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March 26, 2016

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The nation's only vitrification facility is celebrating more than two decades of converting radioactive waste stored at Savannah River Site into glass.

A crane operator controls equipment with a remote control inside the Defense Waste Processing Facility at the Savannah River Site.

A crane operator controls equipment with a remote control inside the Defense Waste Processing Facility at the Savannah River Site.

The Defense Waste Processing Facility poured its first glass canister April 29, 1996, a little more than a month after operations began. The facility poured its 4,000th canister of glassified waste on New Year's Eve.

"The longevity and success of DWPF are attributes of the safe operations performed by our workers over the last two decades," said Mark Schmitz, acting SRR president and project manager. "DWPF is a robust, safe, efficient, and reliable facility. We're looking forward to seeing continued success over the next 20 years."

According to Savannah River Remediation, a contractor at the South Carolina site, the vitrification process uses "extremely high temperatures to turn the sludge waste, combined with frit (a sand-like material), into a glass form."

Also known as glassification, the process immobilizes the radioactivity, making it more suitable for safe, long-term disposal in canisters. The canisters will be stored on-site until a federal repository is identified.

"DWPF is important to the Department of Energy; it's important to the surrounding communities; and it's important to the state of South Carolina," said Jack Craig, SRS manager. "Stabilizing the waste by making it into glass means the risk is significantly reduced for the people, the community and the environment."

Energy Summit
Idaho Falls, ID
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September 2016

14-15

DOE National Cleanup
Workshop
Hilton Alexandria Mark
Center
Alexandria, VA
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Our Voice: DOE deadlines settled, but budget fight continues

Tri-City Herald

March 25, 2016

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When it comes to disputes involving Hanford cleanup, at least one has been resolved.

U.S. Judge Rosanna Malouf Peterson did an admirable job recently when she managed a compromise between the Department of Energy and the state of Washington.

She was tasked with finding her way through the maze of technical, environmental and legal issues surrounding DOE's inability to keep to cleanup deadlines that were legally set by a court-enforced consent decree. Washington Gov. Jay Inslee and Washington Attorney General Bob Ferguson, exasperated by DOE's excuses and requests for extensions, asked the court to intervene when the state and federal government could not agree on new deadlines.

Malouf Peterson established new Hanford targets, including the requirement that the Hanford vitrification plant be fully operational in 2036. This adds 14 years to the latest deadline set under the revised consent decree. Construction of the plant that will turn nuclear waste into a stable glass form began in 2002, but DOE officials said they ran into technical and financial setbacks along the way and could not keep the project on track.

At one point, DOE proposed a system of allowing near-automatic extensions so that new deadlines could be set if technical issues came up that caused delays.

Fortunately, the judge saw rthrough that suggestion.

She said providing a mechanism for automatic extensions would "create a vacuum in which DOE would be free to proceed at its own rate without safeguards for Washington or enforcement by the court."

The whole point of setting deadlines is to make sure the work gets done. Malouf Peterson's ruling appears to give DOE more time to accomplish its mission while still providing a way to hold the agency accountable. It's a good call.

In her ruling, Malouf Peterson also set new deadlines for emptying the next group of leak-prone single shell tanks at Hanford and strengthens DOE's reporting requirements. She said the public and the environment "only can lose as more time passes without an operational solution to the radioactive waste problems at the Hanford site."

While a deadline of 2036 seems outrageously far ahead, at least we have a long-range goal and short-range plans to get there. Now we need the money to make it happen.

Antagonism between the state and DOE makes it harder for our federal lawmakers to justify to others in Washington, D.C., that Hanford cleanup requires consistent funding. Both the governor and the attorney general have said they would like to see more collaboration with DOE, which would help.

The Obama administration is proposing a \$191 million reduction for the fiscal 2017 budget for the DOE Hanford Richland Operations Office. Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., called the budget "inadequate" and "short-sighted" and Sen. Maria Cantwell, D-Wash., Rep. Dan Newhouse, R-Wash., and Gov. Inslee echoed her concern.

While the president's budget includes more money for the Office of River Protection — responsible for the 56 million gallons of radioactive waste in underground tanks and the construction of the vitrification plant — cutting deep into the rest of Hanford cleanup funds would stall progress for other Hanford projects managed by Richland Operations.

The dispute over Hanford deadlines is settled, but the fight for cleanup money continues. Our congressional delegation must keep up the pressure, even if it has to be for another 20 years.

Council questions EM chief on landfill

Oak Ridger

March 24, 2016

[LINK](#)

Sue Cange, manager of the U.S. Department of Energy- Oak Ridge Office of Environmental Management, gave a briefing to the City Council Tuesday during a work session on the four proposed sites for a second hazardous waste landfill within the city limits.

Cange came at Council's request. City Manager Mark Watson said the city staff sent a letter to DOE requesting responses to a number of questions the Council had to a 20 page report published by Cange's office.

This letter was also issued in response to resolutions approved by Council and the Anderson County Commission. In November 2015, The Oak Ridger reported that both government bodies voted to oppose the landfill until DOE answered their questions and concerns. The votes included twin resolutions to send letters to DOE demanding answers.

The first concern listed in the letter is the proximity of one site to residential areas on Tuskegee Drive. According to the letter, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) recommends such a landfill be located no closer than two kilometers from a residence. Residences on Tuskegee Drive are reportedly only 1.3 kilometers away from the proposed landfill site.

The letter said the proposed site is physically and geologically "complex." It also said that it doesn't meet Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) guidelines that "require separation from groundwater sources."

See LANDFILL, Page 4A

The City Council's full list of concerns about the proposed landfill, as listed in the letter, can be found at

<http://oakridgetn.gov/images/uploads/documents/agendas/2015Agenda/20151116Additions.pdf>.

In her briefing Tuesday night, Cange talked about the three visions the DOE has for the cleanup of the former K-25 Gaseous Diffusion site, now called the East Tennessee Technology Park; the Y-12 plant; and the Oak Ridge National Laboratory. These visions are known as a "Vision 2016," "Vision 2020" and "Vision 2024."

Vision 2016 includes completing the demolition of the gaseous diffusion plant building at ETTP. Vision 2020 involves cleaning up and reindustrializing the remaining portion of ETTP. Vision 2024 includes expanding the cleanup work at Y-12 by addressing mercury contamination.

“We anticipate meeting Vision 2020 provided we receive the appropriations needed,” Cange said.

Referring to moving on to Vision 2024, Cange said it was “important not to have an interruption in cleanup.” By the end of Vision 2020, it’s expected the current DOE landfill will be full and a new one will be needed to contain the waste from the Y-12 and ORNL cleanup efforts. The research in design and location of the proposed new landfill are being worked on by what Cange called the “parties included” in the planning.

Mayor Warren Gooch interrupted Cange’s presentation to point out that those parties are the DOE, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, TDEC and “not the city of Oak Ridge.”

“I would ask you to be specific in regards to who the parties are and what the timelines are,” Gooch told Cange.

The Office of Environmental Management (OEM) manager continued, saying current plans are for the proposal to build the new landfill to be ready for public comment by this fall. There will be a 45-day public comment period. She said she plans to continue to share information about the project leading up to that public comment period.

There are four proposed sites. The first is the East Bear Creek Valley site, which is outside the Y-12 boundary. This site, according to Cange’s presentation, is just over one mile from the Scarboro Community. According to Nuclear Regulatory Commission regulations, such a site is to be located at least “two kilometers from the residential property limits of the nearest existing urban community.” This site is roughly 1.3 kilometers from the Scarboro Community.

In June 2015, The Oak Ridger reported several Scarboro Community residents spoke against the proposed site at a City Council meeting. Resident Gail Walker said she was speaking on behalf of several citizens who were concerned about the placement of the site.

“We strongly suggest, hope, and pray you all don't allow this facility to be located near Scarboro,” she said. “Our well-being will not be enhanced or elevated by this facility.”

At that meeting, Andy Hayes said “almost all DOE burial grounds leak.” He said he was responsible for many DOE burial grounds and he challenged DOE officials to show “me one that doesn't leak.”

Hayes said the proposed site is uphill from the Scarboro area and will negatively impact the lives of those residents.

“Residents won't be able to plant gardens and children won't be able to play in their yards for fear of contamination,” he said.

The other proposed sites appeared to be outside that two kilometer distance regulated by the NRC. Cange said three of the sites assume that the most hazardous waste will be trucked to facilities in other states. This includes the East Bear Creek Valley site. One of the sites assumes that about 32 percent of the most hazardous waste will be trucked to other locations, Cange said.

“All four of these on site options can safely contain the clean-up waste assuming they are properly engineered, operated and maintained. The sites are protective of human health and the environment,” Cange said.

Waste disposal, Cange said, is one of the most critical components of a project's success. On-site disposal is one of the reasons for the success for ETPP, she said. That disposal site includes a designated “haul road” to keep trucks out of traffic.

Gooch asked if DOE intended to bury mercury in the new site. Cange replied that DOE would “follow the requirements that pertain to disposing mercury.”

Mayor Pro Tem Ellen Smith pointed out that the DOE document didn't explain how waste containing mercury would be treated.

Brian Henry, chief of DOE's Reservation Management Branch, said the actual treatment method will be determined by the type of waste. He said in most cases the waste will be treated and turned to a

solid that doesn't leach into the surrounding land. Cange added that public comment will be sought prior to deciding on a treatment method.

"I know you will do the best job humanly possible," Council member Charlie Hensley said. He said his concern is the agency's approach to the city. He said DOE pays much less in Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) than a private company.

"Much of the city's problems are the result of a lack of support from DOE," Hensley said. "If DOE did what a normal corporate citizen does the (property) tax rate could go down by 75 percent." Hensley and Smith also spoke about a report prepared by the University of Tennessee Baker Center for Public Policy. Hensley said the report didn't mention Oak Ridge.

In February, The Oak Ridger obtained a copy of the 30-page report. Oak Ridge is only mentioned in a historical context and there is no mention about the impact the OREM activities have on the city, specifically. The report and the summary spell out the impacts on Anderson, Roane and Knox counties. Baker Center Director Michael Murray, who authored the report, told The Oak Ridger that the presumption is that Oak Ridge is included in the Anderson and Roane County estimates.

"We didn't intend to slight anyone," he said. "We were trying to focus on the broad, three-county area of Anderson, Roane and Knox. That is where the DOE-OREM has the highest impact in the state."

According to the report, the largest DOE-OREM expenditure in Tennessee in 2014 was payroll. The \$145.5 million spent on payroll accounted for 47.6 percent of total Tennessee expenditures. The total non-payroll expenditures were just over \$127 million. Those expenditures included manufacturing, transportation and other logistical costs.

The report also discussed the number of jobs created by DOE-OREM activities. Total jobs created in 2014 were 1,926. Those were direct hires. The report also spoke of 2,830 jobs created "indirectly through the multiplier effect." This effect was a result of DOE-OREM related purchases "along with multiplier effects associated with payroll spending and pensions."

The report also indicated state and local sales tax revenues collected through OREM activities totaled \$14.9 million in Fiscal Year 2014. The total local sales tax revenue was listed at \$3.7 million.

At Tuesday night's Council meeting, Gooch and Smith pointed out that while the report included the entire East Tennessee region as the local community, to the Council the local community is Oak Ridge.

Gooch said the author of the Baker Center report said in a recent meeting that there is no negative impact on Oak Ridge, although "knowing full well how property values just declined." The mayor said the DOE reliance on that report is a concern and a previous report by the Baker law firm pointed out the negative impacts to Oak Ridge and that DOE "has never responded to that report."

"I am absolutely flabbergasted that report (Baker Center Report) didn't mention the (negative impact to) the city of Oak Ridge," Gooch said.

"DOE generates a lot of work in Oak Ridge, but they don't want to live in Oak Ridge," Smith said, citing another concern the Council has with DOE. "We even got an email from someone hoping Oak Ridge would build a second bridge over the Clinch River to make getting home to West Knoxville easier."

Hensley said Oak Ridge is the only site with DOE facilities within their city limits.

Council member Chuck Hope said he understood much of what was being discussed Tuesday night was out of Cange's purview.

"The whole of DOE, not just the OEM, needs to find a way to be a good corporate citizen of Oak Ridge," he said.

Council member Rick Chinn said there was a cost to have this landfill in Oak Ridge that DOE doesn't seem to consider. He said that while he knows it's not a nuclear waste dump, "in the (news)papers it is." He said having that facility in Oak Ridge can be a detriment to recruiting new residents and businesses.

Chinn said Oak Ridge's population hasn't changed since he was born in 1969. He said the city has an aging infrastructure that was accepted from DOE and that includes the water plant.

"The water plant is falling down and we don't have the money to put into it," he said.

Follow Russel Langley on Twitter @newwsruslangley.

Savannah River Redmediation announces Tom Foster as president

Aiken Standard

March 24, 2016

[LINK](#)

AECOM announced Wednesday that Tom Foster has been named president and project manager of Savannah River Remediation, or SRR.

Foster is a 35-year nuclear weapons complex and nuclear industry veteran and received his Bachelor of Science in chemistry from Florida State University. The appointment will be effective May 16.

SRR Chief Operating Officer Mark Schmitz is the acting president and has been filling that role since the beginning of January 2015.

According to the press release, Foster has progressive experience in leading and managing safe nuclear operations for the Department of Energy Environmental Management and the NNSA. He also worked with U.K. Nuclear Decommissioning Authority programs. He has held numerous positions with increasing responsibility during 27 years at SRS, according to AECOM. His most recent position at SRS was area operations manager, where he led all operations for four SRS tritium nuclear facilities. He also led the final testing, startup, turnover and integration of the \$506 million Tritium Extraction Facility project.

Foster previously served as chief decommissioning officer at the Sellafield site in the U.K., where he led a \$900 million decommissioning portfolio that includes major construction projects to support decommissioning and clean-up work, as well as radioactive waste retrieval, storage and processing. Before decommissioning work, he led the integration and management of the Sellafield high active waste program, including evaporator and tank operations, waste vitrification plant operation, vitrified product storage and repatriation of vitrified waste to European and Japanese reprocessing customers.

Additionally, at DOE's Hanford site, Foster served as director of waste retrievals from 2008-11. He revitalized the waste retrieval program which includes retrieval of spent nuclear fuel, discarded reactor material and hazardous debris from burial and chemical sites.

"Tom is an exceptional leader with a tremendous track record both in the U.S. and U.K., who has vast knowledge of the Savannah River Site, the U.S. Department of Energy and the nuclear cleanup market," said AECOM's James Taylor, nuclear and environment group general manager. "His leadership and technical skill set will enable the Savannah River Remediation team to continue their excellent performance for our DOE customer at the Savannah River Site."

Thomas Gardiner is the SRS beat reporter for the Aiken Standard and hails from Amarillo, Texas.

Salt Waste facility relies on contractor teamwork

Aiken Standard

March 26, 2016

[LINK](#)

The Salt Waste Processing Facility, currently under construction at the Department of Energy's Savannah River Site, involves multiple SRS contractors, successfully integrating work to complete the project's construction and connection to the existing liquid waste facilities.

A key objective for DOE-SR in the next few years is to fully integrate the salt waste facility into the liquid waste system. Accomplishing this objective requires close partnering between DOE and its contractors. Savannah River Remediation, the liquid waste contractor at SRS, DOE and Parsons, the salt waste facility engineering, procurement and construction contractor, have been closely interfacing on integration of the salt waste facility with the liquid waste system.

A recent example of this interface involves a transfer of electrical equipment to the salt waste facility, which resulted from successful integration between various DOE-SR contractors. Electrical equipment needed to complete electrical connections for the salt waste facility was identified at SRS and transferred to the salt waste project. Once electrical connections are complete, the equipment transfer will result in approximately \$20,000 total cost savings for DOE-SR for the salt waste project.

The salt waste facility construction completion date is scheduled for April 2016, well ahead of schedule according to Frank Sheppard, Parsons vice president and the salt waste facility project manager.

“The electrical equipment transfer is an example of many other implemented strategies to safely accelerate the Salt Waste Processing Facility construction schedule,” Sheppard said. “Effective integration between Parsons, SRR and DOE is key for this project to reach early completion and enable this critical component of the DOE’s cleanup plan for the legacy liquid waste at SRS.” SRR led the interface between Parsons, Savannah River Nuclear Solutions, the SRS management and operating contractor, and DOE-SR which approved the transfer of equipment from one contractor to another. The equipment was transferred in February 2016 at the SRNS Electrical Equipment Yard.

Shayne Farrell, deputy federal project director for the salt waste facility, said the transfer of equipment from SRNS to Parsons displayed an excellent example of teamwork and partnering. “SRR, Parsons, SRNS and DOE provided integral assistance and support to make this happen,” Farrell said. “The transaction took place over a very short time period, was very well coordinated and the reuse of on-hand, spare equipment resulted in a substantial cost savings to DOE-SR and the taxpayer.”

Parsons requested support from SRR’s Salt Waste Processing Facility Integration Program for the electrical equipment, and according to Keith Harp, SRR Salt Waste Processing Facility integration program manager, SRR working with SRNS utilities and operating services identified the needed materials housed in an SRNS electrical lay down yard on site.

“We recognized an opportunity to take advantage of the integration process with SRS contractors, and it turned into a success for DOE,” Harp said. “We’re seeing the strength of the integration team when teamwork and cost savings come together.”

The salt waste facility will be the key liquid waste facility for processing approximately 90 percent of the remaining 36 million gallons of tank waste. The salt waste facility will separate the salt waste into a low-volume, high radioactivity fraction for vitrification in the Defense Waste Processing Facility and high-volume, decontaminated salt solution to the Saltstone Facility for disposal as low-level waste.

The salt waste facility will utilize technology currently being used in SRR's Interim Salt Disposition Project Modular Caustic Side Solvent Extraction Unit, or MCU. Lessons learned from MCU operations are shared during bi-monthly meetings of the SRS the Salt Waste Processing Facility Integration Team, which includes representatives from SRR and Parsons. SRR also participates in monthly salt waste facility construction interface meetings with DOE and Parsons.

SRS is owned by DOE. The SRS Liquid Waste contract is managed by SRR, which is composed of a team of companies led by AECOM with partners Bechtel National, CH2M and BWX Technologies. Critical subcontractors for the contract are AREVA, EnergySolutions and URS Professional Solutions.

Parsons is the salt waste facility engineering, procurement and construction contractor at SRS. Parsons provides technical and management solutions to private industrial customers worldwide, as well as federal, regional, and local government agencies. For more information, visit www.parsons.com.

Savannah River Nuclear Solutions is a Fluor-led company whose members are Fluor Federal Services, Newport News Nuclear and Honeywell, responsible for the management and operations of the Department of Energy's Savannah River Site, including the Savannah River National Laboratory, located near Aiken.

Congressmen still trying to revive Yucca Mountain

Pahrump Valley Times

March 25, 2016

[LINK](#)

Two congressmen are renewing efforts on Yucca Mountain with a letter where they addressed the "obligation" for the Department of Energy to complete licensing for the project.

A letter penned by Fred Upton, R-Mich., and John Shimkus, R-Ill., for U.S. Secretary of Energy Ernest Moniz on March 17 stated that Congress and the Subcommittee on Environment and the Economy chaired by Shimkus had examined issues associated with developing a comprehensive solution for used fuel management policy.

The letter said that while the Department of Energy had undertaken steps to implement its “Strategy for the Management and Disposal of Used Nuclear Fuel and High-Level Radioactive Waste,” the federal government must fulfill statutory obligations as soon as possible.

“Expediently resuming work on the Yucca Mountain license application would do just that,” the letter reads.

Nevada Agency for Nuclear Projects Director Robert Halstead called the letter “an exercise in optimism.”

“I view this letter as an exercise in optimism, to see if they can get any useful information from DOE at a time when DOE is not actually working on Yucca Mountain,” Halstead said.

Shimkus and Upton also recently asked the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) to examine what would be necessary for DOE to fulfill its “obligation” to complete its work on the Yucca Mountain license application.

Halstead said that the DOE has no clear obligation to do so.

“Our understanding of the law as we have been advised by our legal team is that there’s no legal obligation for DOE to move forward on the license application either as soon as possible or in the language of the letter expediently,” Halstead said.

The letter poses a series of questions about Yucca Mountain support activities, Nuclear Waste Policy Act compliance, consolidated interim storage, disposal of defense high-level radioactive waste and transportation of spent nuclear fuel. Shimkus and Upton asked for a response by April 14.

Also addressed in the letter was the hardware and packaging research work that is being done by DOE. While this is supposed to be generic and nonsite-specific research, Halstead said some of it might relate to Yucca Mountain if the project were restarted.

The DOE stated in December 2015 that they had about \$19.5 million carry-over funding from previous appropriations.

Halstead said that the remaining carry-over appropriations would limit what the DOE could do without new funding from Congress.

“In the absence of sufficient appropriations DOE wouldn’t be able to move the license application forward even if they felt that they were required to do so,” Halstead said.

“In our opinion, DOE would need \$100-150 million and at least 12 months just to start gearing up for the full legally-mandated licensing process,” Halstead said.

The DOE estimated in 2007 that it would need \$1.66 billion and 10 years to complete all activities associated with licensing, in addition to more than \$600 million spent on licensing from 1998 to 2007.

The Yucca Mountain project was presumed dead after in 2010, the Obama administration scrapped plans to store tons of nuclear waste in it. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit ordered the Nuclear Regulatory Committee to resume the proceeding in August 2013.

In November 2013, NRC responded to the court order by directing its staff to resume the preliminary portion of the proceeding by using available limited funds. NRC staff subsequently requested that the DOE prepare a supplement to their 2008 Environmental Impact Statement, but the DOE declined, and the NRC did not order the DOE to prepare the supplement.

NRC staff prepared the draft supplement in 2015 and was expected to release the final supplement in the beginning of 2016.

“The final NRC EIS Supplement is expected anytime now,” Halstead said.