

WM2012 Conference Panel Report

PANEL SESSION 31: Oak Ridge: Vital for the Future of Our Nation

Co-Chairs: John R. Eschenberg, *US DOE*
Sue Cange, *US DOE*

Panel Reporters: Ashley Craig Watkins, *B&W Y-12* and Gigi Nelson, *Synergy Solutions*

Panelists:

1. Sue Cange, *US DOE Oak Ridge Environmental Management Manager*
2. Eva Irwin, *Senior Director, B&W Y-12 LLC*
3. Dirk Van Hoesen, *Director, EM Program Office, UT-Battelle*
4. Robert J. Martineau, Jr., *Commissioner, Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation*

More than 100 people attended this session that focused on the critical role of Oak Ridge to the future of our nation and world. With an Environmental Management mission underway in the midst of ongoing Office of Science and National Nuclear Security Administration missions all within the city limits of a community with a population of approximately 30,000 and within a metropolitan area of nearly 1.5 million people, the Oak Ridge Reservation is a unique site within the DOE complex. While the EM mission in Oak Ridge involves some traditional clean up and reindustrialization activities not unlike other sites, it also involves clean up situated among facilities with ongoing missions and continuing operations that poses increased challenges in terms of accessibility and in many cases increased risk. These challenges must be met, however, as the enduring missions are critical for national and global security as well as leading scientific discovery.

The session consisted of PowerPoint presentations by each panelist describing the role each represented organization plays in future DOE missions and the importance of the EM mission in fulfilling these roles. Presentations were approximately 20 minutes each. The presentations were followed by 10-15 questions asked by the audience.

Sue Cange began her presentation with a short video highlighting recent EM successes as well as current EM projects. After a brief description of the unique conditions and chronology of EM work in Oak Ridge, her presentation focused on DOE's significant EM challenges and its near term goals for meeting those challenges. She outlined the three most pressing risks in Oak Ridge as environmental, radiological and lifecycle cost and discussed the need to balance competing priorities and regulatory commitments. Ms. Cange set the stage for the remaining presentations of the day by discussing the environmental challenges and solutions, the need for partnering to continue to move Oak Ridge forward and the emphasis on innovation to enable the future.

Eva Irwin provided an overview of the Y-12 National Security Complex and its role as part of the National Nuclear Security Administration. While she discussed some history of the site, she focused primarily on its evolving missions, the modernization that has begun at the site and EM's critical contributions to necessary continued modernization that will ensure that Y-12 remains flexible and responsive as national and global

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security needs change. Highlighting recent EM successes at the site as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, Ms. Irwin emphasized how EM is reducing the mortgage at Y-12 by eliminating structures that are no longer needed to carry out its missions and, in turn, making room for the facilities that will be critically necessary in the near future to Y-12, the nation and the world.

Dirk Van Hoesen provided an overview of Oak Ridge National Laboratory and its role in the DOE national laboratory system as an Office of Science laboratory. He provided some historical context of the lab, but centered his discussion on the lab's current mission: "[to] deliver scientific discoveries and technical breakthroughs that will accelerate the development and deployment of solutions in clean energy and global security, and in doing so create economic opportunity for the nation." Mr. Van Hoesen also cited recent ARRA successes at ORNL and discussed the vitally important EM mission as an enabler to achieving the lab's missions in science. EM is reducing the risks at ORNL—risks posed to mission, people, financial assets and the environment—and creating a more vibrant environment for discovery.

Robert J. Martineau, Jr. presented a regulatory overview of the Oak Ridge Reservation. As Commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation, Mr. Martineau offered a unique perspective of Oak Ridge as seen by the State of Tennessee. Mr. Martineau began by outlining the economic impact of the DOE in Tennessee highlighting its regional and statewide reach as the fourth largest employer in the state (including its prime contractors). He cited five key elements of the DOE impact in Tennessee: "national security and scientific research; key driver for economic development; expanded partnerships; draws and supports a highly educated workforce; and provides high paying jobs". However, Commissioner Martineau also pointed out some environmental challenges. He suggested interagency connections, common goals, communication and a shared role in priority setting as critical means of working together to meet those challenges. "We can protect our environment and meet the needs of our communities. Economic growth and environmental protection are not mutually exclusive."

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