

WM2012 Conference Panel Report

PANEL SESSION 47: Oak Ridge: Partnering to Move Oak Ridge Forward

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

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

Panelists:

1. John Eschenberg, *Acting Manager, US DOE Oak Ridge Office*
2. Ken Rueter, *VP, Project, Construction & Contract Management, UCOR LLC*
3. Jenny Freeman, *Board Member, Energy, Technology and Environmental Business Association*
4. Ron Murphree, *Board Member, Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board*
5. Mark Watson, *City Manager, City of Oak Ridge, Tennessee*

More than 100 people attended this session that focused on the partnership that exists in Oak Ridge to support the DOE and its missions there. This partnership includes the contractor and labor communities, elected officials, regulatory agencies, citizens and civic groups and Oak Ridge Reservation employees. The session opened with a 20 minute PowerPoint presentation by Mr. Eschenberg describing the partnership, its successes and its role in moving Oak Ridge to the future. Mr. Rueter then gave a 20 minute PowerPoint presentation outlining the recently formed partnership between DOE and UCOR LLC, the DOE EM contractor in Oak Ridge. The presentations were followed by 10-15 minutes of comments by each of three panelists centered on the perspective of the community. Approximately 10 questions were asked by the audience.

John Eschenberg began his comments on the unique Oak Ridge partnership by using the featured site agenda as an example of how DOE, its contractors, its regulators and its community work together to support DOE missions in Oak Ridge. He went on to describe several of the successes including the Tennessee Valley Corridor, the Oak Ridge Huntsville Partnership Office and the Oak Ridge Business Safety Partnership. He also pointed out specific partnership accomplishments citing the renovation of Oak Ridge High School.

Ken Rueter described the UCOR contract with DOE as “taking partnering to the next level”. While effectively applying successful D&D methods to clean up the East Tennessee Technology Park site, UCOR is aggressively pursuing cost savings through innovation and streamlining and proactively partnering with stakeholders to pave the way for reindustrialization.

Jenny Freeman spoke on behalf of the Energy, Technology and Environmental Business Association which represents about 250 companies that provide products and services to DOE and its prime contractors. The organization has existed in Oak Ridge since the mid-1980s and its members create over \$1.2 billion in revenue annually for Oak Ridge and the surrounding communities. ETEBA member companies understand DOE requirements and how to work for DOE. They consistently do their work safely and cost effectively.

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Ron Murphree represented the perspective of the Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board (SSAB) that was established in Oak Ridge in 1999. Mr. Murphree is a private citizen that serves out of concern about the effects of the DOE work on the environment and in the community. The SSAB consists of 22 members like Murphree and two student members and advocates for long term environmental stewardship. Among its many functions, the Board provides recommendations for funding priorities with regard to Oak Ridge clean up, reviews Records of Decision to ensure they can be understood by a layperson and has created an ad hoc committee for capturing oral history.

Mark Watson offered the City of Oak Ridge perspective. He began by reiterating the geography of Oak Ridge which had been earlier described and illustrated. DOE Oak Ridge Operations take place within the City of Oak Ridge creating complexities that most communities do not face. However, through a variety of strong intergovernmental relationships the City is able to offer its expertise and take responsibility for those services which it manages best services such as water, fire, police and traffic management. Because of the large impact of DOE on the City, partnership is vital as the City moves forward with planning activities and economic development endeavors. Likewise, as DOE in Oak Ridge evolves, the partnership with the City is crucial to ensuring the infrastructure and support DOE needs to ensure mission success.

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