LEADING TRANSFORMATION

The National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) celebrated a footprint reduction milestone Aug. 13—the demolition of more than 3 million square feet of aging and excess facilities across the Nuclear Weapons Complex (NWC). The Y-12 National Security Complex demolished more than one-third of the total square feet. Reaching this milestone, more than one year ahead of schedule, is helping to pave the way for transformation of all NWC sites.

NNSA celebrated the milestone with a ceremony at Y-12. The demolition work falls under NNSA’s Facilities and Infrastructure Recapitalization Program (FIRP).

Mike Richesin, Y-12’s FIRP manager, said, “The FIRP-sponsored activities play a major role in Y-12’s transformation efforts. We prioritize demolition activities and focus on removing nonessential buildings.”

The FIRP mission is to restore, rebuild and revitalize the physical infrastructure of the NWC, with one of the program’s primary goals being to remove or demolish structures no longer needed to meet NNSA missions.

Bill Ostendorff, principal deputy administrator of NNSA, came to Y-12 and took the ceremonial first blow on a building in “Engineering Row,” which pushed the NWC total past the three-million-square-foot mark.

By the end of fiscal year 2008, Y-12 will have demolished buildings equaling 149,000 square feet. “FIRP has safely demolished 284 aging facilities at Y-12 between FY 2002 and FY 2008,” Richesin said.

NEW faces, NEW design, NEW energy

Preliminary design for the new Uranium Processing Facility (UPF) is gaining ground. About 20 designers from Merrick & Company moved into the project’s offices in March and immediately went to work on several initial task orders. Merrick was awarded a basic ordering agreement (BOA) in February with a potential value of $30 million to provide preliminary and detailed design as well as Title III construction support services through September 2015 for the UPF project’s process systems and specialty mechanical equipment. About 10 more Merrick staff members will come onboard by the end of the year.

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Welding: It’s a j-o-i-n-t effort

Two more BOAs with a total potential value of about $37 million were recently awarded to CH2M HILL Inc. and Jacobs Engineering Group Inc. to provide facility preliminary and detailed design, as well as Title III construction support services for UPF through September 2014. Almost 30 CH2M HILL staff members and about 50 Jacobs employees are expected on the project’s doorstep by October.

The final BOA for process systems and equipment design is to be awarded this fall.

Another new face joining the project is Phil Schuetz, who was named the UPF project manager in June. Schuetz brings extensive and diverse commercial and government experience to the project.

“I’m really looking forward to this job and working closely with the team to deliver a world-class facility to our National Nuclear Security Administration customer,” Schuetz said.

Schuetz is bringing another type of energy to the team, especially on Thursdays, when he shows his support of the Susan G. Komen Foundation for breast cancer research by wearing pink shirts and, thanks to an anonymous donor, now sports a new pink Y-12 ball cap.

Weld defects in the nuclear business simply cannot be tolerated, so Ken Nicklas works with national laboratory partners and Y-12 welders to perfect welds way before they’re made on weapons systems parts.

“We advise on welding processes that best meet design goals,” he said. “We develop welds and then turn them over to Production. They run with it, and if there are problems, we provide troubleshooting support on the shop floor.”

Recently, Nicklas, an Applied Technologies metallurgical engineer, has been improving the efficiency and enhancing the use of the Faraday cup to produce better welds.

The Faraday cup measures how much energy an electron beam puts out. In the late 1990s, scientists at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL) developed a modified Faraday cup that provided an improved diagnostic tool for measuring electron beams. Nicklas and others have been working with LLNL researchers for the past eight years to refine the modified cup.

“Based on Y-12’s feedback,” he said, “there have been several iterations of the design of the modified Faraday cup. We use the . . . cup to verify the electron-beam machine is producing the same beam that will result in the same weld time after time.”

He estimates that before the modified Faraday cup, it took a minimum of six test welds. Now it takes three welds.

Nicklas will receive the A. F. Davis Silver Medal Award at the American Welding Society’s 2008 Welding Show this October for co-authoring an article on the modified Faraday cup that was published in the Welding Journal (December 2007) .
Making wellness a priority

The Y-12 Employee Wellness Team has been working hard to meet some requests and recommendations of the almost 1,500 employees (922 males and 572 females) who responded to the online wellness survey in April.

The wellness team, which began last fall as part of the President’s ES&H Forum, continues to work to make “health wants” a reality. The new wellness website (http://home1.y12.doe.gov/wellness/) is one tool available to employees. “The survey showed us that employees want to improve their physical and mental well-being,” said Doug LeVan, employee team coordinator. “The website has information on the walking program, What You Feel Counts and links to helpful websites, both internal and external.”

A wellness coordinator also has been hired. Levette Bethea, who has a bachelor’s degree in health, wellness and promotions, joined the Y-12 team in August. In a future issue of The Y-12 Times, you’ll meet Bethea and find out her plans for the program.

Other tasks the team has accomplished include kicking off the walking program. The Y-12 Start! Walking Program, based on an American Heart Association program, is under way with more than 800 employees participating.

The wellness team also has started monthly wellness events. Biking, hiking, walking and camping have been featured. Additional events are planned throughout the summer.

“The team continues to work on employees’ desires,” LeVan added.
History in the making

The Y-12 History Exhibit Hall in the New Hope Center celebrated its first anniversary in July.

Y-12 historian Ray Smith said, “It’s rare when someone is not there viewing the historic artifacts, watching the DVD of the history of Y-12 or just reminiscing about the past.”

Members of the Louisiana National Guard visited while training at Y-12; a group from Russia and a group from Japan also visited.

“The exhibit hall is becoming so well known that folks from out of town are stopping by, and retirees find it interesting to look through past issues of the newsletters for familiar faces. We have lots of windows so the lighting is very good, and we also have several conference rooms nearby, saving travel time.”

Approximately 6,000 square feet on the first floor of the Jack Case Center is the future home of the JCATS computer lab, which is now located in 9114. The space will include several offices, team rooms and a new conference room tailored to this group’s needs.
Jazz it up!

You might think that there’s little opportunity to make music at Y-12, but for a certain group of employees, it’s the right place to be. The Y-12 Jazz Band has been playing since 2004 with an assortment of members and instruments, and they all agree that music makes the job better. They bring jazz to the job when they play for functions such as the United Way kickoff and the Secret City Festival.

Most of the members have had a long-term interest in music. Tim Stone has been playing drums “ever since I heard my first Beatles song around 1966.” Gary Bowman has been playing the trumpet for 50 years. Ken Wills picked up the saxophone in 4th grade, and Tony Manzo started playing at age 7.

Being able to incorporate a hobby into a job is a plus for the band members. “It’s an opportunity to interact with co-workers in an additional dimension,” said Alan Fisher. Brad Lyon pointed out it contributes to positive plant morale. “I’ve been able to meet people that I probably wouldn’t have otherwise run into,” Will Kirkland said. And Kevin Ross declared, “It’s nice to be able to give a little back to the company—after all, they keep my lights on!”

The band is always open to new members. Musicians interested in joining a great group should contact Manzo (a6m; 576-2360).

For members of the Y-12 Jazz Band, music is the way to unite people from different areas into a harmonious relationship—and that sounds good to everyone at Y-12.

Changes to the YES family

The Y-12 Employees’ Society (YES) recently had a board member change when one of the founding members and then president, Ala Montgomery, retired. She left YES in the capable hands of Lisa Harris, a board member of YES since 2004.

Did you know that the YES board members have established discounts with local vendors to help employees save money on various items and services? Board members also have planned trips at discounted prices for employees to take advantage.

“Yes was established to enhance employee morale,” Montgomery explained.

Both Montgomery and Harris think YES is important to employees. Harris said, “YES provides great opportunities to gather together outside of work. If employees, who aren’t familiar with YES or haven’t participated in a YES-sponsored event, would take a trip with us, join a sports team or attend the annual holiday celebration or egg hunt, they would realize how much fun we have in sharing time with our co-workers outside of the work environment.”

YES is a great organization, but it can be better if more people get involved. All work with YES is on a volunteer basis. Contact Harris (lh4; 576-2658) for more information about YES.
When thinking of Mike, one word that sticks out is Pal," said co-worker Jason Coker. "As a union steward or helping me in Planning, many times Mike said, 'We'll make it, Pal' or 'It will be all right, Pal.' He was a friend and a brother. I'm confident when Mike reached heaven, he heard, 'Well done, thy good and faithful servant.'"

In memoriam

Mike Ward of Facilities, Infrastructure and Services passed away July 19. He had 30 years of company service.

"When thinking of Mike, one word that sticks out is Pal," said co-worker Jason Coker. "As a union steward or helping me in Planning, many times Mike said, 'We'll make it, Pal' or 'It will be all right, Pal.' He was a friend and a brother. I'm confident when Mike reached heaven, he heard, 'Well done, thy good and faithful servant.'"

BACK TO SCHOOL: Why four employees return to class

For Renee Pierce, Donna Ethridge, Sheila Garrett and Anne Backus, volunteering on their day off in their children's or grandchildren's classrooms is a natural extension of the work week.

In fact, it wouldn't seem like Friday without stuffing homework folders, serving lunch, chaperoning a field trip, collecting money for school drives or helping with crafts.

"If you're involved, you can help guide their education," explained Pierce of the Financial Performance Assessment group on why she volunteers in daughter Delaney's and son Oran's classrooms. "I want to see what's going on in my kids' lives."

Ethridge of General Accounting said volunteering in her grandson Alex's school is way of staying on top of things. "The biggest advantage is knowing what's going on in school," she said. "You pay attention, so you know how well he's doing and if he's had a bad day."

Six-year-old Emily wishes her mom could go to school with her every day. "She makes me feel appreciated," said Emily's mom, Garrett of Training. "I take ownership of my child's education. If I show interest, it will make Emily want to do better in school."

Backus, Readiness in Technical Base and Facilities, noted that volunteering is important throughout a child's academic career, not just in early childhood. "I get to know their friends," said Backus, the mom of Emily and Catherine, both 16, and Anne Marie, 21, and Emily and Catherine's school's band booster president. "There are a lot of neat, interesting kids out there."

Gammy (as Alex calls his grandmother, Donna Ethridge) likes going to school with her grandson. "It makes a difference to him," she said. "Alex feels special."

SERVICE ANNIVERSARIES

August

46 years
Applied Technologies: Matthew J. O’Hara

40 years
Engineering: Edward T. Johnson Jr.
Facilities, Infrastructure and Services: Herbert F. Shanklin
Production: David P. Bryant

30 years
Engineering: James T. Cox III
Facilities, Infrastructure and Services: Lawrence T. Otoole and Bruce E. Walton
Human Capital: Dana J. Davis

Information Technology: David G. Ball and Janelle J. Dunigan
Production: James M. Dugley and Pamela J. Fritts
Quality Assurance: Barbara D. Carmichael and Richard J. Davis

25 years
Business Services: Cynthia M. Bailey
Facilities, Infrastructure and Services: Roxanne R. Leedy
Production: Teresa J. Goodpasture
Program Planning: James D. Plemmons

20 years
Environment, Safety and Health: Astrid Brynestad, Mark A. Burdette and Laura L. Cunningham
Facilities, Infrastructure and Services: Gary L. Phillips
Human Capital: Cheryl S. Sanz
Legal: Diana L. Johnson
Production: Tonya M. Barnard
Justice: ‘Make sure it’s done right’

She may not be high on the seniority list, but Lara Justice already has a name for speaking up and expecting changes for the better. Justice, who has clocked a little more than a year as a chemical operator in Production, said, “Sometimes it takes a new person asking questions to see that things can be done better.”

Being safe and following procedures are big deals because high-pressure presses, airborne irritants, forklifts, and bending and stooping are all part of the job. One of Justice’s first suggestions was to install a plastic-sleeve door separating the break room from the operating area. The new door allows visibility while ensuring that irritants don’t migrate into the eating area. Adding a light to a glovebox was another suggestion. “It might seem like a small thing, but now it’s easier to see what we’re doing,” she said.

Justice began as a cafeteria worker and moved on to laborer before landing her current job. “Working as a laborer changed my life,” she said. “Learning how to operate power tools and big forklifts and working at high elevations gave me confidence that I could do just about anything.

“In my current job, I know I have to try harder because I’m the new person,” she said, “and I think my attitude may encourage others. Maybe a lot of people could do my job, but you need to go the extra mile to make sure it’s done right.”

Sticking to it

With more than half of 2008 gone, we’re checking in with some people who entered this year’s New Year’s Resolution Contest. Good news: Many are sticking to their pledges and seeing good results.

Production’s Lynda Bryan, a recycling advocate, began urging co-workers to go greener. “Six in my group have converted to recycling plastic bottles,” she said. “Another person has joined me in carrying tote bags back and forth to the grocery.”

Susan Beeler of Business Services resolved to be more involved in her neighborhood. “Picking up roadside trash, weeding adjacent yards, running a book club and planning events for the women’s group have become routine,” she said.

The most popular pledge, of course, was to exercise and lose weight. Facilities, Infrastructure and Services’ Will Farmer runs more than his 15-mile-per-week goal. While Engineering’s Mark Gibbs has lost 11 pounds, but more importantly has decreased body fat by 9 percent and gained muscle mass. Jay Everett of Engineering has lost 14 pounds and several inches in the waistline by running regularly.

Rebecca Dotson of Safeguards, Security, & Emergency Services changed her routine after adopting two pets; now in place of exercise class, she takes long walks with the dogs. Karen Tipton of Human Capital may not get to all the classes she intended, but she walks or rides her bike. Both women are strong advocates of the Y-12 Start! Walking Program.

What makes for success? Strong determination and good feedback are tops. At least one resolution has led to another benefit: “Aggressive digging in my yard is great therapy after a stressful day at the office!” said Beeler.
Coming in September

Y-12 will celebrate the completion of the Highly Enriched Uranium Materials Facility. Stay tuned to YSource for details.

Traffic Safety Expo

Sept. 24

Jack Case Center Courtyard
1–3:30 p.m.

Contact Ed Werden
(e4n; 576-6048)

Replacing critical skills

With what looks to be a resurgence of the nuclear power industry, particularly across the Southeast, skilled craft workers are in short supply. That's why Y-12 is reviving an apprenticeship program to recruit and train workers in nine skilled crafts.

The apprenticeships will be for boilermakers, carpenters, electricians, insulators, ironworker/riggers, outside machinists/millwrights, painters, pipefitters, air conditioning and refrigeration mechanics and welders. Bill Klemm, vice president for Facilities, Infrastructure and Services (FI&S), and Garry Whitley, president of the Atomic Trades and Labor Council (the organization that represents the union work force at Y-12), are working together to move the program forward.

Whitley said, "More than half of the craft workers at Y-12 could retire in the next few years, and it will be difficult to replace them with trained workers from the general labor pool."

When Y-12 advertised for applicants for its apprenticeship program, 2,610 people applied and paid a fee to take the mathematics and reading comprehension test for one of 50 apprenticeship spots.

Apprentices will be full-time Y-12 employees, where they will receive their on-the-job training in critical skill areas. They also must attend classroom training sessions conducted by the respective union locals. Apprenticeship length varies by craft.

Completion of the apprenticeship will result in the trainees earning their journeyman's card.

Eva Irwin of FI&S coordinated the registration and aptitude testing phase of the program. "We had people from all over East Tennessee and from as far away as Lexington, Ky., apply. There has been tremendous interest in this program," she said.