and general manager, NNN; Jim Moran, senior vice president, Stoller; David Field, president, Springville Chamber of Commerce. Back row, from left: Hugh Thompson, J.C. Wallace, Ken Congleton (all NNN), Sharon Brady, Joe Legare and Elizabeth Lowes (all Stoller).

Springville residents may have noticed a new sign in front of the Springville Door and Window location at 56 Waverly St. A ribbon cutting ceremony was held on April 18 to open the Stoller-Newport News Nuclear offices, located in the office area on the second floor of the Springville Door and Window building.

SN3 is one of the Department of Energy contractor teams currently competing to continue cleanup activities at the West Valley Demonstration Project and is a team arrangement comprised of the S.M. Stoller Corporation, whose core business is performing environmental remediation in support of the DOE, and Newport News Nuclear, a subsidiary of the nuclear Navy's principal contractor for the construction and refueling of nuclear aircraft carriers and submarines which also supports DOE cleanup projects. David Field, president of the Springville Chamber of Commerce, welcomed SN3 to Springville and participated alongside Stoller and NNN senior leadership in the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

Jim Moran, Stoller's senior vice president, provided a perspective on SN3's choice for locating its WNY office in Springville: "Having an office in this community is a way for us to be more accessible to the stakeholders of the West Valley Demonstration Project," he said. "We are thrilled that such a nice office facility was available to us. This will allow us to move forward expeditiously should we be the contractor selected for the next phase of cleanup."

As part of the office opening, Joe Legare, Stoller vice president, presented the West Valley Food Bank with a check for \$2,000. Bud Williams accepted the check. He, along with his wife Mary Lou, volunteers time to manage the food bank. Joe said, "Bud and Mary Lou Williams provide such an important service to the West Valley area. When we heard about the West Valley Food Bank we knew it was one of the community services that we want to support."

SN3 also held an open house at the Ashford Community Center in West Valley that evening to provide an opportunity for the community and the workers at the West Valley Demonstration Project to learn more about the company. After completing all the SN3 events on Monday, Doug Stitzel, NNN's vice president and general manager, said, "It is our culture to be a good corporate citizen. To that end, it is important to us to support the neighborhoods and communities in which we work, and we are particularly pleased to become part of the Springville and West Valley communities."

The Springville Journal

Volume 146, No. 19
Thursday, May 12, 2011

Springville business named subcontractor of the year

The US Small Business Administration has awarded InTomes Technical Services, Inc. and President Joelle Runge of Springville the 2011 subcontractor of the year for region two. This region encompasses all of N.Y. and N.J., Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

The SBA presents the Subcontractor of the Year Award to a small business that has provided the government with outstanding goods and services. Nominations are evaluated on six criteria, including the following: overall management, delivery performance, technical capabilities and exceptional results.

InTomes is a staff augmentation technical services provider founded in 2005. Its primary focus is the support of decontamination and decommissioning of Department of Energy sites.

InTomes has been involved in sup-



Joelle Runge

porting several disciplines including electrical, process, instrument and controls, structural and civil/environmental. The company provides services to DOE sites in Hanford, Wash. and West Valley and operates under an ASME NQA-1 Quality Assurance Program.

InTomes Technical Services was nominated for the award by West Valley Environmental Services for its work as a team member at the West Valley Demonstration Project. InTomes provides WVES with civil, structural, mechanical, electrical and chemical engineers, as well as project managers, Primavera schedulers and multi-discipline design drafters.

In 2010, InTomes was awarded a multi-year multi-million dollar subcontract to provide engineering and drafting support to WVES. This subcontract was competitively bid and required DOE approval.

"It is a great honor to be nominated for this award. Winning it is even bigger," said Runge. "Our efforts over the past six years to create a business that provides quality work at competitive prices has been validated by the SBA . . . an added bonus is being able to keep federal dollars here, stimulating our local economy."

For more information, contact Runge at 592-7425 ext. 122 or joell@intomes.com.



ABSOLUT CARE
of Aurora Park

*Absolut Opportunities,
Absolut Rewards, Absolut Care*
Absolut Care at Aurora Park, a 320-bed Nursing and Rehabilitation Facility in East Aurora, is dedicated to providing quality care with warmth and comfort. We are looking for dependable, enthusiastic people, who enjoy a fun and challenging work environment to join our team.

We're currently hiring...

**Full Time & Part Time
Employees for:**

- RN Nurse Manager, F/T
- Staff RN/LPN, F/T&P/T

*Come Join Us...
and make a difference
in another persons life.*

**292 Main Street
East Aurora, NY, 14052**

Phone: 716-652-1560

Fax: 716-655-3979

e-mail: jkoch@absolutcare.com

For more information please visit us at
www.absolutcare.com

E.O.E.

Business First of Buffalo, May 17, 2011

Voluntary layoffs total 15 at West Valley

Business First - by David Bertola

Date: Tuesday, May 17, 2011, 12:03pm EDT

Fifteen employees applied for and were approved for voluntary layoffs at West Valley Environmental Services Co., short of expected reductions next month.

In March, employees there were told that around 65 will be laid off by June. The layoffs are a result of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding that is to run out on June 30.

Up to 50 additional positions will be eliminated through involuntary layoffs to reach pre-American Recovery and Reinvestment Act employment levels. Current workforce at the site south of Buffalo is approximately 324.

West Valley Environmental Services management is evaluating the remaining skill set to determine positions to be eliminated.

Those identified for the layoffs will be notified in June, and the last day of work for those who volunteered or otherwise is June 30.

West Valley Environmental Services, a New York State-owned site that specializes in radioactive waste management and facility decommissioning, used around \$64 million in stimulus package funding for multiple projects.

In March, company spokesman **John Chamberlain** said it has been known for some time that the funds, granted in 2009, would run out on June 30, which coincides with Department of Energy projects that are to be completed by then.

Town of Ashford is facing off with FEMA

By Lizz Schumer
JOURNAL STAFF REPORTER

The town of Ashford has been embroiled in a battle with the Federal Emergency Management Agency for funds to repair Fox Valley Road since the culvert washed out in 2009, and so far, the saga continues. "I've yelled and screamed at congressmen, senators, FEMA, SEMO and everyone else, and we still haven't heard a thing," said Supervisor Chris Gerwitz.

The Ashford Town Board has been working to get the road repaired since the first study was done in 2009 and was sent out to bid in May 2010. FEMA is set to contribute 75 percent of repairs and the State Emergency Management Office is in for 12.5 percent, leaving the town responsible for the last 12.5 percent. After the first bid came in at almost \$2 million, the board appealed to FEMA to contribute more than its original promised sum, which would have covered less than half of that bid.

"Since it was the end of the season and most contractors already had their projects set, we only got one bid, which came in a lot higher than what FEMA had agreed to pay," Gerwitz said.

That appeal took nine months, and resulted in FEMA's refusing to pay the additional sum. The board then sent the project out to bid a second time, garnering two promising bids, one of which it had planned to award on March 22: one from Ed Bauer Construction and one from Union Concrete.

The board then had 60 days to award the bid, a deadline it missed because FEMA still did not respond with its commitment.

"The clock was ticking, so I went to SEMO, Senator [Catharine] Young and Congressman [Tom] Reed, all who tried to help me get an extension to get this done," Gerwitz explained.

Although Ed Bauer had to pull out because of the time restriction, Union Concrete agreed to honor its bid for 30 more days, and the board submitted an additional appeal in an attempt to get FEMA to pay the adjusted sum.

The board is now waiting for results

of a renewed appeal to FEMA for increased funds to cover not only the additional cost, but the amount spent on the engineering study to decide what would need to be done to avoid another washout before sending it out to bid a second time. Including the amount lost when the lowest bidder withdrew, the estimated cost of the project is approximately \$977,000.

As of the meeting on May 11, Gerwitz had still not heard from FEMA, despite requests for information to both Reed and FEMA representatives to intervene on Ashford's behalf. Gerwitz pledged that he would not move forward without a FEMA commitment.

"We did our due diligence on this issue, doing the study and making sure we had all the facts before going forward. I can tell you, I don't want my name on this thing if we don't take care of it properly and it washes out with someone on it," Gerwitz said. "If we spend almost \$500,000 on this project, the town wouldn't be able to recoup that in 60 years. I don't know about you all, but to me, that's a lot of money. I'm not going to do that to our residents."

"As it is, people can spend a little extra gas and just go around the long way," Council Member William Heim added. "You can buy a lot of gas for half a million dollars."

As it stands, the board will continue to wait for a FEMA commitment before moving on the project.

The board also discussed the hydrofracking issue currently facing residents, and emphasized the importance of education before making any decisions.

"From what I've read, I can't find any reason why we would want to do that," said Charlie Davis, council member.

Gerwitz brought up the idea of bringing in experts to talk about the pros and cons of hydrofracking. "They should at least educate us on what needs to be done so we can make an informed decision," Gerwitz suggested.

Heim compared the hydrofracking debate to the windmill issue, but quickly pointed out the difference in stakes. "We're not well-versed enough to make those kinds of decisions," he said. "We need to

really do our research. It's like the windmills issue. The difference is, windmills aren't catastrophic. Windmills never killed anybody. With hydrofracking, it could either be a great asset or it could be devastating," said Heim.

The board decided to pursue bringing in experts to discuss the issue.

In other matters:

• Paul Bombia from the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority presented the results of aerial topographic mapping and aerial photography of the Butter-milk Creek Watershed created in cooperation with the Department of Energy, contracted with MJ Harden Inc. NYSERDA is working on getting photographs cleared with the Department of Homeland Security in regard to personal property, but will make the topographic maps available to the town and county.

• The planning board will examine the junk yard law and the sign law.

• The town of Ashford collected a check for \$178,800 from the county to take over control of Henrietta and Gulf Hill roads. Accordingly, the town budget will increase to \$1,267,327.

• Swimming pool codes have changed since a new federal law went into effect in June 2008 and Code Enforcement Officer Gary Perkins said he has been diligent in making sure residents' pools meet codes. The board wanted to emphasize the importance of residents' knowing the codes, including requirements for covers and alarms on pools capable of holding more than 24 inches of water.

• Engels proposed repairs to Gulf Hill Road to make the bridge passable. He added the necessity of posting speed limit signs to limit liability, potentially making the road accessible for farmer and emergency vehicle use only. He pledged his commitment to get as much done as quickly as possible, as cheaply as possible.

• Heim expressed displeasure in the amount of litter along the sides of local roads. He suggested posting a sign reminding residents and passers-through about littering fines in New York state.

The next meeting will be held at 7:30 p.m. on June 8.

NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

Division of Environmental Remediation

625 Broadway, Albany, New York 12233-7017

Phone: (518) 402-9814 Fax: (518) 402-9819

EPA ID No: NYD980779540

PUBLIC NOTICE OF CLOSURE PLAN

The United States Department of Energy (DOE) as operator of the West Valley Demonstration Project (WVDP) has notified the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (Department) of its intention to commence final closure of Hazardous Waste Storage Lockers (HWSLs) #1 - #4 at the WVDP facility in West Valley, NY 14171-9799. The HWSLs are one of several hazardous waste management (HWM) units at the WVDP facility that requires closure under Title 6 of the New York Code of Rules and Regulations (6 NYCRR) Part 373. The DOE maintains a closure plan for each HWM unit as stipulated in §373-1.2(b) and §373-3.7. The HWSL closure plan (Doc. ID Number WVDP-156, Rev. 13, dated 11/18/10) was revised in response to Department comments and resubmitted in November 2010 for Department review and approval. The Department has tentatively determined that the revised closure plan is consistent with the regulatory requirements for the decontamination and closure of hazardous waste container storage areas and, as such, can be approved. The intention of this public notice is to solicit comment from the public on these closure plans.

The revised HWSLs closure plan includes removal of all containers of hazardous waste, inspection of the floor of each locker, decontamination of the floors using a low volume, high pressure cleaning unit followed by characterization of the wash water and sampling of the rinsate from each floor. The decontamination residues and wash water would be collected, characterized and dispositioned as either a hazardous or non-hazardous waste, as necessary. DOE has stated within their closure plan that no spills or releases of hazardous waste to the environment have occurred in this area.

State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) status: Closure of the HWSLs will not result in significant changes to the surrounding areas of the WVDP facility. The closure activities will be performed entirely within the HWM units and will use only light equipment. This action will leave the HWM units clean and uncontaminated. The Department has determined that the closure of each of these HWM units is a Type II action which is not subject to SEQR.

State regulation requires that the public be given thirty (30) days to provide written comments on the draft closure plan. The public comment period begins on 05/19/11 and will extend through 06/20/11. A copy of the closure plan is available for public review at NYSDEC Central and Regional Offices. Copies of the closure plan may be obtained by contacting either Mr. Patrick W. Concannon, Engineering Geologist, at NYSDEC Region 9, Division of Environmental Remediation, 270 Michigan Ave., Buffalo, NY 14203 [Telephone Number: (716) 851-7220] or Mrs. Lynn M. Winterberger, Environmental Engineer, at NYSDEC, Central Office, Division of Environmental Remediation, 625 Broadway, Albany NY 12233-7017 [Telephone Number: (518) 402-9814]. Comments on the closure plans must be sent no later than June 20, 2011 to:

Mrs. Lynn M. Winterberger, P.E.
New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
Division of Environmental Remediation
Remedial Bureau E, RCRA Permitting Section
625 Broadway
Albany, New York 12233-7017

All comments will be considered and evaluated in making the final determination for approving the closure plan. Prior to the approval of the closure plan the Department will respond to any comments submitted by the public. The Department will approve, modify or disapprove the draft closure plan based on the information received during the comment period and public hearing, if required. A notice of the final decision will be sent to each interested citizen or organization that submitted written comments or have requested such notice.

**West Valley Demonstration Project
Quarterly Public Meeting
Wednesday, May 25, 2011, 6:30pm**

Ashford Office Complex
9030 Route 219, West Valley, NY 14171

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) will hold a public meeting to provide an update on progress at the WVDP and to discuss the Phase 1 Study process. NYSERDA and DOE will provide the public with an opportunity to ask questions and provide comments.

For further information,
please contact John Chamberlain at
John.Chamberlain@wves.org or (716) 942-4610.

SURPLUS AUCTION!

**West Valley Environmental Services • Sat., May 21 at Noon (preview at 10AM)
7023 Henrietta Road, Springville, NY**

SURPLUS ITEMS INCLUDING: 1995 load lifter LLL 10000 w/3,102 hrs. w/load scale, lift & 4' forks; '84 K-D Manitou T1304HA w/8234 hrs. & 8' forks, heat exchanger/hydraulic power portable unit, Straddle Stacker forklift 12,500 LB capacity, 60" lift, Trane vertical a/c unit, 5 sided lifting tarps, insulated portable office, Northern Telecom/Meridian Telephone 1 system & (3) switches, System 3 Universal Alarm Control, Sola 5000 control, (3) reel wire racks, CIM chain & beam holsts, Standard Register PT650 plus thermal printer, portable water current meter, NH3 gas meters, Flex-Tube manometer, sifter filters, extension cords, tool boxes & cases, Bradley 1 ton lifting hoist, GE 75 hp motor, large fire extinguisher, misc. shelving parts, dolly, wooden & metal doors, (2) Graco XR7 paint sprayers, plastic spill tank, air conditioner, cable slings, cleavales, core bits, sheet of poly cutting board, safety devices, large valve & trash pump, fan & blower system, Rigid sewer snake, 150 PSI pump hose, fireboxes, integrated corrosion monitor, containment boxes, 2,000 lb. electric pallet jack, 5,000 lb. short pallet jack, misc. Milcon controls, 10,000 PSI water blast hose, pallet of air hose, misc. cases, VCRs & TVs, Compaq Pentium 3 computers, Sharpvision projector, Laserjet printers, misc. office supplies, wood pallets, telephone pole parts & more. See website for pics! **Terms:** Payment in full the day of sale in cash or check. 10% Buyer's Premium, bidders must be U.S. citizens, show 2 forms of ID (1 with photo) and comply with WVES safety rules & requirements.

**C.A.S.H.
REALTY &
AUCTIONS**

1295 Main Street, Buffalo, NY 14209

Ph.: 716/885-2200 • Fax: 716/885-9162

See our website for details www.cashauction.com

*Fracking moratorium should
not be lifted in New York state*

Editor:

If the moratorium against fracking is lifted in New York State, I am fearful. Not only will we have methane gas in our water, there will also be nuclear poisoning of

our fresh water supply from buried waste in West Valley.

Michele Ghani
West Valley

Springville Journal, Thursday, June 09, 2011



NYSERDA and DOE announce plans to bring in a third party facilitator at the WVDP
By: Teresa Nagel

An update was given at the West Valley Demonstration Project's quarterly public meeting on May 25 regarding plans to proceed with third party negotiations concerning the phase one decommissioning studies at the project.

The New York State Energy Research and Development Authority, along with the New York State Department of Education, began last year with a sources-sought announcement seeking a third party, private facilitator to act as a neutral liaison between NYSERDA, DOE and the public regarding the project.

The facilitator would also bring in a panel of technical experts and address public concerns, among other things. Explaining why this step is a necessity, Paul Bembia of NYSERDA said, "We don't have identified subject matter professionals for all these issues. We are looking to at least have a final technical agreement for all participants, because right now, we don't have that."

To move things along at a reasonable rate, DOE and NYSERDA have agreed to bring the facilitator in through a third party small business contract. As a result of last year's sources-sought announcement, responses were received from five firms, a capabilities briefing was done on May 12 and DOE and NYSERDA will be moving forward with one of the firms, the name of which could not be released as of the meeting. The endeavor is expected to cost DOE and NYSERDA a combined total of between \$1 million and \$2 million per year.

Until everything is finalized, the Keystone Center will be acting as a temporary facilitator for the quarterly meetings.

In other matters:

- In a project update given by the DOE, it was announced that the West Valley Demonstration Project recently celebrated four years without loss of time due to a work-related accident or illness. Although there was a small fire that smoldered in one of the stainless steel drums during the quarter, the facility was never in any danger and the fire was put out with low pressure liquid nitrogen.

A systematic safety shutdown was done as a precaution, and everyone was back to work within two weeks. To date, approximately 91 percent of low level radioactive waste and 80 percent of transuranic waste has been processed. The tank and vault drying system, which was installed and operational by last December, was used to evaporate 23 percent of tank waste liquids in the first three months of use.

- WVDP showed its appreciation to three local organizations for mutual support in the form of donations. West Valley Fire District was awarded with \$70,000, Bertrand Chaffee Hospital with \$10,000 and Mercy Flight with \$5,000.

- A presentation on the Buttermilk Creek Watershed LIDAR and Orthoimagery Project was also given, during which some of the tools which process information regarding the flow of water within the area were discussed.

The next quarterly public meeting for the West Valley Demonstration Project is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, August 24 at 6:30 p.m. at the Ashford Office Complex.

West Valley Demonstration Project: A Disaster Turned Good

June 11, 2011

By Sharon Turano (sturano@post-journal.com) , The Post-Journal

This article is part of an occasional series looking at what happened to local projects and initiatives that were undertaken with great expectations. Email editorial@post-journal.com with your suggestions for followup stories.

ASHFORD - What began as a way to attract attention to the state as a location for the atomic industry has resulted in it getting noticed for how to clean up the result of the business.

According to information from staff at the West Valley Demonstration Project, the federal Atomic Energy Act of 1954 resulted in the encouragement of the private reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel to commercialize nuclear fuel. New York established an office of Atomic Development in 1956.

In 1961, the state of New York selected 8,500 acres 30 miles southeast of Buffalo as the site where it would store and reprocess nuclear waste. The first such site in the nation to be operated under state auspices, it sought to attract the atomic industry here and help promote economic development.

According to Stan Lundine, Gov. Nelson Rockefeller thought the idea would put the area on the map. That may have been true, but not for what Rockefeller may have thought at first.

Instead, it's the site's cleanup that became memorable.

UNMET EXPECTATIONS

"We were to be the first in the United States," Lundine said about plans to take leftovers from nuclear energy and reclaim valuable elements from them.

Nuclear Fuels Services began operations on 3,330 acres of the West Valley site. During operations, about 640 metric tons of spent nuclear fuel from defense reactors and commercial power reactors was reprocessed in West Valley. There were, however, operational difficulties as worker doses and unplanned releases of radioactive material to the environment took place, according to information from staff at the project. Reprocessing operations were halted to allow \$15 million in modifications to be made.

During the shutdown, new requirements were issued related to earthquake and tornado protection, along with waste management, making the modifications more expensive - it would cost \$600 million to reopen. Realizing it was not economically feasible to reopen, the reprocessing plant closed in the 1970s after taking in reactor fuel and taking uranium and plutonium for the liquid to make new fuel. It operated from 1966-72, and then went bankrupt and abandoned the plans.

"It is clear that the reprocessing facility at West Valley failed to live up to its high expectations, and, in retrospect, it was a combination of economic factors, technological difficulties and an evolving regulatory framework that led to the failure of the facility," reports the information from project staff.

CLEANING UP

Lundine remembers the fingerpointing that occurred as the endeavor that was to draw the notice of the country for a successful business resulted in an environmental mess with radioactive waste being left at West Valley.

He said, however, the cleanup of the facility ended up drawing notice and creating jobs after all.

Lundine was elected to Congress to fill a vacancy in 1976.

"I quickly realized the one thing truly unique about the district," he said, adding it had an abandoned commercial nuclear reprocessing facility. Lundine said 600,000 gallons radioactive waste were left in a tank at West Valley; there was waste buried underground, along with other concerns. The gallons of liquid high-level waste was stored in two of four underground storage tanks and the main plant process building, which was highly contaminated. Some areas were inaccessible due to contamination levels and radioactive dose fields.

"I wanted to push a solution to the problems there," he said, adding he was the principal author of legislation to remedy the situation. In 1980, the West Valley Demonstration Project authorized the federal Department of Energy to conduct a cleanup of the site in cooperation with the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority.

"I was very pleased," said Lundine. He said the legislation meant the federal government would pay 90 percent of the clean up costs, and the state would pay 10 percent.

"It turned out to be a much more expensive project than we envisioned," said Lundine, who said \$2 billion has been sent to clean up the facility. Despite that, he said, he considers it successful.

"It addressed catastrophic and environmental problems," he said, adding the legislation providing for the cleanup also provided jobs for hundreds of workers for years.

For instance, he said, during the cleanup, it was proven that liquid radioactive waste could be solidified into a glass form, which is not as dangerous, and could therefore be transported off the site; 125 spent nuclear fuel assemblies that were in storage were shipped, the largest single shipment of spent nuclear fuel in the country. Shipment and disposal of 304,800 cubic meters of low-level waste was completed; a permeable treatment wall to mitigate a plume from a spill was installed, as was a drying system to eliminate liquids and moisture from the high-level waste tanks. Processing equipment and piping has also been removed.

"It turned out to be a good thing for people involved in it," he said.

IS THE END NEAR?

Although Lundine said there will always be disputes about when the property's cleanup will be considered complete, he acknowledges environmental knowledge was gleaned from the work.

A record of decision was recently made, gearing efforts toward a two-phased approach with Phase 1 including some work such as removing the former used fuel reprocessing plant and radioactive water treatment plant. While work is being done to complete that, additional studies of long-term management of disposal areas and underground tanks will continue.

Some radioactive waste is still on site including contaminated buildings that were used during operations and 275 10-foot-tall canisters of solidified radioactive waste. There are disposal areas, where radioactive waste was put in the ground and capped, along with underground tanks that had waste, which are empty and being dried. Continual work is being done to get waste off site, and maintain and monitor what is there.

Further decisions are expected to be made within 10 years to select either removal or in-place closure, or a combination, as area residents keep a watchful eye on the progress in hopes of insuring environmental atrocities do not occur as a result of decisions made.

For instance, in 1993 radioactively contaminated groundwater surfaced due to a leak in a process line. The leak is thought to have been a one-time event, with remedies put in place. Environmental concerns remain such as what will happen in decades due to environmental changes such as erosion, movement of soil or earthquake potential. Concerns include whether all waste, such as equipment now buried, should be removed at a high cost or whether it can be safely stored there. Another concern is whether water supplies could be exposed to the radioactive stored material.

Radioactive waste that does remain is being shielded, report officials at the demonstration project, so it is kept away from people. The site is being cleaned up by federal and state agencies. The demonstration project is located on the border of Cattaraugus and Erie counties. It is owned by the New York State Research and Development Authority, also working on the cleanup efforts.

tri-cityherald.com, June 21, 2011

Washington Closure Hanford president retiring July 8

By Annette Cary, Herald staff writer

Neil Brosee, the president of Washington Closure Hanford, announced Monday that he plans to retire July 8 after 45 years in the nuclear industry.

A permanent replacement has not been named, but Ryan Dodd, the Washington Closure deputy project manager, will serve as acting president and project manager.

Brosee became president and project manager of Washington Closure in October 2009 when former president Chuck Spencer became president of the Hanford tank farm contractor, Washington River Protection Solutions.

Brosee joined Washington Closure around the start of 2007 as deputy general manager, but left for a time to work at Washington River Protection Solutions as a base operations manager before returning to Washington Closure as president.

He previously worked at the Hanford vitrification plant and at the **West Valley Demonstration Project** in New York.

"As WCH president, it has been very gratifying to be part of a unique team that has earned a positive reputation for achieving safe, visible cleanup progress on the Hanford site," he said in a memo to employees Monday.

Washington Closure is responsible for completing most cleanup on the 220 square miles near the Columbia River at Hanford by Sept. 30, 2015. It's on track to have 98 square miles of the river corridor cleaned up later this year.

The project employs 1,350 workers, including subcontractor employees, under a \$2.3 billion, 10-year contract with the Department of Energy.

Brosee is most proud of "upholding a personal commitment to a strong safety culture while performing the most dangerous cleanup," he told employees.

Dodd, a Richland native, joined Washington Closure in fall 2008. Before then worked for the tank farm contractor. He was named a vice president for the previous tank farm contractor, CH2M Hill Hanford Group, in spring 2003 and was in charge of Hanford's 149 single-shell radioactive waste tanks.

-- Annette Cary: 582-1533; acary@tricityherald.com; More Hanford news at hanfordnews.com.

The Republic, June 21, 2011

Contractor at W. NY nuke cleanup site to lay off 40 as stimulus money ends

- THE ASSOCIATED PRESS
- First Posted: June 21, 2011 - 3:01 am
Last Updated: June 21, 2011 - 3:01 am

WEST VALLEY, N.Y. — The main contractor cleaning up a western New York nuclear site says it will lay off 40 workers over the next week to bring the workforce back to the level it was at before federal stimulus funding was awarded.

West Valley Environmental Services announced earlier this spring that it would lay off up to 65 people with the completion of a stimulus fund project started in 2009. The reduction will bring staffing to the previous level of about 266 workers.

Attrition and 15 voluntary departures reduced the number to be involuntarily laid off to 40.

The West Valley site in Cattaraugus County 30 miles south of Buffalo housed the nation's first commercial nuclear reprocessing facility from 1966 to 1972. Cleanup has been under way since 1980.

West Valley finalizes job cuts

Business First - by David Bertola

Date: Tuesday, June 21, 2011, 9:58am EDT

Related:

[Human Resources](#)

Over the next week, approximately 40 employees will be laid off at West Valley Environmental Services Co. LLC.

In March, the company announced it would be reducing its workforce by up to 65 by the end of June to coincide with completion of work authorized under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. The workforce reduction will realign the number of full-time workers to the pre-Recovery Act level of approximately 266 employees.

Through attrition and 15 employees who chose to voluntarily leave the company through a "Self- Select" program, another 40 staffers will be laid off. All employees leaving the company will receive severance benefits.

In 2009, The West Valley Demonstration Project received approximately \$63 million in Recovery Act funds to accelerate work on a number of activities including:

- Installation of a ventilation system to dry the radioactively contaminated underground tanks and vaults where the high-level liquid waste at the site was stored before it was solidified.
- Installation of a 860-foot long in-ground, passive treatment system to remove radioactive strontium-90 from groundwater.
- Removal of radioactively contaminated hardware and materials from the former reprocessing plant to prepare it for dismantlement.
- Acceleration of processing stored wastes.

As part of the workforce reduction process, West Valley Environmental Services has offered seminars and individual assistance to employees including information on job search techniques and resume writing. On June 16, a job fair and job transition seminar were conducted at the site.

Further changes are anticipated at the West Valley Demonstration Project as the Department of Energy is currently reviewing proposals for a new prime contractor to conduct the next scope of work there. Selection is anticipated soon with transition from West Valley Environmental Services to the new contractor planned for this summer.

WIVB.com (Channel 4 News, Buffalo, NY), June 21, 2011

40 West Valley workers pink slipped

Updated: Tuesday, 21 Jun 2011, 6:24 PM EDT

Published : Tuesday, 21 Jun 2011, 6:24 PM EDT

Nancy Sanders

WEST VALLEY, NY - Forty employees of West Valley Environmental Services will be pink slipped over the next week. The layoffs have been anticipated for months.

The layoffs come as stimulus funds tied to West Valley projects are terminated. The Energy Department's prime contractor announced that it would cut 65 of the company's 300 jobs.

Additional cuts could come when the Energy Department picks a new prime contractor at the West Valley Demonstration Project- the announcement is expected before September.

[The Buffalo News](#)

Last update: June 21, 2011, 12:02 PM

West Valley laying off 40 people

By **Matt Glynn**

NEWS BUSINESS REPORTER

Published: June 21, 2011, 12:02 PM

West Valley Environmental Services over the next week will lay off 40 workers to complete a previously announced plan to reduce its work force.

The company, the Energy Department's prime contractor at the West Valley Demonstration Project, disclosed in March it would cut up to 65 of its more than 300 jobs as stimulus funds tied to specific projects come to an end. It already achieved some of those job reductions through attrition and employees who took voluntary separation packages. The work force will be trimmed to about 266 full-time WVES employees.

But additional reductions could come when the Energy Department chooses a new prime contractor at West Valley Demonstration Project. Selection is expected to come soon, with the transition to the new contractor planned for this summer.

mglynn@buffnews.com



Springville Journal, Thursday, June 23, 2011

Ashford Town Board debates benefits and drawbacks of broadband services

By:Lizz Schumer

The Ashford Town Board debated the pros and cons of bringing broadband service into their area at its monthly meeting on June 8.

The service would provide broadband Internet for most residents in the town and village, with some “white areas” to be filled in as technology improves. The cost of obtaining the service would be \$5,000, although the chamber of commerce expressed an interest in partnering with the board to cover 50 percent of the cost.

A representative said the chamber feels it is a worthwhile venture to bring businesses into the area, and so it was planning on committing to the project, although no formal vote has been made on the issue yet.

Town Supervisor Chris Gerwitz said he had spoken to both individuals in the communications industry and to local residents and businesses and said he had gotten mixed, although mostly positive, reviews on the prospect.

“We’d like to move forward on the project. It gives the town an opportunity to bring people in. When businesses move into this area, they’re looking for infrastructure,” he explained. “We’ll budget it for next year, so it’ll be in next year’s budget. This will make the service available to people who don’t have any. It’s not a total fix, but I look at it as a start.”

One of the objections raised was the concept of the town government’s paying a private company to provide a service to the town. Whether or not it would be an appropriate use of taxpayer money was discussed, as well as whether bringing in this company would lead to subsidizing other types of businesses to provide necessary services in the future.

Gerwitz responded to the concern by emphasizing that not only the broadband provider would be profiting from the venture. “It’s not going to be subsidizing one private company,” he said. “The company is going to be renting the towers, so they’ll get some revenue, too. It’s not going into one guy’s pocket.”

Board Member Charlie Davis said he would be in favor of the project if it would mean greater economic development in the area.

“My only concern is that the decisions we make today affect us down the road,” Davis said. “This is the start of an infrastructure in town, trying to get businesses, but it’s not going to do it alone. My only goal is to get businesses into town to help lower taxes. If this helps 10 years down the road to get businesses in here to lower taxes, I’m all for it.”

It’s all about the big picture: we can’t step over dollars to save dimes,” he added. “This is an opportunity to let business step in. There’s not a business out there that will operate without Internet. I don’t care what industry they’re in.”

Board Member John Pfeffer looked at the issue from a financial standpoint, saying he hoped the company would continue to invest in technology as capabilities continue to improve.

“This is not the sort of investment we usually look at,” he said. “This falls out of the norm of services we’re used to providing.”

Bill Heim, board member, said he trusts the chamber's judgment on the issue. "If the chamber looked at this hard and heavy, there are some good business heads there. I have no problem partnering up with them," Heim said.

The board passed a resolution to contribute \$2,500 to providing broadband service to the town of Ashford, contingent on the chamber of commerce's contribution of the other \$2,500 required to secure the service.

The board also discussed the progress of the Fox Valley restructuring project, and Gerwitz said he expects work on the project to go into next year.

"We will have to work on getting FEMA and SEMO to reimburse the next study on the work plan. It's just been a fiasco," Gerwitz said, shaking his head. "We're now into June, so most companies have already booked through the season. I just don't see it happening this year.

"We want to make sure we get a solution that lasts a long time. As the guy who represents all of you guys," he said, gesturing to assembled residents, "I want to make sure that I'm not in a situation where, if that tube washes out and carries someone away, I don't want to be the one left hanging there. It has to go into appeal again. This is year three."

Pfeffer said he had spoken to both Congressman Tom Reed's office and Senator Charles Schumer's office, both of which expressed a desire to help influence both state and federal agencies.

In other board news:

Paul Bembia, program director from West Valley Site Management, said the NY Department of Energy has established the asset revitalization task force to explore opportunities to reutilize DOE site assets for beneficial purposes, which may include clean energy development, environmental sustainability projects, open space or other uses.

"The problem right now is that the program is specifically geared toward defense sites, but West Valley is not considered a defense site," he explained. "Programs like this one are going on now that the board has been talking about getting involved in for some time. This might be our opportunity to participate. We're at a point now that we've got our next 10 years of clean-up set, so now is a good time to talk about types of programs we can get involved in. I think it's important to try to plug into an existing program and make sure all involved know the town and site are interested. We want to be as visible as we can get."

The board agreed to look into the possibility of applying for participation in the project, and Bembia said his office is working on paperwork to submit to the program as well.

A local youth will perform 40 hours of community service in answer to a charge of carrying a target shooting weapon onto a college campus, allegedly by mistake. Gerwitz said the town's insurance allows the individual to "wash trucks, clean sidewalks and things like that," as long as he does not operate town-owned equipment.

The Town of Ashford Youth Inc. will have three girls' Little League teams, but no boys' teams this year, reported Davis. The board will provide \$150 to pay three umpires for the season.

National Fuel plans to update the gas line on Route 240 through town. The company plans to replace the old line, which does require digging it up, but no impact on the road is expected.

Highway Superintendent Tim Engels said construction on the pipes on Gulf Road are on the books for later this season. Cattaraugus County has provided one pipe and promised one additional pipe, and the town has bought one pipe. A roller is on site and Engels said his crews will install the pipes when the crews get a chance to schedule it.

The next Ashford Town Board meeting will take place on July 13 at 7:30 p.m.

Jamestown Post-Journal, Saturday, June 24, 2011

West Valley Environmental Services To Cut 40 In Layoff

June 25, 2011

WEST VALLEY - About 40 employees of West Valley Environmental Services Company LLC will be laid off in coming weeks.

The company, whose staffers work at the West Valley Demonstration Project, announced in March it would reduce its work force by up to 65 employees by the end of June as work is completed to clean the site of a closed nuclear fuel reprocessing plant on which they are working. The cuts will result in 266 employees remaining.

Nuclear Fuels Services operated on the site, reprocessing 640 metric tons of spent nuclear fuel from defense reactors and commercial power reactors.

The plant closed in the 1970s, with the state and federal governments hiring WVES to help with clean-up efforts.

WVES reports 15 employees voluntarily chose to leave the company when the reductions were announced in March. Those involuntarily cut will also receive severance benefits. WVES will also offer them job transition assistance.

Further changes are anticipated as the federal Department of Energy reviews proposals for a new prime contractor to conduct the next scope of work at the project.

Selection of the contractor is anticipated in the near future.

[Nuclear Street News Team, June 29, 2011](#)

DOE Awards Decommissioning Services Contract to CH2M Hill-B&W West Valley

Nuclear Street - Nuclear Power Portal (blog)

Wed, Jun 29 2011 1:16 PM

The Department of Energy (DOE) today awarded a contract to CH2M Hill-B&W West Valley of Englewood, Colorado, for the Phase I Decommissioning and Facility Disposition activities at the West Valley Demonstration Project (WVDP). The contract is a performance-based, cost-plus-award-fee, completion type contract with cost and schedule incentives. The total contract value is \$333.4 million.

DOE has selected a phased approach for decommissioning activities at the WVDP. Phase I is the first of a two-phase process for the final decommissioning of the site in western New York in accordance with the West Valley Demonstration Project Act.

The Phase I Decommissioning Contract will be a continuation of the work currently being performed under the Interim End State contract. There will be a 60-day transition period starting July 1.

Services to be provided by CH2M Hill-B&W West Valley under the Phase I Decommissioning and Facility Disposition contract include:

- Project management and support services
- Site operations, maintenance, and utilities
- High-level Waste canister relocation
- Facility disposition
- Waste Tank Farm management
- NRC-licensed Disposal Area management
- Waste management and nuclear materials disposition
- Safeguards and security

[TriCity Herald.com](http://TriCityHerald.com), June 29, 2011

(Serving Kennewick, Pasco and Richland, Washington)

HANFORD: Acting contractor manager to lead New York project

By Herald staff

Richland Ryan Dodd, who had been named to serve as acting president and project manager of Washington Closure Hanford, will be leaving for West Valley, N.Y.

Today the Department of Energy announced that a team lead by CH2M Hill had been awarded a seven-year, \$333 million contract for decommissioning at the West Valley Demonstration Project in western New York.

Dodd has been named chief executive of CH2M Hill B&W West Valley, the winning bidder. Transition to the new contract starts Friday.

On July 8 Neil Brosee, the president of Washington Closure Hanford, plans to retire.

Washington Closure has not announced who will serve as acting president now that Dodd is leaving.

Washington Closure holds a 10-year, \$2.3 billion contract to clean up Hanford along the Columbia River.

The West Valley work includes decommissioning and disposition of the Main Plant Process Building and Vitrification Facility, relocation and storage of vitrified high level waste, management of the site's underground tank farm, and operation and maintenance of site facilities and infrastructure.

BUSINESS NEWS



Derek Gee/Buffalo News file photo

Sign warning of radioactivity in wastewater pond is posted at the West Valley Demonstration Project, with phase one of decommissioning and facility disposition work now under contract.

W. Valley phaseout pact awarded

By **MATT GLYNN**

NEWS BUSINESS REPORTER

The U.S. Department of Energy has awarded a \$333.4 million contract for the next phase of work at the West Valley Demonstration Project.

A business partnership called CH2M Hill-B&W West Valley was awarded a contract for phase one of decommissioning and facility disposition work. Phase two will complete the site's decommissioning.

The new contract will be a continuation of work currently being performed by a different primary contractor. A 60-day transition period will start Fri-

day, the Energy Department said.

The current primary contractor, West Valley Environmental Services, is reducing its work force to about 266 employees as federal stimulus funds tied to specific projects come to an end. About 65 jobs were cut recently, through a combination of voluntary separations, attrition and layoffs.

Still to be announced is the size of the work force that the new primary contractor will use at the West Valley site. A CH2M Hill spokesman could not be reached to comment Wednesday.

CH2M Hill, based in Colora-

do, is a program management, construction management and design firm. B&W, its partner on the project, is a Charlotte, N.C.-based provider of clean energy and technology services.

West Valley, just south of Springville, 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.

e-mail: mglynn@buffnews.com



News Site



Communication Solutions

News Room

Knowledge Sharing

For Journalists and Bloggers

SOURCE: CH2M HILL



June 30, 2011 10:54 ET

U.S. Department of Energy Selects CH2M HILL Team for West Valley Follow-On Contract

DENVER, CO--(Marketwire - Jun 30, 2011) - CH2M HILL (www.ch2mhill.com), a global full-service program management, consulting, design, construction, and operations firm, is pleased to announce that a CH2M HILL led team has been awarded the follow-on West Valley Demonstration Project (WVDP) contract to carry out the first phase of decommissioning of the site. The contract is set to run for approximately seven years with an anticipated annual funding profile of \$60 million. CH2M HILL B&W West Valley, LLC (CHBWV) is made up of CH2M HILL Constructors Inc., Babcock & Wilcox Technical Services Group, Inc., and Environmental Chemical Corporation. CHBWV's small business protégé is American Demolition & Nuclear Engineering, Inc.

"We are honored to be entrusted with the Phase I Decommissioning - Facility Disposition contract and are committed to delivering efficient, measurable progress while following the highest safety standards. We bring a fundamental focus on safety that entails partnering with the workforce," said Ryan Dodd, President and CEO for CHBWV. "We look forward to teaming with the workforce and becoming an active member of the community."

"We are grateful for the Department of Energy's confidence in our ability to deliver on the commitments we made in our proposal. Our entire firm is proud of the men and women who worked so hard to make this result possible," added Mark Fallon, CH2M HILL Nuclear Business Group President. CH2M HILL is also the nuclear operations contractor responsible for material handling and processing operations, spent fuel operations, facility operations and environmental cleanup and decommissioning operations at sites throughout the Nuclear Weapons Complex on behalf of the U.S. Department of Energy.

Headquartered near Denver, Colorado, employee-owned CH2M HILL is a global leader in consulting, design, design-build, operations, and program management for government, civil, industrial and energy clients. The firm's work is concentrated in the areas of water, transportation, environmental, energy, facilities and resources. With US\$6.3 billion in revenue and 23,000 employees, CH2M HILL is an industry-leading program management, construction management and design firm, as ranked by Engineering News-Record. Visit us at www.ch2mhill.com, twitter.com/ch2mhill and facebook.com/ch2mhill.



About Marketwire

Site Map

Privacy

US: 1.800.774.9473

Canada: 1.888.299.0338

UK: +44.20.7220.4500

Follow Marketwire



BusinessWire (July 6, 2011)

B&W Announces \$333 Million West Valley Demonstration Project Cleanup Contract Award

CHARLOTTE, N.C.--([BUSINESS WIRE](#))--The Babcock & Wilcox Company (B&W) (NYSE:BWC) is pleased to announce that CH2M HILL- B&W West Valley, LLC has been awarded a \$333 million contract from the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) for the decommissioning of the West Valley Demonstration Project near West Valley, New York. CH2M HILL-B&W West Valley is a company formed by Babcock & Wilcox Technical Services Group, Inc. (B&W TSG), CH2M HILL Constructors, Inc. and Environmental Chemical Corporation (ECC).

“We look forward to working with CH2M HILL and ECC and expanding our support to the DOE’s Environmental Management program.”

The contract will begin following a 60-day transition period that started July 1. B&W TSG’s expertise in nuclear safety as well as nuclear waste operations and storage management is integral in CH2M HILL-B&W West Valley’s operations.

“B&W TSG is committed to supporting the successful and safe execution of the critical decommissioning activities at West Valley,” said S. Robert Cochran, President of B&W TSG. “We look forward to working with CH2M HILL and ECC and expanding our support to the DOE’s Environmental Management program.”

The West Valley Demonstration Project contract includes decommissioning activities such as removal and disposal of contaminated waste and also maintenance of the site.

About B&W

Headquartered in Charlotte, N.C., The Babcock & Wilcox Company is a leader in clean energy technology and services, primarily for the nuclear, fossil and renewable power markets, as well as a premier advanced technology and mission critical defense contractor. B&W has locations worldwide and employs approximately 12,000 people, in

addition to approximately 10,000 joint venture employees. Learn more at www.babcock.com.

Cautionary Statement Regarding Forward Looking Statements

B&W cautions that statements in this release that are not historical fact may constitute forward-looking statements, including statements relating to the West Valley Demonstration Project contract. These forward-looking statements involve a number of risks and uncertainties, including, among other things, delays or other difficulties executing on the project. If one or more of these or other risks materialize, actual results may vary materially from those expected. For a more complete discussion of these and other risk factors, please see B&W's filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission, including its annual report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2010, as supplemented by its quarterly reports on Form 10-Q. B&W cautions not to place undue reliance on these forward-looking statements, which speak only as of the date hereof, and undertakes no obligation to update or revise any forward-looking statement, except to the extent required by applicable law.

Contacts

The Babcock & Wilcox Company

Media Contact:

Jud Simmons, Public Relations Manager, 434-522-6462

hjsimmons@babcock.com

or

Investor Contact:

Michael P. Dickerson, Vice President and Investor Relations Officer, 704-625-4944

investors@babcock.com

Business First of WNY, July 6, 2011

DOE awards \$333M West Valley contract

Business First - by Charlotte Business Journal, Charlotte Business Journal

Date: Wednesday, July 6, 2011, 12:42pm EDT

Related: Environment

The U.S. Department of Energy has awarded a \$333 million contract at the West Valley Demonstration Project to multiple companies.

Under the agreement, CH2M HILL-B&W West Valley will decommission the 15-acre area low-level radioactive waste-disposal area, located approximately 35 miles south of Buffalo.

The contract includes activities such as removal and disposal of contaminated waste and also maintenance of the site.

CH2M HILL-B&W West Valley is a company formed by Babcock & Wilcox Technical Services Group Inc., CH2M HILL Constructors Inc. of Englewood, Colo., and Canton, Ohio-based Environmental Chemical Corp



Springville Journal, Thursday, July 07, 2011

United States Department of Energy chooses a company to decommission WVDP

By: Press Release

Date: Thursday July 7, 2011

The United States Department of Energy awarded a contract to CH2M Hill-B&W West Valley of Engelwood, Colo. for the phase one decommissioning and facility disposition activities at the West Valley Demonstration Project.

The contract, awarded June 29, is a performance-based, cost-plus-award-fee, completion-type contract with cost and schedule incentives. The total value is \$333.4 million.

The DOE has selected a phased approach for decommissioning activities at the WVDP. Phase one is the first of a two-phase process for the final decommissioning of the site in Western New York in accordance with the West Valley Demonstration Project Act.

The Phase One Decommissioning Contract will be a continuation of the work currently being performed under the interim end state contract. The 60-day transition period started July 1.

Services to be provided by CH2M Hill-B&W West Valley under the Phase One Decommissioning and Facility Disposition Contract include:

- Project management and support services
- Site operations, maintenance and utilities
- High-level waste canister relocation
- Facility disposition
- Waste tank farm management
- NRC-licensed disposal area management
- Waste management and nuclear materials disposition
- Safeguards and security

For more information, visit www.energy.gov/newyork.htm.

Springville Journal, Thursday, July 7, 2011

LETTER TO THE EDITOR: Local Town Boards Need to Protect Citizens

By: Arthur Munson

The New York state and the Department of Conservation now having sold us out and the federal government dragging its feet, now is the time for our local officials to step up and protect us. Our town board must act quickly and decisively to enact local laws or rules and regulations assuring our safety from the dangers and negative environmental impacts of hydraulic fracturing. I am not even going to address the concerns of what some advocates of this natural gas extraction technique claim are debatable. Instead I will only talk about fact that both sides agree on.

- **Fact:** a six-well pad, which is normal for these sites, will require, on average, 6,300 truck loads of equipment, material and water, multiplied by two to account for each being a round trip, and you are looking at 12,600 loads.
- **Fact:** hydraulic fracturing of each well uses between 5 - 7 million gallons of water and 100,000 gallons of chemicals, which are trucked in 100,000-gallon capacity trucks. Multiply this by six to account for each well at the site.
- **Fact:** the average lifespan of a well is 30 - 50 years, during which fracturing occurs 10 times, on average once every five years.

The first thing residents unlucky enough to be subject to this process will notice is the truck traffic, which may take up to nine months and sometimes 24 hours a day, seven days a week. With it comes noise, fumes and road destruction as well as traffic delays. How are the residents compensated for this daily disruption of their life? They are not. Also understand that the community will not be dealing with a single well site, but rather a gas field. The impact of this type of industry is very significant.

The biggest concern I have is that of all this water that is injected into the earth, only 25 percent of it is recovered. This is the industry's claim, not mine. Where will all of this water come from? Where will the water and chemicals recovered be taken to be processed?

West Valley has contributed enough to this society by having forced upon it a nuclear demonstration project that, to this day and the foreseeable future, will remain a serious threat and concern to our community. I have been told that the town residents and officials could do nothing to stop it. That is not the case this time.

Our town officials should not believe that this will not happen here. Do not be lulled into complacency by statements that the potential of our area is not of interest to the energy moguls. Act to protect the citizenry like other local officials like Wales, Holland, Colden and Concord are doing. If hydraulic fracturing is so safe, then why did the state protect New York City and Syracuse from it? Are we expendable just because they think we are just a bunch of dairy farmers? Please protect us.

Arthur Munson
West Valley

Local environmental group submits comment on nuclear-fuel reprocessing facilities

Posted by [Margaret Williams](#) in [Environment](#) | 19 hours, 28 minutes ago

Subject: Comment on Docket ID NRC–2010–0267 NRC, "Draft Regulatory Basis for a Potential Rulemaking on Spent Nuclear Fuel Reprocessing Facilities"

Secretary

U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission

Washington, DC 20555-0001

Attn: Rulemakings and Adjudications Staff

fax 301-415-1101

Rulemaking.Comments@nrc.gov

Re: Comment on Docket ID NRC–2010–0267, NRC "Draft Regulatory Basis for a Potential Rulemaking on Spent Nuclear Fuel Reprocessing Facilities"

On June 10, 2011, the NRC published in the Federal Register the latest notice concerning development of regulations for future facilities engaged in the reprocessing of spent, or irradiated nuclear fuel. This comment is in response to that notice and is being submitted for the record.

There is no need to develop regulations for facilities that will not be pursued, therefore we oppose the development of regulations for reprocessing plants as we support a decision by the Commission to not proceed to rulemaking for regulations that are not needed and for which no urgency has been established. This process can thus be terminated when the staff concludes its work in September. The recommendations by the Blue Ribbon Commission are likely to affirm that reprocessing is, at best, decades away, underscoring the lack of necessity to finish promulgation of regulations which will not be used and which will soon be outdated.

Many existing regulations may not need changing in spite of efforts to include them into a single regulatory framework. Development of a single set of regulations to cover all aspects of reprocessing complex appear at this point beyond the capacity of the regulatory structure and the capability of the NRC to manage. Given the host of functions which could take place at a reprocessing complex — including spent fuel storage in dry casks and in pools, reprocessing, waste management and disposal, noble gas capture and containment, materials storage, and fuel fabrication — a single set of new regulations will be both insufficient to cover all possible functions and processes.

Since public opportunity for involvement in the licensing process will be greatly limited, we oppose consideration of a one-step licensing process for reprocessing plants as this approach not only would be applied to speculative and untested reprocessing and associated technologies.

Since reprocessing will lead to a host of hard-to-manage radioactive waste streams, including high-level waste, greater-than-Class-C waste, low-level waste, noble gases, contaminated uranium, and weapons-grade plutonium, these waste streams will prove more difficult to manage and isolate from the biosphere than the original irradiated fuel and create a greater volume with no reduction in radioactivity. We urge containment and isolation of radioactivity from the environment but reprocessing achieves the opposite result, with a higher economic cost than managing spent fuel via dry cask Hardened On-Site Storage (HOSS).

There is absolutely no way that reprocessing can be defined as "recycling." Given the waste streams generated via reprocessing which have no potential use whatsoever, it is incorrect and misleading to call it "recycling." Any draft definitions by the NRC must reflect reality and not a greenwashing term favored by some in the nuclear industry to crassly appeal to the public's positive support of genuine recycling.

Reprocessing in the United Kingdom has been an abysmal failure, and Russia continues reprocessing with no use of separated plutonium, and all European countries have now withdrawn from reprocessing in France, and France reuses little of the contaminated uranium removed via reprocessing, and the \$20 billion Japanese reprocessing plant Rokkasho has failed to start after more than two years of attempts. The disastrous U.S. experience with commercial reprocessing at West Valley, New York, from 1966-1972 was a total failure which contaminated the environment and resulted in a multi-billion dollar clean-up program that is still proceeding, revealing that the NRC must guarantee that all costs of operation, clean-up and potential accidents must be guaranteed by license holders, not by the Federal Government or taxpayers.

By writing a reprocessing rule at this time, the NRC would greatly influence national policy on plutonium in spite of its denial of "setting national policy" on management of radioactive wastes. The U.S. has, in the past, under Presidents Ford and Carter, forestalled separation of plutonium from civilian radioactive waste. Development of regulations simply in response to companies claiming that they will apply for a license for a reprocessing facility is not adequate basis to continue this effort. The NRC's writing new rules for plutonium separation in the near term would be "playing into the hand" of those who do seek to set national policy including foreign interests (AREVA and the French government of which it is an arm) who would benefit economically, while placing greater liability on the US taxpayer and electric power customers in the USA. While U.S. law and U.S. regulations clearly forbid a license for a foreign owned or controlled operation, these interests must also be prevented from dictating U.S. policy -- through an agency the publicly states that it does NOT set policy.

The product of commercial reprocessing — Plutonium fuel or Mixed Oxide (MOX) Fuel — is much more dangerous, harder to control in a reactor than uranium fuel and twice as deadly compared to uranium in case of a major reactor accident. The increased hazard is because there is both more plutonium in the reactor core, and also more of the heavier-than-plutonium elements — all of which are more toxic and more carcinogenic than what has caused enormous suffering in the areas impacted by Chernobyl, and likely Fukushima. There is no established national policy to use plutonium fuel on a wide-spread commercial basis and the Department of Energy's MOX program is facing many hurdles as no reactors have been identified to use the fuel and DOE has refused to reveal the decade-long testing program that will be needed to test MOX in reactors owned by the Tennessee Valley Authority.

The NRC must immediately undertake a full-scale analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) — a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement — from "cradle to grave" prior to embarking on a rulemaking effort. The overall consequences of reprocessing and associated facilities and processes as it relates to the entire nuclear fuel cycle must be analyzed first. Likewise, as the pursuit of reprocessing regulations could stimulate interest in a questionable technology, the NRC must take a "hard look" at the consequences of encouraging reprocessing/separation of plutonium in the U.S. The NEPA analysis should be programmatic and examine all aspects of this activity — including implications for the taxpayer, the ratepayer, waste management, the environmental impacts at every step and the international ramifications on the global fuel cycle as well. The overall issue of international proliferation of nuclear weapons materials is appropriate to include in the full public debate and should be included in this analysis.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

For conservation and sustainability,
Paul Gallimore, Director
Long Branch Environmental Education Center

Tri-City Herald

July 9, 2011

Johnson named Washington Closure Hanford president

By Annette Cary, Herald staff writer

Carol Johnson was named the president and project manager of Washington Closure Hanford on Friday, a day after she was named acting president and project manager.

She replaces Neil Brosee, who retired Friday, which was a day off for Washington Closure employees.

Late Thursday, the Department of Energy approved Washington Closure's appointment of Johnson as president, Brosee said in a message to employees Friday. Just before the close of business for the week, he had announced Johnson's temporary appointment.

"Carol's track record for project management and leadership experience is exactly what is needed to lead the river corridor project on the road to closure," Brosee said in the latest message.

Johnson came to Washington Closure in November 2010 as closure director. Washington Closure is Hanford's first closure contract, requiring most of the 220 square miles near the Columbia River to be cleaned up by Sept. 30, 2015, and plans are being made for completion of work.

Johnson, a chemist, has more than 30 years experience in the operation of high hazard nuclear facilities, nuclear infrastructure and environmental restoration at Department of Energy and United Kingdom sites.

Before coming to Hanford, Johnson was infrastructure executive director at the URS-led Sellafeld remediation project in the United Kingdom. She was responsible for critical nuclear safety infrastructure and support services, commercial fuel transport and nuclear materials security.

She managed more than 1,900 employees and an annual budget of more than \$500 million.

In 2003, she was a URS member of the Battelle Energy Alliance proposal team that won the contract to manage the Idaho National Engineering Laboratory.

She was responsible for developing long-range plans for research and development facilities based on future work and managing new infrastructure capital projects.

Johnson also has been a manager at the DOE Savannah River, S.C., site, and the Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico.

In June, Ryan Dodd, the Washington Closure deputy project manager, was named acting president of Washington Closure. But then a team led by CH2M Hill was awarded the decommissioning contract at the **West Valley Demonstration Project** in Western New York, and Dodd was named to lead the project.

Bruce Covert, waste operations director for Washington Closure, now will serve as acting deputy project manager.

Washington Closure is operating under a 10-year contract worth \$2.3 billion and employs about 900 people with its prime subcontractor, Eberline Services.

It is responsible for demolishing 486 contaminated buildings, cleaning up 396 waste sites and placing two former plutonium production reactors and one nuclear facility in interim storage.

It also manages Hanford's cleanup landfill for low-level radioactive and chemical waste, the Environmental Restoration Disposal Facility.

Washington Closure is owned by URS, Bechtel National and CH2M Hill.



News Site



Communication Solutions

News Room

Knowledge Sharing

For Journalists and Bloggers

SOURCE: CH2M HILL



June 30, 2011 10:54 ET

U.S. Department of Energy Selects CH2M HILL Team for West Valley Follow-On Contract

DENVER, CO--(Marketwire - Jun 30, 2011) - CH2M HILL (www.ch2mhill.com), a global full-service program management, consulting, design, construction, and operations firm, is pleased to announce that a CH2M HILL led team has been awarded the follow-on West Valley Demonstration Project (WVDP) contract to carry out the first phase of decommissioning of the site. The contract is set to run for approximately seven years with an anticipated annual funding profile of \$60 million. CH2M HILL B&W West Valley, LLC (CHBWV) is made up of CH2M HILL Constructors Inc., Babcock & Wilcox Technical Services Group, Inc., and Environmental Chemical Corporation. CHBWV's small business protégé is American Demolition & Nuclear Engineering, Inc.

"We are honored to be entrusted with the Phase I Decommissioning - Facility Disposition contract and are committed to delivering efficient, measurable progress while following the highest safety standards. We bring a fundamental focus on safety that entails partnering with the workforce," said Ryan Dodd, President and CEO for CHBWV. "We look forward to teaming with the workforce and becoming an active member of the community."

"We are grateful for the Department of Energy's confidence in our ability to deliver on the commitments we made in our proposal. Our entire firm is proud of the men and women who worked so hard to make this result possible," added Mark Fallon, CH2M HILL Nuclear Business Group President. CH2M HILL is also the nuclear operations contractor responsible for material handling and processing operations, spent fuel operations, facility operations and environmental cleanup and decommissioning operations at sites throughout the Nuclear Weapons Complex on behalf of the U.S. Department of Energy.

Headquartered near Denver, Colorado, employee-owned CH2M HILL is a global leader in consulting, design, design-build, operations, and program management for government, civil, industrial and energy clients. The firm's work is concentrated in the areas of water, transportation, environmental, energy, facilities and resources. With US\$6.3 billion in revenue and 23,000 employees, CH2M HILL is an industry-leading program management, construction management and design firm, as ranked by Engineering News-Record. Visit us at www.ch2mhill.com, twitter.com/ch2mhill and facebook.com/ch2mhill.



About Marketwire

Site Map

Privacy

US: 1.800.774.9473

Canada: 1.888.299.0338

UK: +44.20.7220.4500

Follow Marketwire



Business First of Western New York, July 13, 2011

Higgins, Reed push for West Valley funding

Business First - by David Bertola

Date: Wednesday, July 13, 2011, 6:49am EDT

Reps. **Brian Higgins** and **Tom Reed** and have introduced an amendment that would restore \$41 million to the non-defense environmental cleanup fund to be used for cleanup efforts at the West Valley Demonstration Site.

“Our amendment makes good sense from both a governmental and a financial standpoint,” said Reed.

The funding would be included in the fiscal year 2012 Energy and Water Appropriations Bill.

“The Department of Energy has an obligation to clean up this nuclear waste and to protect local communities and Congress has an obligation to fund the program at levels sufficient to clean these sites thoroughly and expeditiously,” said Higgins. “The consequences would be environmentally and economically dire if this radioactive waste makes its way into the Great Lakes, the largest source of freshwater in the world.”

The Reed-Higgins Amendment would take clean-up money from two administrative accounts.

“Instead of allowing the \$41 million to disappear into the D.C. bureaucracy, our amendment shifts these tax dollars directly to the local sites where it is needed most,” said Reed.

“At the same time it responsibly addresses the environmental legacy of previous generations before it becomes a bigger problem for future generations,” added Higgins.

According to a joint statement from Reed’s and Higgins’ offices, without the amendment, the appropriation will extend the first phase of the cleanup from 10 to 14 years. The statement goes on to say maintenance costs are \$30 million per year, and an additional 4 years means \$120 million in additional necessary funding, money would be saved by the passage of the Reed-Higgins Amendment.

The West Valley site was established in the 1960s in response to a federal call for efforts to commercialize the reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel from power reactors. While in operation, approximately 640 metric tons of spent nuclear fuel was reprocessed. Reprocessing operations were halted between 1972 and 1976 to support facility modifications, but operations never resumed. The U.S. Department of Energy became responsible for the site through the West Valley Demonstration Project Act of 1980, legislation requiring the Department to solidify the high-level waste and dispose of it.

Olean Times Herald, July 13, 2011

Reed reveals bill for cleanup at West Valley

U.S. Congressmen Tom Reed, R, Corning, and Brian Higgins, D-Buffalo, on Tuesday introduced an amendment to increase funding designated for clean-up efforts at the West Valley site, a move aimed at protecting the greater Western New York community and saving money over the long-term.

The Reed-Higgins Amendment would restore \$41 million to the non-defense environmental cleanup fund in H.R. 2354, the FY 2012 Energy and Water Appropriations Bill.

“Our amendment makes good sense from both a governmental and a financial stand point,” Rep. Reed said in a prepared statement. “In the midst of a debt-driven crisis, we must carefully prioritize every dollar we spend. Public safety facilities, especially those containing radioactive waste, must be at the top of the priority list.”

“The Department of Energy has an obligation to clean up this nuclear waste and to protect local communities and Congress has an obligation to fund the program at levels sufficient to clean these sites thoroughly and expeditiously,” Rep. Higgins said. A member of the Great Lakes Task Force, he added: “The consequences would be environmentally and economically dire if this radioactive waste makes its way into the Great Lakes, the largest source of fresh water in the world.”

The Reed-Higgins Amendment would take money for clean-up from two administrative accounts. “Instead of allowing this \$41 million to disappear into the D.C. bureaucracy, our amendment shifts these tax dollars directly to local sites where it is needed most,” Rep. Reed said.

“At the same time it responsibly addresses the environmental legacy of previous generations before it becomes a bigger problem for future generations,” Rep. Higgins added.

Without the amendment, the appropriation will extend the first phase of the cleanup from 10 to 14 years. With maintenance costs at \$30 million per year, an additional four years means \$120 million in additional necessary funding. That money would be saved by the passage of the Reed-Higgins Amendment, the congressmen said.

The West Valley site was established in the 1960s in response to a federal call for efforts to commercialize the reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel from power reactors. While the site was in operation, approximately 640 metric tons of spent nuclear fuel was reprocessed.

Reprocessing operations were halted between 1972 and 1976 to support facility modifications, but operations never resumed.

The U.S. Department of Energy became responsible for the site through the West Valley Demonstration Project Act of 1980, legislation requiring the department to solidify the high-level waste and dispose of it.

The Alamogordo Daily News, July 18, 2011

By Milan Simonich Santa Fe Bureau

WIPP jobs in danger without expanded mission, congressman says

SANTA FE - About 500 well-paying jobs in the Carlsbad area are in jeopardy unless the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant can expand its mission, an aide to U.S. Rep. Steve Pearce said Monday.

Todd Willens, Pearce's chief of staff, outlined a bill that the congressman has introduced to keep shipments of transuranic waste rolling to WIPP. Willens appeared before the state Legislature's committee on radioactive and hazardous materials.

Under federal law, WIPP can only accept radioactive waste from government sites that had a defense mission. These include operations in eight states, including Los Alamos in New Mexico, Rocky Flats in Colorado and the Savannah River site in South Carolina.

WIPP receives 26 shipments a week now, but the number will decline to 14 weekly by 2020, Willens said.

Original projections by the U.S. Department of Energy were that WIPP's life span for receiving waste from defense-related sites would end in 2037. But WIPP is running out of waste to bury, leaving it vulnerable to job losses.

To keep the plant operating at capacity - and to clean up transuranic waste across America - Pearce proposes to expand WIPP's mission without changing the type of waste it handles.

His bill would enable the New Mexico repository to accept government-owned transuranic waste not related to defense missions.

One example of this is the West Valley site south of Buffalo, N.Y. It was a commercial site used as a nuclear fuel reprocessing center.

Under Pearce's bill, this radioactive waste from Western New York could be trucked to WIPP and deposited in salt beds 2,150 below the earth's surface.

These sorts of essential projects would keep WIPP's 200 miners and 300 technically skilled employees on the job, Willens said.

State Rep. Brian Egolf, D-Santa Fe, said many people contend that government does not - and should not - create jobs. He asked Willens if WIPP in fact was a government employment project that would run up costs at the federal level.

Willens said government had created a problem with transuranic waste and WIPP was a solution.

Willens also said that taxpayers bear the cost of maintaining waste at a dozen sites now. Those expenses would be negated by sending the waste to WIPP for safe disposal, he said.

WIPP now receives and buries 8,000 cubic meters of transuranic waste annually. It has ample capacity to handle more if it can expand its mission, Willens said.

He said Pearce's bill is sharply focused and has a good chance at receiving approval in Congress. Pearce's proposal is HR 2367.

Santa Fe Bureau Chief Milan Simonich can be reached at simonich@tnmnp.com or 505-820-6898. His blog is at nmcapitolreport.com.

Reed's West Valley amendment OK'd

Funding will be restored for cleaning up nuclear fuel reprocessing site

WASHINGTON — By a vote of 261-162, the House of Representatives on Thursday approved an amendment to restore funding for cleanup efforts at the West Valley Demonstration Project site in Cattaraugus County, N.Y.

The amendment was originally introduced by New York's Rep. Tom Reed, R-Corning and Rep. Brian Higgins, D-
Buffalo.

Rep. Reed said the move actually saves \$120 million which would have resulted from cleanup delays.

"The successful adoption of our amendment is a win

for taxpayers and a win for Western New York," Rep. Reed said. "Tax dollars are saved and public safety is enhanced by the cleanup of the West Valley Demonstration Project.

"I thank our many colleagues on both sides of the aisle who recognized the importance and value of our effort."

"Thanks to the support of our colleagues in the House, approval of this common sense measure means West Valley cleanup continues on a responsible schedule protecting the local environment and the taxpayers who would have

borne the cost of excessive delays," Rep. Higgins said.

"I am pleased to join my colleague Congressman Reed on this issue — together, standing up for Western New York, we have delivered a great victory for this community," he added.

The amendment to H.R. 2354, the FY 2012 Energy and Water Appropriations Bill offered by the Western New York members, transfers \$41 million in funds from administrative accounts to the nondefense environmental cleanup fund, which supports West Valley remediation.

The bipartisan effort was announced earlier this week by Rep. Reed and Rep. Higgins.

The West Valley site was established in the 1960s in response to a federal call for efforts to commercialize the reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel from power reactors. While the site was in operation, approximately 640 metric tons of spent nuclear fuel was reprocessed.

Reprocessing operations were halted between 1972 and 1976 to support facility modifications, but operations never resumed. The U.S. Department of Energy became responsible for the site through the West Valley Demonstration Project Act of 1980, legislation requiring the department to solidify the high-level waste and dispose of it properly.



Rep. Tom Reed

Springville Journal, Thursday, July 21, 2011

Fox Valley work and hydrofracking discussed by Ashford Town Board

By Lizz Schumer
JOURNAL STAFF REPORTER

The Ashford Town Board heard an update on the Fox Valley Road project at its regular meeting on July 13. Mark Burr, director of the Engineering Division and Highway Division of Cattaraugus County, and Roy Pedersen, the representative from E&M Engineers and Surveyors, P.C., attended to present to the board the progress of the project and recommendations for how to move forward.

“We lost this construction season, which was very disappointing for me too,” Pedersen said. “Mark [Burr] and Chris [Gerwitz] met with FEMA [Federal Emergency Management Agency] and SEMO [State Emergency Management Office] and they said we’ve got to bid the pipe just like the one that washed out. Our thought is that we’ll do that, comply with their regulations and at the same time, propose an alternate. We’re going to compare the numbers and keep our fingers crossed that we can build the concrete structure.”

He explained that E&M Engineering had generated a fixed quote, which would remain the same even if the bid took less time than anticipated, but before the board and company expanded on their preliminary design, he advised the board to wait to see whether the FEMA and the SEMO would approve the new plan before moving any further forward.

When Board Member John Pfeffer asked why the board was proposing re-bidding the concrete structure, Town Supervisor Chris Gerwitz explained that it was proposing both plans to see which came out lower. He had spoken to SEMO representatives, who communicated that as long as the proposal stayed within the original work scope, it was likely to be approved.

Burr explained the process, confirming that the plan must be consistent with the original in order to be eligible for reimbursement. “The original quote was significantly underestimated due to the damage to the original structure, in our opinion,” he said, speaking on behalf of Cattaraugus County. “This is the crux of what got us into trouble in the first place: when it comes to flood damage, FEMA is obligated to put the structure back to pre-flood conditions. There’s a special process to go through to get something different, such as concrete versus steel.”

“We at the county have made decisions on similar projects, we’ve got them completed, but are still waiting for approval. The only way to get this through is to go back to square one on the original plan and go from there,” Burr added. “Part of our frustration is that we send it back to Albany and it goes into this black hole of bureaucracy. The sooner we can get it into the pipeline, the better.”

Burr went on to say that Cattaraugus County wants to get the engineering work finished as soon as possible in order to get the order to FEMA and SEMO for approval in time to bid out the project at the beginning of 2012. “The more time we give it, the more time we have at the end to maximize our reimbursement. We have the whole bureaucracy part in there to contend with,” he said.

Both Burr and Pedersen assured the board the cost for re-evaluating the project was lower than the original, and that they were sensitive to the town’s needs and the length of the project. Because E&M Engineers had already evaluated the Fox Valley project, Burr advised the board that bringing in an additional firm would have been neither timely nor cost-effective and that as far as he was concerned, the board was doing its due diligence to handle the project as best it could.

The board voted to allow the consulting to move forward, in the interest of re-submitting to FEMA and SEMO for consideration as soon as possible.

Springville Journal, Thursday, July 21, 2011

Paul Bembia of the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority spoke to the board about activities at the West Valley Demonstration Project. He announced that the U.S. Energy Department has chosen CH2M Hill-B&W West Valley of Engelwood, Colo. to perform phase one decommissioning and facility disposition activities on site. The contract, which is valued at \$333.4 million, includes cost and schedule incentives, site operations, facility disposition, waste tank and NRC-licensed disposal area management. It will be a continuation of the work currently being performed under the interim end state contract with a 60-day transition period that began on July 1.

The Demonstration Project has sent a proposal to the Department of Energy to participate in the established asset revitalization task force.

"Since we're not technically considered a defense site, we're working to meet their requirements for participation," Bembia explained.

"I've been saying all along we need to get in their faces, need to get their attention," Pfeffer said. "One letter [to Congress] a year doesn't do anything. In this case, there's a program out there; we know the DOE is looking ahead. I think it's worthwhile to knock on some doors and try to get in there."

"The first step is going to be to get them to put us in this program. What we need to do as a town board is to get into Congressional ears and say hey, we need to do this. We've got to become part of this asset revitalization initiative. That's step one," said Board Member Charlie Davis.

Bembia also reported on a trip he, Gerwitz and Davis took to the Miamisburg Mound Plant site in Ohio, the site of a former nuclear and metal fabrication plant through the 1970s. This has since been cleaned up and is now owned by the city of Miamisburg, Ohio, near Dayton and is being advertised for industrial light use and office space. The three also visited the Fernald site, also in Ohio, which is currently being used as a nature preserve and is still owned by the DOE.

"We got to see both sides of the spectrum, which was really interesting," said Bembia.

Finally, he addressed the issue of the Yukka Mountain decommissioning and explained that the facility is no longer accepting high-level waste, which has required the U.S. government to find somewhere else to put it.

"The issue became more important when people saw what happened in Japan with the storage pools there. I haven't heard any community interest yet in that point, but we're looking to a phase three decision between now and 2020," he said.

Davis, with his eye to the finances of the issue, said, "They've got to find someplace to put this stuff. We, as a board, need to be a mouthpiece for the town. Wherever they decide the storage units are going to be, a lot of money is going to come with it [*sic*]."

The board resolved to keep an eye on the issue, although they were not pursuing the idea at this time.

Gerwitz also reported back from a meeting he recently attended regarding hydrofracking in Bradford County.

"There's an area in Bradford County where there are over 200 sites hydrofracked and their economy's doing really well: businesses, restaurants, housing is all booming," Gerwitz said. "Problem is, the people who live there, their kids can't get apartments because prices are suddenly skyrocketing. We discussed the legal end of the issue, roads, houses, infrastructure as well as contamination problems with wells. There are goods and bads. The best thing to do is get as educated as you can."

Pfeffer referenced a set of laws he had sent to board members previously, stressing the importance of reading up on the facts and keeping in mind the response of surrounding towns. "In my opinion, the Wales law [on hydrofracking] is one we should model. Honestly, I don't think we need fracking in the town of Ashford," he said. "We've injected enough crap into the ground in the town of Ashford. I don't think we need any more."

Gerwitz agreed that, at this point, the best thing for the town board to do would be to focus on educating themselves on the issue before acting on it.

"We have some of the best water in the state here. It would be a very sad thing to compromise that," he said. "For myself, I'd like to learn as much as I can myself before we do anything."

When asked whether hydrofracking in Ashford would affect the West Valley Demonstration Project, Bembia noted that the site had not been approached, but that NYSERDA would examine it and make their own determination as to whether or not it would be a hazard if it were presented.

Springville Journal, Thursday, July 21, 2011

In other news:

- Highway Supervisor Tim Engels reported that an accident had taken place on Thomas Corners Road, despite posted “bump” signs to alert motorists to uneven pavement in that area.

“They were in a jeep-type vehicle, hit the bump and rolled it up the hill. There were no major injuries,” said Engels. “We had signs up and they were from the area, so they knew the bump was there. On Tuesday [July 12], we went in and smoothed the bump out, which we had been planning on doing anyway. We just don’t want to see a reoccurrence.”

Since the area was clearly marked and smoothing the road had been in Engels’ schedule prior to the crash, Gerwitz did not foresee any liability for the town.

- Engels requested authorization of a bid for a new excavator machine, which was approved.

- The West Valley Demonstration Project submitted a proposal to the Army Corps for erosion control work, which Bembia said should be completed this season.

- The Department of Health and Conservation inspected the WVDP disposal site, and said the location is in full compliance with New York state regulations.

The next board meeting will take place on August 10 at 7:30 p.m.

West Valley Cleanup Has Money Restored

By a vote of 261-162, the House of Representatives recently approved an amendment introduced by U.S. Reps Tom Reed, D-Buffalo, and Brian Higgins, D-South Buffalo, restoring funding for clean-up efforts at the West Valley Demonstration Site, a move that saves \$120 million which would have resulted from clean-up delays.

"Thanks to the support of our colleagues in the House, approval of this common sense measure means West Valley Clean-up continues on a responsible schedule protecting the local environment and the taxpayers who would have borne the cost of excessive delays," Higgins said. "I am pleased to join my colleague Congressman Reed on this issue - together, standing up for Western New York, we have delivered a great victory for this community."

The amendment to House Resolution 2354, the fiscal year 2012 Energy and Water Appropriations Bill offered by the Western New York members transfers \$41 million in money from administrative accounts to the non-defense environmental cleanup fund, which supports West Valley remediation.

The West Valley site was established in the 1960s in response to a federal call for efforts to commercialize the reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel from power reactors. While the site was in operation, 640 metric tons of spent nuclear fuel was reprocessed.

Reprocessing operations were halted between 1972 and 1976 to support facility modifications, but operations never resumed. The U.S. Department of Energy became responsible for the site through the West Valley Demonstration Project Act of 1980, legislation requiring the department to solidify the high-level waste and dispose of it.