

CLOSING IN ON CLOSURE: PERSPECTIVES FROM HANFORD AND FERNALD — AN UPDATE

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ABSTRACT

“... an open and declared *armed* hostile conflict...” That’s how Webster’s dictionary defines the word *war*. In World War II, the *arms* dramatically changed from machine guns and incendiary bombs to nuclear weapons. Hanford and Fernald, two government-run sites, were part of the infrastructure established for producing the fissile material for making these weapons, as well as building a nuclear arsenal to deter future aggression by other nations. This paper compares and contrasts, from a communications point of view, these two Department of Energy (DOE) closure sites, each with Fluor as a prime contractor.

The major differences between the two sites – Hanford in Washington state and Fernald in Ohio – includes the following: size of the site and the workforce, timing of closure, definition of end state, DOE oversight, proximity to population centers, readiness of local population for closure, and dependence of the local economy on the site’s budget. All of these elements affect how the sites’ communication professionals provide information even though the objectives are the same: build public acceptance and support for DOE’s mission to accelerate cleanup, interface with stakeholders to help ensure that issues are addressed and goals are met, help workers literally work themselves out of jobs – faster, and prepare the “host” communities to deal with the void left when the sites are closed and the government contractors are gone.

The 12-months between January ’04 and January ’05 have seen dramatic transformations at both sites, as Fernald is now just about a year away from closure and Fluor’s work at Hanford has made the transition from operations to deactivation and demolition. And while Fernald continues to clean out silos of waste and ship it off site, Hanford is dealing with recent state legislation that has the potential to significantly impact the progress of cleanup. These changes have even further accentuated the differences in the content, distribution, and impact of communications.

INTRODUCTION

“... open and declared *armed* hostile conflict...” That’s how Webster’s dictionary defines the word *war*. In World War II, the *arms* dramatically changed from machine guns and incendiary bombs to nuclear weapons. Fernald and Hanford, two government-run sites, were part of the infrastructure established for producing the fissile material for making these weapons, as well as helping to build a nuclear arsenal to deter future aggression by other nations.

Hanford, originally referred to as the Gable project, marked its 60th anniversary in March 2003; Fernald celebrated its 50th in May 2001. Both sites had ended “production” by 1989 and embarked on a new mission of cleaning up the legacy waste – hazardous and nuclear – left behind. Now designated closure sites by the Department of Energy (DOE), both installations have Fluor as a prime contractor. Fluor has been the prime cleanup contractor for DOE’s Richland Operations Office at Hanford since 1996, and DOE’s prime contractor responsible for all cleanup operations at Fernald since 1992.

Geographic/Demographic Differences

The two sites differ in their physical size, proximity to major metropolitan areas, and the size of their workforce in relation to the population of their “host” communities.

In terms of physical size, the Hanford Project dwarfs Fernald. Hanford facilities and personnel are in pockets, but stretched out for miles across the reservation. At Fernald, employees and facilities are stretched out, but most are within walking distance of one another.

Hanford, often referred to as the world’s largest environmental cleanup project, covers more than 580 square miles in a relatively remote region of southeastern Washington State at the convergence of the Yakima, Snake, and Columbia Rivers. With an annual budget exceeding \$2 billion, Hanford is the main economic force in the surrounding communities, collectively known as the Tri-Cities. Richland, Kennewick, and Pasco have a combined population of about 160,000. Larger metropolitan areas such as Spokane, Seattle, or Portland are least a 2-1/2-hour drive. The Tri-Cities’ economy is extremely dependent on Hanford as about 40% of the money spent in the community comes from the site’s employees. Therefore, as cleanup progresses, “life without Hanford” becomes more than people losing jobs, it is a community fighting for its continued existence – a community that not only wants the radioactive and hazardous waste removed, but also needs the economic stability that the site’s work and contractors bring. Hanford currently has about 14,000 employees spread across three DOE field offices, four major contractors, and a national laboratory Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (managed by Battelle). Fluor is the site’s largest employer with more than 4,000 bargaining-unit (slightly less than 50%) and salaried personnel.

On the other hand, Fernald is a relatively small site of just 1050 acres, located 18 miles northwest of Cincinnati, Ohio, which has a strong, diverse economic base and fairly large job market. Unlike Hanford, Fernald – which was built nearly a decade after Hanford –has always been a small fish in a big pond. While Fernald pumps hundreds of millions of dollars (\$324 million annual budget) into southwest Ohio, northern Kentucky and eastern Indiana, the site really doesn’t have much of a job or financial impact in the community. Instead, corporate giants like Procter & Gamble, General Electric, Kroger, and Delta make up the top tier of employment with a myriad of middle and smaller size, diversified businesses throughout the tri-state region. Once 2,000 strong, the workforce at Fernald has dropped from 1,600 in early 2004 to just under 1,000 now...and falling. The current workforce includes about 20 DOE-Fernald Closure Project personnel, as well as 800 Fluor Fernald and 150 subcontractor employees. The Fernald Closure Project is part of the DOE Ohio Field Office with roughly 30 personnel supporting the site’s cleanup mission.

Same Mission...Different Visions

Hanford and Fernald have the same mission: safely cleaning up the radioactive and hazardous waste left behind from decades of producing nuclear weapons. That said, however, the vision of what “cleaned up” actually entails and really looks like in the end is different for the two sites. This condition exists for three main reasons: Hanford has just begun its “closure” mission, while Fernald is in the final stretch; Hanford is a larger and more complex site with multiple, diverse waste streams; and Hanford’s oversight by three separate DOE field offices complicates decision-making.

With Hanford’s closure date more than 30 years away – 2035 – the site has just begun to deactivate and demolish production facilities, and clean up waste sites and contaminated groundwater. The production of nuclear materials at Hanford has left a legacy of tremendous proportions, not just in terms of hazardous and radioactive waste, but also the infrastructure supporting the cleanup. Here are some of the statistics. From a waste management point of view, the task is enormous: 1,700 waste sites; 450 billion gallons of liquid waste (dumped into the soil); 70 billion gallons of contaminated groundwater; 53 million gallons of tank waste; 9 reactors; 5 million cubic yards of contaminated soil; 22 thousand drums of mixed waste; 2.3 tons of spent nuclear fuel; and 17.8 metric tons of plutonium-bearing material...and that’s not the complete list. On the infrastructure side, the numbers are almost as staggering: 500 miles of roads, 4 fire stations, 200 buildings containing 5 million square feet of floor space, 104 miles of water lines, and 200 miles of electric lines. The transition from operations and engineering personnel to a preponderance of D&D/craft workers is just taking hold...with each reduction of force evidence that both the size and the skills of the workforce are changing. And the transfer of site operations – such as the transfer of fabrication services to a commercial company offsite – gives further evidence of a changing paradigm for doing business.

While the DOE has hopes of beating the 2035 Hanford closure date by as many as 10 years, the public process for deciding the end states of various areas of the site is also in its early stages. The question, “how clean is *clean*?” is the source of considerable debate. Focused public workshops on the various sources and types of waste have been forums for open, in-depth discussions, but have been unsuccessful in generating consensus on a path forward.

In addition, at the same time buildings are being closed and taken down, a new facility, the Waste Treatment Plant is being built, adding a new dimension to managing the Site’s infrastructure for closure – while adding and upgrading services to support the construction and operation of a major new complex. Two other factors further complicate changing the mindset of area residents and workers. The first is Hanford’s role as part of the Manhattan Project under the National Historic Preservation Act that makes such facilities as the B Reactor potential “museums.” In fact, on the occasion of its 60th anniversary last fall, a federal grant was provided to study the feasibility for converting the B reactor – the world’s first nuclear reactor – into an historical exhibition, and recent tours of the Hanford site have attracted record numbers of visitors to the historic facility. The second unsettling situation is the deactivation and closure of the Fast Flux Test Facility (FFTF), under a contract the DOE awarded in the fall of 2004, but

was subsequently was contested. This uncertainty continues to fan the hopes and fervor of interested parties who are fighting to keep the reactor as a source of medical isotopes.

As a result of these competing activities – building a new multi-billion-dollar plant for converting waste to glass, converting an historic reactor into a national museum, and fighting to preserve a full-scale test reactor for a new mission – the word *closure* seems a misnomer. It's no wonder the workers and the community alike are grappling with the concept of closing the site, and messages built around “life without the DOE and its contractors” are difficult to convey...and believe.

On the other hand, Fernald, referred to as the Fernald Closure Project (FCP), is doing just that – closing. Now just a year away from closure, the site – once a uranium production plant – has experienced dramatic changes in its skyline. Buildings have been torn down and areas once contaminated have been turned back to usable land – all visibly signaling to the employees and the stakeholders that the “end” is near. For more than 10 years now, employees have coped with the idea of working themselves out of jobs and have come to accept the inevitable.

Fernald employees understand that the project's days are numbered. A countdown on the site access road and a popup box on their computers serve to keep this message front and center. Now, with that reality, comes the challenge of motivating employees to work themselves out of jobs – more safely and faster than ever before.

The \$4 billion cleanup, which began in earnest in 1992, will be complete more than a decade sooner than original estimates. When the cleanup is complete, plant neighbors will have a 900-acre park with a 100-plus-acre onsite disposal facility, resting atop a clean aquifer. So few and simple words to describe many years of work, community involvement, and mutual cooperation among regulating bodies, agencies, and interested groups!

As Fernald prepares to close its doors and become the charge of the DOE's Office of Legacy Management, Hanford's mission is continuing. Topics such as new strategies and technologies for cleanup, new approaches to contracting, as well as periodic re-bids and changes in prime contractors play into the challenges of communicating both internally and externally.

Communication...Dealing with the Realities

Communications involves more than transmitting information – it is a two-way process that requires a sender to craft a message and a receiver to act on it. The message must be delivered in a way that the audience (receivers) understands and reacts to produce the desired outcome. To the communications professionals at Hanford and Fernald, the audiences often appear as “legion”! However, when it really comes down to it, in addition to the client (DOE) and its regulators, there are only three main groups: employees, public-at-large, and stakeholders, served through internal communications, external communications and media relations, and public involvement. As this section discusses, the way Hanford and Fernald provide information to employees represents perhaps the greatest contrast between the sites, as far as communications is concerned. The second most significant difference lies in public involvement.

Internal Communication

Closure sites have several things in common compared with sites that have “operations” missions: more bargaining-unit (union-represented) employees from the building trades, more construction – or rather de-construction activities – more heavy equipment, aging infrastructure, and shrinking footprints. Rumors about layoffs and reductions in benefits run rampant. Frequent news coverage – often about issues beyond the contractors’ control, such as the recent Initiative in Washington State concerning the importation of waste – heightens anxiety and spawns further speculation about job security. While at Hanford, the split between union represented and non-union workforce is still about 50-50. By comparison, at Fernald there are more building-trades workers than salaried workers. And, like many DOE sites, where the contractors have changed, but the workers have not, the average age of the Hanford and Fernald workforces increases each year. At Hanford, for example, the average worker is 52 years old. This combination of factors has increased the need for communications in general, and communications about working smartly and safely in particular. Successful site closure is SAFE site closure!

At Hanford, where the transition from operations to D&D activities has just begun, *closure* is a relatively new term in the site’s vocabulary. Therefore, internal communications focus on working safely and changing a mindset – from the stability of long-term employment to the time-sensitive tasks and instability associated with a closure site. Further, memos and staff meetings at all levels include discussions about new ways of working, as well as recommendations for adapting tools and adjusting work conditions to accommodate muscles and joints that have lost some flexibility. On the flip side, Fernald’s challenges run more in the vein of helping employees prepare for a change in work status, either through retirement, new non-Fernald employment opportunities, or additional education. Of course, working safely is always a key message.

Many techniques are used in transferring information, but face-to-face communication often proves to be the best method, though not necessarily the easiest. At Hanford, for example, with multiple shifts, and a massive “campus,” holding a single all-employee meeting is impractical. Even if a single all-employee meeting were to be held, there’s no one central place that’s either convenient or large enough for everyone to gather. The only facility that can even accommodate Fluor Hanford’s 4000-plus employees at one time is off site, nearly 20 miles from the closest Hanford facility.

All-manager meetings are more manageable and usually conducted in two shifts in a facility close to the site. Personal messages from the President or other senior staff are broadcast to all employees using a video-streaming process that can be accessed by computer. This approach, too, has its challenges, as not every employee has a personal computer and not every computer has sound capability. The latter situation has required that closed-captioning be added to the video. Because Fluor manages six distinct projects, each with its own challenges, facility-specific communications are handled by Project Directors and Facility Managers, supported by the centralized Fluor Hanford Communications staff. Needless to say, as the site “closes in on closure,” the methods used to communicate with employees will need to be adapted, just as they have at Fernald.

Ten years ago, Fluor Fernald could hold an all-hands meeting and seat a majority of the workforce. Today, no facility exists on-site to convene a large group. In fact, all but project-

essential personnel are off site. The Fluor Fernald Project Director and his DOE customer shared leased space within sight of the Project. The Public Affairs group also has moved – and now housed in leased office space about 30 minutes from Fernald – operates with a staff of three that four years ago numbered 24. Only a few meeting facilities are fairly close to the Project, and are viewed unfavorably because of travel and time off the job. Some communications mediums once popular with employees, like *InfoChannel*, are no longer viable because of decentralizing activities and dismantling the site's infrastructure.

The employee newsletters have changed at both sites over the years as well. At Hanford, the *Hanford REACH* chronicled work at the site since cleanup began. Originally begun in 1990 as a contractor newspaper, the *REACH* became a DOE publication, issued in hard copy, for all DOE and contractor employees, as well as Hanford stakeholders in 1994. It shared the ups and downs of cleanup in more than 600 weekly issues until it was discontinued in September 2003. In its place have come individual, contractor-specific weekly electronic newsletters to employees. Fluor Hanford's publication, called *FYI – Fluor Your Information*, is produced in cooperation with the site's occupational-health provider. *FYI* contains articles and vignettes on project challenges and successes, benefits, safety and health, employees, and upcoming events. It also provides access to the newsletters of the other Hanford contractors, which would be unavailable to Fluor employees otherwise. In addition to the electronic version of *FYI*, about 300 hard copies of the four-to-six page publication are printed and distributed to various locations on site. Project-specific monthly newsletters, once prominent during the operations phase of work, have now shifted to become safety bulletins, and Project Managers share progress through personal electronic weekly updates in addition to face-to-face employee meetings.

Like Fluor Hanford, Fluor Fernald has had multiple publications. *Let's Talk* has been produced since 1997 for supervisors to use as talking points when meeting with their employees. *Let's Talk* contains information on safety, project updates, as well as other important work and benefit information. Employees on the other hand received *News to Use*, a weekly publication catering to employees' information needs. In 2002, *News to Use*, ceased and *Let's Talk* became the resource for both supervisory and field personnel. Today, *Let's Talk* is produced every other week instead of weekly and sent electronically to more than 500 employees, with hardcopies sent to the various job sites. At Fernald, *Let's Talk* has become the standard for communicating about safety and providing general project information.

Both sites also send E-mail general messages to employees concerning such topics as safety and organizational and personnel changes. With Fernald on the heels of closure, more than 90 *Employee Updates* and *Messages from Jamie* (Closure Project Director) were produced in 2004, compared to 70 in 2003. This is many more than in previous years! In light of the dramatic changes expected in 2005, communication with workers at Fernald will continue to be frequent and integral to safely closing the site. By comparison, messages from the company president and other senior management at Hanford numbered more than 300 and impromptu visits to various locations on the site to see a specific activity, celebrate a success, or meet with workers has become the norm.

A prime location for employee communication at Fernald continues to be the main access road to the project. With one-quarter of a mile of straight open road to work with, the 30-mph drive to

and from the Project offers some prime real estate to communicate safety messages, site milestones, and upcoming events. The key is not to distract drivers while still making sure they see the message. While Hanford's 500 miles of roads could be used for informational postings, seasonal and rapidly changing conditions of blowing sand, patchy fog, and slick pavement limit signage to mileage restrictions, warnings of animal crossings, level of fire danger, and cautions for entrances and egresses from various facilities. However, the two points of entry to the Site – the Wye and Rattlesnake Barricades – do have electronic message boards that carry pertinent daily information.

With several available modes of communication, however, Fluor Hanford and Fluor Fernald still rely heavily on front-line supervisors for communicating with employees. In many instances, wage/bargaining-unit employees do not have computer access, and therefore, supervisors are expected to address key subjects during shift safety briefings, stock material-distribution racks, and ensure that message boards are kept current. Recent communication surveys at the sites support this direct approach, as employees have indicated they prefer face-to-face communication with their supervisors and managers.

External Communication

DOE cleanup sites seem to act as magnets for media attention – Fernald and Hanford are no exception. In the mid to late 1980s, Fernald appeared on just about every major network television news program, as well as in newspapers and magazines. In the mid-1990s the *Cincinnati Enquirer* began a series of articles by reporter Mike Gallagher entitled, "Danger and Deceit." Those stories triggered even more television coverage locally. For the last few years, Fernald has enjoyed light, generally positive media coverage. However, aggressive self-reporting of Fluor Fernald's past and active "whistleblower" cases, has given the *Cincinnati Enquirer* a steady stream of information, resulting in more local print and television coverage.

Hanford, too, has had its share of media coverage, though its remoteness from major population areas has helped in keeping a relatively low profile. Getting reporters to come to Hanford is difficult, which can be both a blessing and a curse. Some coverage, especially with the trade press, has been actively pursued when there's good news to tell, such as removing the "burping" tank from DOE's watch list or meeting a Tri-Party Agreement milestone for moving spent nuclear fuel out of the K Basins. But much of the coverage has been unwelcome. In the early '90s, the *Spokesman Review*, a newspaper out of Spokane, Washington, ran a series of articles called the "Train Wreck Along the River of Money." The series focused on the perceived "waste" of money at Hanford, as well as the explosion and fire at the Hanford Plutonium Refinishing Plant and the ensuing legal battles. With Washington State literally split down the middle by the Cascade Mountains, the press usually sits in two camps. The local press, the *Tri-City Herald*, follows issues at the Site in painstaking detail and regularly carries interviews with DOE, contractor, and regulatory agency personnel on "hot" topics. The west-side press, however, with links to national media, rarely does first-hand interviews and usually reworks stories published in the Tri-Cities' local press. We also work with the regional AP reporter whose stories are a key source of generating coverage on the west side. Over the past 12 months, however, with a concerted effort to "court" regional reporters, Hanford has received more coverage, with balanced stories the norm rather than the exception. The Presidential election and gubernatorial race in Washington in 2004 put Hanford in the spotlight across the State, as

contenders disputed the “pros” and “cons” of waste coming from other DOE sites, and the state regulators and Federal Government argued over jurisdictional issues. The more intense coverage of the Site also prompted a local CBS affiliate to produce a two-part documentary on Hanford’s history, challenges, and progress on cleanup.

One of Fernald’s biggest challenges is limiting the number of stories that go right from the “Local” section of the paper directly into the television teleprompter. To help diffuse stories that are particularly one-sided, Fluor Fernald calls each local affiliate in the morning following a story to see if the producers are interested in Fernald’s perspective. This proactive approach helps repeat stories die down quickly.

At Hanford, the TV and radio stations run fairly balanced stories the majority of the time. While newspaper articles are still fodder for local TV and radio, the reporters and station managers are usually willing to listen to both sides of the story before airing a piece, though multiple contractors and DOE field offices often result in a confused, if not inaccurate, presentation. Further, on many occasions – particularly during this past election year – the timing and content of news stories was not controlled locally.

Of course in working with all media outlets, Fluor Hanford and Fluor Fernald respond to inquiries in a professional, complete and expedient manner. Both provide local and trade-press reporters with timely access to the organizations’ top level of management, as well as press releases, fact sheets, photographs, and video footage to make covering stories easier. The communications departments provide TV stations b-roll tapes that give a unique vantage point – footage they couldn’t shoot on their own because of potential damage to equipment in certain contaminated facilities and more stringent security access requirements following the 9-11 attacks. This responsiveness and openness has gone a long way toward helping news outlets understand that the cleanup is happening safely and efficiently, conducted by people that really care about the well-being of area stakeholders.

Now and in the near future, both Fernald and Hanford are in the enviable position of communicating the completion of some very big projects. The dismantling of the last production building, the completion of Waste Pits Project, and the removal of Silo waste are a few of the major milestones Fluor Fernald has, or will, hit hard with the local media and trade press this year. At Hanford, completing the stabilization and packaging of all the plutonium at the Plutonium Finishing Plant, which produced more plutonium “buttons” for defense applications than any other U.S. facility, and having all of the spent fuel out of the K Basins were two accomplishments that garnered extensive media coverage. A third project gave media access to an ongoing activity that they could witness themselves, which gave them a unique perspective when it comes to accessing a radiologically controlled area on a secure site. The open-air demolition of 233-S, a highly contaminated plutonium processing facility, was very visual and simple to understand. Inviting reporters on site definitely helped in building relationships and credibility. A similar approach is being used for other project work as appropriate.

Public Involvement/Communication

Stakeholders play a major role in any site's cleanup. Hanford and Fernald have very active citizen advisory boards and special interest groups that weigh in on cleanup progress and post-closure issues. And here's where the two sites differ radically.

At Fernald, with the site literally counting the months 'til closure, stakeholders are more interested in the immediacy of closure and ensuing stewardship issues. For Hanford groups, however, the focus is still on ensuring DOE's commitment to cleaning up the site, setting priorities, monitoring progress, complying with the Tri-Party Agreement, and advocating for funding. Simply said, Fernald is already "becoming" its end state, while the end state has yet to be defined for Hanford, and in fact, the public participation process for determining what "closure" really means is really just beginning. Further, DOE's new policy, DOE Policy 455.1, "Use of Risk-Based End States," will definitely affect both the process, if not the outcomes, of decisions regarding cleanup.

During the past year at Fernald, there's been a shift from needing information on cleanup status to greater communication and public participation on closure and stewardship issues. If not for the Silos Project, stakeholder focus would solely be on post-closure issues. In addition, over the last 20 years, the number of neighbors interested in Fernald has declined. For the most part that's a good sign because people have confidence in DOE's and its contractors' ability to manage the cleanup. Others, about 12-18 citizens, continue to take a leadership role for the community and rarely miss any of the public meetings. Many of these people belong to Fernald Residents for Environmental Safety & Health and/or the Fernald Citizens' Advisory Board. The Fernald Citizens' Advisory Board represents Fernald at DOE's Environmental Management Site-Specific Advisory Board.

Neighbors are also very interested in seeing a Multi-use Education Facility built where certain records and photographs could be housed for public viewing post closure. So until that issue is addressed public interest will remain high. They also want to know more about how the DOE's Office of Legacy Management will work to ensure that the property, including the On Site Disposal Facility, will be maintained once EM's mission is complete. For their part, the Office of Legacy Management has done an excellent job of getting people to Fernald and working to build a relationship with stakeholders. The faces have been constant, too, which has helped build public confidence. Representatives of the Office of Legacy Management have worked hard to clearly explain the transition process that will take place and their role in the management of the site.

On the other hand, Public Involvement at Hanford has heated up around such issues as removing tank waste, exposing workers to toxic vapors and materials such as beryllium, accepting waste from other states, and shipping transuranic (TRU) waste to WIPP. Further, there's no lack of interested and vocal parties: the Columbia Riverkeeper, the Government Accountability Project, Hanford Communities, Hanford Watch, Heart of America Northwest, Hanford Natural Resource Trustee Council, Oregon Hanford Cleanup Board, Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society, Oregon Department of Energy, and the Hanford Advisory Board (HAB). Perhaps the two most influential local groups are the Hanford Natural Resource Trustee Council and the HAB. The Trustee Council is a collaborative working group chartered to address natural resources by the release of hazardous substances from the site. Members of the Council include such groups as

native Americans (Nez Perce, Umatilla, and Yakima), the states of Washington and Oregon, the Bureau of Land Management, the Department of the Interior, DOE, and the Department of Fish and Wildlife. The HAB provides recommendations and advice to the DOE, Environmental Protection Agency, and the Washington Department of Ecology. Composed of 31 seats, the HAB represents Hanford on DOE's Environmental Management Site-Specific Advisory Board.

Like Fernald, the community is also interested in preserving the history of the site. Groups have formed to promote the area's heritage. Friends of the Hanford Reach focus their efforts on protecting the Hanford Reach, a national monument, and establishing the Hanford Reach Interpretative Center. Another organization, the Columbia River Exposition on History, Science and Technology (CREHST), which traces its beginnings back to 1962 when the Atomic Energy Commission opened the Hanford's Visitor Center in Richland, manages a full service museum that tells the dynamic story of the region from the prehistoric age, to the atomic age and beyond. Both organizations, though vying for supporters and funding regionally and nationally, are collaborating to build an integrated interpretative center and museum that will tell the Hanford story and that of the region. The bicentennial celebration in 2005 for the Lewis & Clark expedition is also bringing visitors to the area, which spurs interest in the work being done at Hanford.

CONCLUSION

Communications at both Hanford and Fernald play a key in providing information to employees, stakeholders, and the public-at-large. Yes, the Fernald Closure Project is nearing its end, but communication challenges will continue. Public Affairs and project management will carry a majority of the load internally, externally and to key stakeholders. To that end, the Fernald cleanup will be a great story when it's done, but fade away quickly on the local level. Most of the workers displaced by closing will move on to other jobs in the area. The effect on Cincinnati as a whole will be slight. What remains of the property should be an asset to the community...an end state reached thanks to communication and public involvement.

What lies in store for Hanford still remains to be written...and communicated.