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2nd Annual National Cleanup Workshop Focuses on Successes, Future Priorities, and Transition

The 2016 National Cleanup Workshop was a resounding success. The event, hosted by ECA with the support of the Department of Energy (DOE) and the Energy Facility Contractors Group (EFCOG), took place in Alexandria, Virginia from September 14-15.

Over the two-day conference, nearly 900 people attended or watched online, more than double last year's attendance. Workshop attendees heard from industry executives, elected officials, DOE senior leadership and site officials, and other stakeholders on the progress and future direction of the Office of Environmental Management's (EM) cleanup efforts across the DOE complex.

Notable attendees and presenters included Kevin Knobloch, DOE Chief of Staff, David Klaus, Deputy Under Secretary for Management and Performance, Dr. Monica Regalbuto, Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management, John Kotek, Acting Assistant Secretary for Nuclear Energy, Mark Whitney, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Representative Mike Simpson (R-ID), Chairman of the House Energy and Water Development Appropriations Subcommittee, Representative Chuck Fleischmann (R-TN), Chairman of the House Nuclear Cleanup Caucus, and Billy Morrison, EFCOG Chairman.

EM Highlights “Science of Safety” Initiative

Assistant Secretary Monica Regalbuto spoke the first morning about her priorities for the DOE cleanup program. She took the opportunity to emphasize EM's new “Science of Safety” initiative, a program that employs advanced robotics to improve working conditions and increase worker efficiency at cleanup sites across the nation. Regalbuto characterized this initiative as “a way to empower workers in the field with the necessary tools to better accomplish our cleanup mission.”

Other DOE leaders echoed these points, including keynote speaker Kevin Knobloch and Mark Whitney. Whitney noted that this EM initiative was matter of “leveraging existing engineering and advanced robotic competencies to increase safety” at cleanup sites.

Unanimous Call for Improved Communication

Throughout the two-day Workshop, speakers iterated the importance of increased and sustained communication between all affected communities and offices. Representatives Mike Simpson and Chuck both encouraged contractors and citizen groups to reach out to their Members of Congress—Simpson noting that communication between representatives and their constituents is what helps drive priorities and generate the political will necessary to impact the appropriations process.

ECA members Councilmember Kristen Henderson of Los Alamos, NM, and Mayor Rebecca Casper of Idaho Falls, ID, also highlighted the importance of communication between DOE sites and their host communities. Henderson spoke of the importance of municipalities remaining informed of the decision-making processes at cleanup sites, noting that the municipalities are responsible for providing employee housing and utilities for



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DOE sites. Mayor Casper spoke about the benefits of increased communication between the different DOE offices. Many of the national labs have more than one mission, e.g., cleanup, nuclear energy research, science and technology research, but some of the larger, overarching priorities are the same. Casper said, “I believe in synergy. Everyone benefits when we work toward the same goals.”

Frank Marcinowski, EM’s Associate Principal Deputy Secretary for Regulatory and Policy Affairs, mentioned the importance of building and maintaining open lines of communication between regulatory bodies and state, local, and tribal leaders to enable cleanup efforts to progress.

Developing a Long-Term Approach to Cleanup Projects

Many speakers at the Workshop expressed the need for both the DOE and contractors to appreciate the long-term nature of cleanup work. Typically, DOE-contracts are awarded on a 5-year timescale, but many DOE contractors feel that this is too short. Longer timescales allow for trust to build between DOE offices and companies managing the different sites; increased trust can lead to greater transparency in operation and a stronger safety culture.

Longer timescales also increase employee retention and job security. Mayor Casper and Councilwoman Henderson noted that this is good for individuals, contractors, and ECA communities. When cities know that a set number of jobs will exist at a DOE site for a long period of time, they can make strategic planning decisions to accommodate the influx of workers.

Building the Next-Generation EM Workforce

In his keynote address the first day, David Klaus, Deputy Under Secretary for Management and Performance, discussed the need for workforce development and EM talent acquisition. This theme was carried through the conference, culminating with the final panel of the Workshop. This panel, moderated by Carol Berrigan of NEI, discussed strategies for fortifying the EM talent pipeline and attracting the millennial generation to the field. ECA member Ron Woody of Roane County, TN, highlighted the important role that scholarships and internships have in giving young students experience in the field.

Improving Operations and Project Management

As cleanup efforts continue to move forward across the DOE complex, changes to current procedures could result in greater levels of communication between DOE headquarters and local communities. As ECA member and Savannah River Site Community Reuse Organization Executive Director Rick McLeod pointed out, current DOE practice allows for a day where communities can offer feedback to the various conditions of a contract. However, often communities first need briefing on what different portions of the contract mean, and how the contract will affect them. Having a meeting with DOE to go over the conditions of the contract before the community formally provides DOE with its feedback could help foster greater awareness for the implications, consequences, and goals of a cleanup project.

Photos, videos, and presentation files from this year’s Workshop can be found [here](#).



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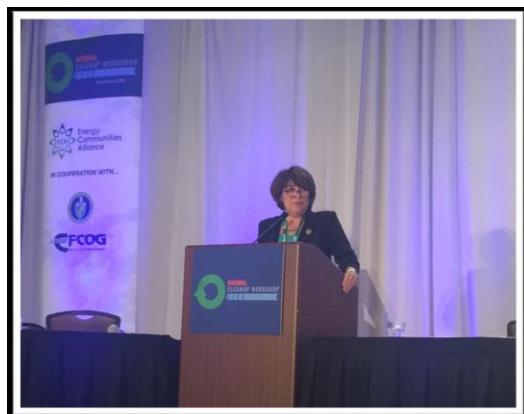
Over the two-day conference, nearly 600 people attended in-person, and almost 300 online.



Seth Kirshenberg, Executive Director of Energy Communities Alliance; John Kotek, Acting Assistant Secretary, Office of Nuclear Energy; Mayor Bob Thompson, City of Richland, WA, ECA Past Chair



From left to right: Oak Ridge Office of Environmental Management Site Manager Sue Cange; EM Associate Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Field Operations Stacy Charbonneau; West Valley Demonstration Project Director Bryan Bower; and CH2M HILL BWXT West Valley President and General Manager Jeff Bradford.



Mayor Rebecca Casper, Idaho Falls, ID



From left to right: Jack Cnig, DOE Manager of the Savannah River Site; Tom Foster, President and Project Manager, Savannah River Remediation; Rick McLeod, Executive Director, Savannah River Site Community Reuse Organization



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Los Alamos EM Contract Includes New Community Commitment Language

The Office of Environmental Management (EM) has updated its Community Commitment language to ensure its contractors follow through on engagement with local governments. This new language means that if contractors want to receive their full fee, they will have to comply with the community commitment language in their proposals.

Last December, ECA released its **Statement of Principles on DOE-EM Acquisition Reform** urging DOE to do more to ensure contractors engage community partners directly affected by cleanup operations. “There should be a reaffirmation of the Community Commitment clause and contracts should be incentivized to include community engagement requirements to ensure the letter and intent of the clause is honored in such contracting activities as workforce planning, labor agreements, and subcontracting practices to facilitate and expedite communities’ transitions to sustainable, post cleanup economies,” the third principle states.

In the Los Alamos Legacy Cleanup request for proposals (RFP) released this month, DOE includes new language (italicized below) in the draft **Performance Evaluation and Measurement Plan**:

“The Contractor will be assessed on their performance to the Regional Purchasing Program requirements and the Small Business Subcontracting Plan. ***The Contractor will be assessed on their performance in interfacing with the community and other stakeholders in the execution of the EM mission work scope, including but not limited to follow through on community commitments.***”

DOE’s signaling that community support and engagement will be assessed in this \$1.7 billion, ten-year contract is a major win for DOE’s local government partners and community stakeholders across the country. In another part of the RFP, DOE recognized “that giving back to the community is a worthwhile business practice.” These are provisions ECA wants to see included in subsequent acquisitions that may be rewarded in coming years, from **West Valley, NY**, to Piketon, OH and Paducah, KY, to Hanford, WA.

“The involvement and the role of the local communities is invaluable to the Department and is critical to our success,” said Ralph Holland, EM Deputy Assistant Secretary for Acquisition and Project Management and Director of the EM Consolidated Business Center, during this month’s National Cleanup Workshop.

“We are very grateful to hear that EM has heard our communities’ call for building a stronger community relationship through community commitment in the 10 years of EM work in our communities, and we look forward to working together with the next contractor to build the best future we can through this incredible opportunity,” Andrea Romero, Executive Director of the Regional Coalition of LANL Communities, said of the new language.