

WM2017 Conference Panel Report

PANEL SESSION 110: US DOE Featured Site - PPPO Lexington, KY (Portsmouth & Paducah)

Co-Chairs: **Robert Edwards**, *Manager, PPPO*
 Yvette Cantrell, *SMSI-PPPO*

Panel Reporter: **Yvette Cantrell**, *SMSI-PPPO*

Panelists:

1. **Joel Bradburne**, *Portsmouth Site Lead, US DOE*
2. **Jennifer Woodard**, *Paducah Site Lead, US DOE*
3. **Reinhard Knerr**, *Federal Project Director, US DOE*
4. **Jeff Stevens**, *Deputy Program Manager, Fluor B&W Portsmouth Project*
5. **Bob Smith**, *Paducah Project Manager, Fluor Federal Services*
6. **Tammy Courtney**, *Program Manager, Swift & Staley Inc.*
7. **Alan Parker**, *President & Project Manager, Mid-American Conversion Services*

“One PPPO” was the theme from the Portsmouth Paducah Project Office at this year’s Waste Management Conference. PPPO Manager **Robert Edwards** opened the session emphasizing the ongoing collaboration between the Portsmouth and Paducah sites as they work towards the cleanup of DOE EM’s last two gaseous diffusion plants, as well as conversion of the DUF6 cylinders.

Working as a cohesive unit helps the sites be safer, more efficient, and allows quick application of lessons learned. **Edwards** continued by introducing each of the PPPO site leads and contractors to provide progress on the projects.

At Portsmouth, Site Lead **Joel Bradburne** was confident that the site had a solid plan to get the plant to final cleanup. Describing the details using a series of schedule graphics, **Bradburne** laid out a clear path to success for site cleanup, emphasizing, “we have the plan, now we need to execute.”

Bradburne listed a series of “check marks” to illustrate his point. Siting completion of a lifecycle baseline, regulatory approvals, stakeholder consensus, a technological approach, and a focused workforce as aligned to reach the end goal. The only mark left unchecked was the budget. **Bradburne** recognized that the only way to make planned progress on the schedule was to maintain a stabilized funding profile.

Jeff Stevens, Deputy Project Manager for Fluor-BWXT agrees Portsmouth is positioned for closure. Giving an update on FBP’s progress, **Stevens** says the contractor expects to bring the first cell of the X-326 process building to criticality incredible and ready for demolition this spring. Also, maintaining a rapid pace on the construction of the on-site waste disposal facility is key to cleanup project staying on schedule.

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In addition, the contractor will continue work in the second process building, X-333 and maintain environmental remediation progress in treating contaminated groundwater. **Stevens** also noted that Portsmouth was the largest shipper of waste to NNSC this past year.

Paducah Site Lead **Jennifer Woodard** said the lessons learned from Portsmouth were invaluable as Paducah begins the planning efforts to reach a comprehensive lifecycle baseline. **Woodard** described the complexity of the cleanup at Paducah by saying we have “more to do than we have done.” Paducah has an extensive environmental remediation scope that was being performed while uranium enrichment operations continued through 2013. After receiving the plant back in October 2014 Paducah has been focused on maintaining the remediation effort, while re-sizing the newly returned plant facilities, the equivalent of a small city, to be efficient for cleanup activities. As an example, she described a revised approach to the C-400 building cleanup. C-400 was the primary source of TCE contamination at the site. Prior to the return of the facilities a number of actions were segmented to reach the TCE sources, while the building was occupied. Now that the building is no longer in use, a new approach to reach the source directly under the building is being described as cleaning up the whole city block is being proposed.

Woodard also expressed the need for investment in infrastructure maintenance as a priority for the site. Many of the buildings at the site are over 60 years old, creating both safety and long term cost issues.

Bob Smith, Project Manager of the Fluor Federal Services deactivation project at Paducah provided more details on the progress at the site. FFS has completed numerous deactivation activities, including the reroofing of 75 acres of process building roofs, finishing consolidation of switchyards, and positioning the recycling of large quantities of R-114 stored onsite.

Smith also provided more specifics on the acceleration approach to the C-400. Workers are focused on cleaning out 81,000 square feet of building space, which will allow for a targeted sampling event through the floor of the building. This will give the site access to previously unknown groundwater data, allowing for a more effective cleanup of the TCE source.

Adding another dynamic to the PPPO session was **Tammy Courtney's** presentation on infrastructure services at the site. PPPO has a unique contract arrangement at their D&D sites, using a small business prime contractor specifically to handle infrastructure for DOE and all of the resident contractors.

Courtney laughingly told the audience that we aren't just “road and commodes”, then proceeded to detail a laundry list of accomplishments over the past year that included performing classification review on over 8.6 million pages of records, providing training services for 1,700 site employees, and maintaining an IT system that processed 18 million e-mails last year.

In addition to remediation and demolition work at PPPO, the Depleted Uranium Hexafluoride conversion facilities are primed to see significant action this year. **Reinhard Knerr**, Federal Project Director for the DUF6 plants at both Portsmouth and Paducah echoed the “One PPPO” theme by describing a re-alignment of the plant culture as seven lines, one project. The seven lines are the technical specifications of both plant.

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One project stems from a safety incident that forced an extended shutdown of the systems. Bringing the plants together as one project allowed for multiple safety and maintenance corrective actions to be put in place, experiences to be shared amongst the sites, and solutions being developed by both plants functioning as one.

Knerr also introduced the new DUF6 contractor Mid-America Conversion Services, led by industry veteran **Alan Parker**.

Although describing himself as new to the group, **Parker**, President and Program Manager for MCS, says he's found the cohesiveness of the PPPO group to be inclusive. After giving an overview of MCS and their approach to operating the DUF6 plants, **Parker** expressed confidence in DUF6's personnel to get two additional lines running at Paducah by June 2017 and Portsmouth restarted by September 2017.