A brief history of the Y-12 Development Division, part 2 —
Development Division worked "in the trenches" with workers

Our focus continues on the history of the Development Division, one of the oldest organizations at Y-12. The personnel in this innovative and creative thinking group have been involved in every phase of Y-12 evolution over the years. One of their hallmarks is the presence with the workers on the production floor when new processes are being brought on line.

As each new process or machining capability was created or enhanced, they were there. As each new idea grew from the laboratory to the pilot phase to production, such people as Dr. Googin and others like him were always there in the trenches, so to speak, with the workers making sure the process or equipment functioned as intended.

When the lithium work came to Y-12, it came with nothing more than a request to "figure it out" and separate the much needed Lithium 6. The COLEX process was developed by Forrest Waldrop and Dr Googin and piloted in the Y-12 Development Division. This would have been in the 1953–1955 timeframe. Development was located in Building 9201-2 where the various laboratory scale lithium separation processes were located as well as the pilot processes.

The first manager of the Development organization while it was a part of the Technical Division and still located in Building 9201-2 was George Strasser. Even in the earliest years of its existence, it was creating the pilot processes that were being turned into production in the various large Calutron buildings that no longer contained Calutrons and thus had expansive spaces for these huge production processes.

In early 1959, the Y-12 Development Division moved from Building 9201-2 to Building 9202 and 9203. Metallurgical pilot-scale facilities, a special materials laboratory and pilot plant, a plastics laboratory, general chemistry laboratories, and analytical and physical inspection facilities were all located in Building 9203.

R. C. Olson was the Y-12 Development Division Manager when this move was completed. He reported to Roger Hibbs who had responsibility for the Technical Divisions. In April, 1959, Y-12 Plant Manager, John Murray put Bill Whitson in charge of the Development Division replacing Bob Olson who left Y-12 in July 1959.

In the years following this movement of the Y-12 Development Division into the 9202/9203 complex, major machining advances, major chemical processing improvements, major measuring and inspection capabilities and in general every major advancement in Y-12 began with the able assistance of Development research and development in conjunction with the production and operations organizations. Development has had profound impact on all aspects of Y-12 operations.

From 1960 to date the division has continued to thrive and has led the Y-12 mission's technological advances as well as solving the many technological problems that have been a constant part of the Y-12 legacy. The "Can Do" attitude that Y-12 is known for starts with Development!

The Lunar Sample Return Container (Moon Box), the Seawolf propulsor, the Centers for Manufacturing Technology, and many more work for others activities have all been driven by Development.

Over the years various managers have led the Development organizations:

1949–1953	George Strasser	1978–1990	W. H. Dodson
1953–1960	L. P. Twichell	1990–1998	R. C. Riepe
1960–1968	W. K. Whitson, Jr.	1998–2001	C. C. Edwards
1968–1977	W. J. Yaggi	2001–2006	M. L. Baker
1977–1978	W. R. Martin	2006–present	M. W. Richey

Over the years the organization has had several names:

What is today known as the Technology Development organization began as the Development Department in the Technical Division in 1949. In January 1968, the organization was listed as Weapons Development. By 1970, the organization became known as Y-12 Development. In 2001 the name was changed again to Technology Development department under Engineering for a while then coming under Applied Technologies Division.

As the Technology Development organization looks to the future, their goal is to provide diverse capabilities in materials sciences and manufacturing technologies in support of the U. S. nuclear weapons manufacturing mission as well as other national security missions. Technology Development is the focal point for the development and preservation of uranium and lithium materials sciences and manufacturing technologies at Y-12.

The diverse staff provides technical leadership on a local, national and international scale. Members serve on the boards of numerous technical societies. In addition to supporting the Y-12 mission, the talent and resourcefulness of our staff also benefits U.S. industrial competitiveness through technology partnerships.

Engineers and scientists of Technology Development are the recipients of numerous awards and patents, including the R&D 100 Award and the DOE Award of Excellence. Four staff members also serve on the Senior Scientists and Engineers Technology Team. We at Y-12 are proud of the strong technical leadership that has historically been provided by this unique organization with an exemplary “Can Do” attitude so typical of Y-12 over the years.