

Ribbon cutting makes history

Please allow me to interrupt the series on the history of Y-12 to insert this current history-making event. We will again pick up the early history of Y-12 next week.

On Tuesday, July 10, 2007, the Y-12 National Security Complex experienced a singularly historic event. Not since February 1, 1943, when construction began on the massive Y-12 electromagnetic separation plant, has such a substantial change occurred at Y-12.

The New Hope Center was the scene of a gathering of over 350 community leaders, media personnel, elected officials, invited guests. Special guests of honor were the interviewees who helped make a moving and informative documentary short film especially for the important occasion.

The spacious lobby was comfortably filled and the Y-12 History Exhibit Hall was buzzing with its first visitors. The 400 seat auditorium was largely full. The first experience of hosting the community was a huge success! We are most pleased with the community response.

You readers will have to allow for a bit of enthusiasm in my description of this event. Admittedly, I am too close to it to be objective, however, given that, I do believe everyone with any past knowledge of Y-12's history of access to the site and public knowledge of the activities that take place here will have to agree, the New Hope Center is a huge departure from past practice. You will ALL be welcome to come there just as soon as we get moved in. Now, when did you ever think you would read such a statement as that!

The Jack Case Center cafeteria was christened by a young two-year-old Jack Marion Case, his grandfather's namesake. And young Jack Case even favors his now famous grandfather – THE Jack Case who was Y-12's Plant Manager for 15 years and whose name is enjoying a resurgence of recognition because of his name being the choice for this the largest office building ever constructed at Y-12. The entire Jack Case family was present for the dedication and ribbon cutting to officially open the Jack Case Center.

Also featured were five of the ladies who are still living that are in the historic Ed Westcott image of a 1945 Y-12 Shift Change made into a 20' X 50' mural on the north wall of the cafeteria. Along with Ed Westcott – the photographer, Lillie Allred, Dorothy Coker, Marie Guy, and Alice Piercey autographed a smaller image of the mural photograph. Agnes Houser was unable to attend the event on Tuesday because of a broken hip, but she has now signed the photograph as well. The framed and autographed photograph will be displayed alongside the mural.

Among the dignitaries to attend the historic ribbon cutting was National Nuclear Security Administration's Deputy Administrator, Tom D'Agostino. His favorable impression of Y-12's historic modernization effort was documented in media coverage where he stated that Oak Ridge was leading the way across the DOE Nuclear Weapons Complex and that he would be "copying" the model from Oak Ridge at other locations. Again, history in the making in Oak Ridge!

Congressman Zach Wamp's comments were, "These two facilities change the face of Y-12," among other complimentary remarks. His comparison of the costs of construction for the Jack Case and New Hope centers when compared to the much higher costs of the visitor center being built at the nation's capital were enlightening. I am sure Lawler Wood and Turner Construction personnel in the room must have swelled with pride to hear such grand praise, and rightly so. Oak Ridge is doing many things right these days and this is but one example.

The Y-12 National Security Complex proudly announced its new "face" through a 12-minute video – *Y-12's New Face*. The film featured interviews with many New Hope community former residents, including John Rice Irwin, Elmer Brummett, Wilma Brooks and former Y-12 employees, Bill Wilcox and Gordon Fee speaking about Y-12's historic leader Jack Case. The brief video also

included George Dials and Ted Sherry jointly announcing the historic change in Y-12's relationship to the community through the New Hope Center and the opportunities for improved communication within Y-12 brought about by the Jack Case Center.

Other former Y-12 managers to attend were Ken Bernander, who actually started up the calutrons in the Beta buildings at Y-12; Finus Patton; Harvey Kite; and Ken Sommerfeld. Helen Brown, a Calutron Girl, and Connie Bolling, a former Y-12 calutron supervisor, were there as well.

Finally, Ed Westcott, the official Manhattan Project photographer and Oak Ridge legend, viewed the 70 framed black and white artistic images of his early photographs with pride. There are 130 more of them coming! How can anyone visit New Hope Center or work in Jack Case Center without being constantly aware of Y-12's history – of course, that is the idea...thanks to Ed's foresight and skill when he made the original images. What a treasure we have in Ed.

In conclusion, July 10, 2007, will go down in Y-12's history as the day Y-12 put on a new face and made the most significant change at the site since the Manhattan Project. This ribbon cutting event at Y-12 was history being made in Oak Ridge - where science keeps on making history.

Caption: The Jack Case Center is a playground for two of Case's great grandchildren – Holly and Jack Marion Case, his namesake...who even favors his great grandfather.