

West Valley Site Celebrates DOE's First-Ever Demolition of Vitrification Facility

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WEST VALLEY, N.Y. – At top, *West Valley Demonstration Project (WVDP) Director Bryan Bower addresses the audience at a recent celebration marking the start of the Vitrification Facility demolition. At center, the celebration, from left, Willis Bixby, past WVDP project director; Bill King, former Town of Ashford supervisor; Bryan Bower, current WVDP project director; and Stacy Charboneau, EM Associate Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Field Operations. At bottom, with demolition underway, heavy equipment prepares to take another bite out of the Vitrification Facility.*

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Demo starts at WVDP thanks to workers



09-30-2017 - ASHFORD—The West Valley Demonstration Project is one step closer to completing its mission, with the beginning of demolition of its Vitrification Facility. Officially started on Sept. 11, the demolition is expected to take about eight months. A commemorative event marked the beginning of the demolition of the first Vitrification Facility in the United States.

"We're here to celebrate the success of the project," Jeff Bradford, president and general manager of CHBWV, said. "This is the glamour moment ... but it's been years of hard work, planning and guys doing skilled, measured ... work on the inside."

The work is about 20 percent done, and crews are working from both the back and front of the building to move along the project. The second half of the building will begin its demolition in 2018. Most who spoke at the event called the beginning of the demolition an example of hard work and partnerships.

"Thanks to the dedicated workforce," New York State Energy Research and Development Authority WVDP project manager Brad Frank said. "It's been challenging and historic ... this is a great example of teamwork."

Stacy Charboneau, associate principal deputy assistant secretary, field operations for the U.S. Department of Energy Office of Environmental Management, said the demolition was good for environmental restoration and said she appreciated the work that went on behind the scenes.

"You're going to start seeing the skyline change ... but you won't see the years of hard work that went into making the [vitrification] facility ready for demolition," Charboneau said. "[Workers] are owed a debt of gratitude for doing the work and doing it safely."

She then presented project director Bryan Bower and International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers union president Rob Dallas the Legacy of Stars award for their work. The award signifies a safe workplace; in 2016 the WVDP reached 2 million safe work hours.

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"The workers do the work ... to ensure they come home safe and keep the community safe," Charboneau said. "They can recertify at star value ... this is four years running."

Jennifer Henry, Integrated Safety Management program coordinator said the award signifies the work done to keep everyone, both workers and the Ashford community, safe. Henry is responsible for the continuing training at the project site, which helps keep the workers safe.

"The workers meet and talk about safety ... there's multiple discussions," she said. "That comes up the ladder to management, where we work to implement the safety ... then back down."

She added there is a 100 percent accountability from all the workers, between training and mentoring moments. Earning the Legacy Award for the fourth year shows their commitment to safety is working.

"It shows we're doing an excellent job maintaining safety, and maintaining a safe working environment," Henry said.



To prepare for demolition, process equipment was removed and interior surfaces were decontaminated and sealed. Working from the outside, the demolition will use heavy equipment to size-reduce the structure in sections. Waste will be managed and staged at the site, and disposed offsite at a federal waste disposal facility.

"Despite the small quantity of remaining radioactivity, all activity will be conducted in accordance with state, federal and regulatory requirements," reads a press release. "Controls will be in place during demolition to prevent the spread of contamination."

WVDP vitrification facility facts:

Constructed and operated in the 1980s as a non-radioactive testing area

It's a 10,700 square foot reinforced concrete structure, 133 feet long by 102 feet wide.

One of two facilities in the United States.

It achieved the highest operational availability of any vitrification in the world

First facility of its kind in the U.S. to complete its mission

Approximately 15,000 cubic feet of equipment and materials were removed from the facility in preparation of demolition, including three large contained components.

Pfeffer, Heim rerunning for Ashford board

ASHFORD – The Town of Ashford will have two councilman seats up for election this year on Nov. 7 with both John Pfeffer and William Heim running for their seats unopposed.

John Pfeffer

After serving on the Ashford Town board for three terms, John Pfeffer will be running unopposed for a seat on the board for his fourth term. Along with serving on the town board, Pfeffer has been a member of the **West Valley Citizens Task** force for 20 years, is a fireman and EMT for the West Valley Volunteer Hose Company and has served as president of the fire company for the past four years.

While Ashford might be a smaller town, Pfeffer said there are many challenges involved working in the town and keeping in contact with their representatives to continue in the process to better the town. But Pfeffer said he would be happy to continue this job as councilman and keep working to grow the town.

“I’m running for re-election primarily because I love the job,” Pfeffer said. “One might think there is not much to do in a little town like Ashford, but we have some fairly large challenges. Many of these challenges involve working with state and federal elected and appointed officials.

“In the past few years I have made it a priority to interact much more frequently with our leaders in Albany and Washington than has ever been done before, and the results of those interactions are starting to become evident,” he said.

Pfeffer said he is proud of the many accomplishments the Ashford Town Board has made over the past few years including the installation of a brand new municipal water system in West Valley, which will provide clean drinking water to over 200 homes and provides fire protection for the hamlet, and helping secure a grant for the reconstruction of the West Valley Hotel.

“To see one of our former ‘crown jewels’ brought back to life and bring people to our town will be a great thing for all,” Pfeffer said.

He would like to continue the ongoing projects the town board has been working on including getting broadband internet in the town, clean energy initiatives with the possibility of a solar farm on the **Western New York Nuclear Service Center** site and the formation of the Ashford Advocacy Coalition, which will work to seek out a fair share of the burden placed on the town for have to host a federal and state nuclear facility for 50 years without adequate financial compensation.

Along with the ongoing projects, Pfeffer added he would like to work on providing some form of senior transportation to and from the town and find a way to help their community based organizations continue to prosper in light of a declining population.

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“We have an aging population and an aging infrastructure. In order to improve these, we need to make smart investments in both. I’m eager to work with our community to find the answer,” Pfeffer said. “The most important positive I see is how our community always steps up and pitches in wherever and however needed. Elected officials don’t make a community successful, the people in it do. We are only here to facilitate what the community needs and wants.”

William Heim

After serving on the board for four years and living in Ashford for 40 years, William Heim will be running for his councilman seat unopposed.

Throughout his time working on the town board, Heim said he is proud of the other town board members and the many residents who have worked hard to grow and better the town, especially with the installation of the municipal water district in West Valley.

“I think we got some really good people working on the town board, I think we got some amazing people working to do things to benefit the town and I praise the town people who wanted to have the water system ... my hat is off to the people who pushed for that,” Heim said.

While continuing with the town board projects, Heim said two of his main goals for the town is to bring in more businesses to Ashford and to find a way to lower taxes for residents, which he believes annexing the West Valley Central School is one way to do that.

“I would like to try and get some commerce into town and try to lower taxes,” Heim said. “With our small town, taxes are killing us and we are not going to get any commerce in here and people are not going to do anything because they can’t afford the taxes.”