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WEST VALLEY DEMONSTRATION PROJECT PUBLIC INFORMATION
PLAN OBJECTIVES—1988

By
W. Dean Hoffman

September 30, 1987

Work Performed Under Contract No. AC07-81NE44139

West Valley Nuclear Services Company, Inc.
West Valley, New York

MASTER

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PUBLIC INFORMATION PLAN

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Prepared for
U.S. Department of Energy
Assistant Secretary for Nuclear Energy

Prepared by
West Valley Nuclear Services Company, Inc.
West Valley, New York 14171

FY 1988
WEST VALLEY DEMONSTRATION PROJECT
PUBLIC INFORMATION PLAN

1.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of the plan is to fully inform the community about the West Valley Demonstration Project to create and sustain a public awareness that will generate Project support.

2.0 NEED

The West Valley Demonstration Project is a matter of considerable public interest and concern because it deals with nuclear waste. Even though the Project is solving an existing problem by solidifying high-level radioactive waste and transporting it to a federal repository, public reaction was initially characterized by concern and suspicion. The public still doubts the commitment of industry and government to adequately manage this nuclear waste project to successful completion. Because the community can better consider West Valley issues when it is fully informed about the Project, a comprehensive communication plan is essential to the successful completion of the Project.

3.0 OBJECTIVES

- o Develop an effective communication between the Project management team and the general public, the media, public officials, educators and environmental groups.
- o Enhance regional, national, and international awareness that the Project solves an existing problem while protecting health and environment.
- o Build public confidence that the Project will be successfully completed.

4.0 STRATEGIC APPROACH

The Public Information program is characterized by candid, open communications on the Project, addressing problems as well as accomplishments. It is a dynamic communication program where opportunities to inform are sought out rather than a program that merely responds to requests. The program emphasizes information about the West Valley Demonstration Project and attempts to put these efforts in a context which is both understandable and meaningful. We also listen. The Public Information program shows that Project management considers the impact of its decisions on the public.

5.0 SPECIFIC PROGRAMS

The following specific programs are included in the Public Information Plan:

- o Community Leader Communication
- o Local Environmental Groups Participation
- o Facility Open House
- o Local, Regional and National Media Coverage
- o Employee Speakers Bureau
- o Government Interface
- o Media Services
- o Support Materials Development

Details about specific programs, their target audiences, program benefits, implementation and schedule are contained in the following pages.

6.0 IMPLEMENTATION

The first task of the Public Information program is to identify various public audiences, assess their information needs, and then design programs to meet those needs. The Public Information Plan emphasizes local community audiences; however the needs of the extended community and the media are also addressed.

6.1 Community Leaders

A key method of interacting with the local community is through public leaders. By developing personalized communications with these local leaders and then continually reinforcing that relationship with additional contact and information, a link from the Project to the community via its leaders is forged. Those leaders include educators, churchmen, and town administrators, as well as leaders from civic, business, tribal and labor groups.

Meeting local leaders and interfacing with their community groups is the key to developing an awareness of specific public concerns. This understanding of public attitudes and perceptions is essential to the design of effective communication programs to meet the need for Public Information.

6.2 Environmental Communications

An environmental groups communications program has been developed at the Project. It will be expanded through semiannual steering group meetings and periodic technical meetings. The open communications approach has enhanced the Project by providing an opportunity for concerned citizens to talk directly with Project leaders.

Steering group representation will come from town council members, leading educators, and environmentalists from the Coalition on West Valley Nuclear Wastes and the Radioactive Waste Campaign. An agenda will be agreed upon at steering meetings and cognizant Project managers will address topics of interest at technical meetings open to a larger public.

6.3 Facility Open House

An Open House is held each year. The event allows the public to tour the site, view exhibits, meet employees, and better understand the Project.

The Open House is publicized in order to generate as large a public as is possible. A tour route is established and speakers address specific facility areas for attending guests. Engineers answer questions at various exhibits. The object of the event is to educate the public and show progress.

6.4 Media

Press releases are written as required on Project accomplishments and distributed regionally to newspapers, radio, and television stations as well as nationally to interested journals. Media are invited to the site regularly to document Project progress. Problems are reported promptly. Access to Project management is provided.

Media provide the greatest opportunity to disseminate information about the Project to a wide audience. Media contact with management and technical personnel builds confidence in the Project. Credibility is best maintained by reporting both accomplishments and problems.

6.5 Speakers Bureau

An employee speakers bureau is maintained to represent the Project in media interviews, at public speaking functions, and on-site tours. Selected members are given an opportunity to participate in media and communications training. Weekly meetings ensure that members are well versed on Project events and issues.

Personal contact with the community is established through the speakers bureau. Public awareness of the Project is enhanced.

6.6 Government Interface

Key state and federal officials are advised of the Project status. This is enhanced through regular on-site briefings for regional officials and annual off-site visits to federal representatives. Communication between the Project and key state and federal officials will help sustain the political environment necessary to successfully complete the Project.

6.7 Media Services

Video generation and production is critical to document project progress on a regular basis. Photographic services are also provided daily to support presentations and documentation.

6.8 Support Materials

Fact sheets are developed to address technical Project events and issues. Articles and conference papers are written to share Project information. The Project accomplishments videotape is produced to document progress at the site. Articles reinforce the Project where personal contact is not possible. The videotape gives scores of interested parties, including Congress, an overview of yearly progress on the Project.

7.0 FY88 SCHEDULE

A time-phased schedule for FY88 implementation follows the specific Public Information program section of this plan. It is a baseline for future years as well.

7.1 Community Leader Communication

Audience

Local public officials

Activities

Personalized communications will be developed with public officials including councilmen, mayors, educators, town administrators, civic and business leaders. This communication channel will be achieved and reinforced through the Speakers Bureau to provide Project information.

Benefit

A communication link is formed between the community and the Project via contact with various group leaders. Community information needs can thus be assessed and met.

Implementation

- o Conduct teachers education programs with tours and briefings
- o Accommodate special interest groups, community leaders and public officials with project presentations

Schedule

2nd & 3rd QFY88

1st & 4th QFY88

7.2 Environmental Groups Communication

Audience

Local Environmental Groups, Educators, and Town Officials

Activities

An environmental groups participation program has been developed at the Project. It will continue through quarterly on-site meetings and plant visits.

Benefit

Participation and involvement in the Project are enhanced by providing an opportunity for environmentally concerned citizens to monitor Project progress.

Implementation

Schedule

o Steering Meeting at WVDP

1st QFY88

o Technical Meeting at WVDP

1st QFY88

o Steering Meeting at WVDP

3rd QFY88

o Technical Meeting at WVDP

3rd QFY88

7.3 Facility Open House

Audience

Local community and interested groups, public educators, and leaders from the extended community. Local and regional media. Local, state and federal officials.

Activities

A facility open house that will allow the public, to tour the site and better understand the Project.

Benefit

The opportunity to see the facility and meet the people at the site will enhance the purpose of the Project.

Implement

Schedule

- o Procure supplies needed for event

3rd QFY88

- o Select tour route and exhibits

3rd QFY88

- o Conduct planning meetings

3rd QFY88

- o Coordinate the event

4th QFY88

7.4 Local, Regional and National Media Involvement

<u>Audience</u>	<u>Activities</u>	<u>Benefit</u>
Local, regional and national media.	Frequent press releases on Project accomplishments, milestones, and problems will be promptly reported. Ready access to Project management and reasonable access to the site will be provided. Technical Project spokespeople will be placed on radio and television talk shows and news programs and newspaper interviews will also be arranged.	The local and regional media provide the greatest opportunity to disseminate public information about the Project to a wide audience. The media can better communicate about the Project when its information needs are met by site visits and contact with Project management. Media contact with management and technical personnel builds confidence that the Project is properly and safely managed. Credibility is best maintained by reporting both accomplishments and problems.

<u>Implementation</u>	<u>Schedule</u>
o Press releases, accomplishments, problems and out of the ordinary events	As Required
o Access to Project management and site	As Required
o Place technical spokespeople on radio and television and in newspaper interviews	Quarterly

7.5 Employee Speakers Bureau

Audience

Local and regional community.

Activities

The employee Speakers Bureau will grow, and both off and on-site presentations will increase.

Benefit

Personal contact with the community is provided by Project representation speaking to various groups. Community awareness about the Project and the people involved in it is enhanced. In addition to being responsive to the community need for information, employee interest in public issues and the community is increased through participation in the Speakers Bureau.

Implementation

- o Identify key community groups and develop presentations to address them
- o Conduct speakers training
- o Coordinate Media Training

Schedule

Continuing

2nd QFY88

2nd QFY88

7.6 Government Interface

Audience

Selected state
and federal officials.

Activities

Key state and federal officials
will be advised of Project
status.

Benefit

Communication between the
Project and key state and
federal officials will help
sustain the political envi-
ronment necessary to success-
fully complete the Project.

Implementation

- o Identify key officials
- o Meet and brief
- o Provide information
through continued contact

Schedule

Continuing

Annually

Continuing

7.7 Media Services

Audience

Project population and external groups.

Activities

Video and photographic services;
media production.

Benefit

Project work documentation;
effective project progress communication.

Implementation

o Video documentation and production

Schedule

Continuing

o Photographic services

Continuing

7.8 Support Materials Development

<u>Audience</u>	<u>Activities</u>	<u>Benefit</u>
All	Develop written materials which address the Project, its scope, key public issues, commonly asked questions etc. Produce videotapes on annual accomplishments, media coverage, and ANS preview.	Journal articles are a principal method of introducing and reinforcing Project information when personal contact is not possible. The annual accomplishments videotape is made to give Congress an overview of yearly progress. Media coverage is documented in video to support the aggressive Public Information program. In addition, videotape will support the ANS meeting.

<u>Implementation</u>	<u>Schedule</u>
o Write and produce public information videotape	1st QFY88
o Write and produce annual accomplishments videotape	2nd QFY88
o Write conference paper	2nd QFY88
o Develop visual file, including slide storage, photo services, duplication	Continuing
o Prepare Project update article	4th QFY88

8.0 ASSESSMENT AND FUTURE WORK

The progress and success of each specific communication program will be evaluated every other year. Based on that evaluation, a revised Public Information Plan will be submitted for the following two years. As some items in various programs will be completed, an opportunity to add new programs will exist. These will be based on future public information needs.