

Ed Westcott's photography goes on the road

A traveling photographic display of 48 framed images, primarily the result of work done during the Manhattan Project by famed local photographer Ed Westcott, is going on the road. The *Oak Ridge Secret City Photographic History Exhibit* consists of selected images from many of Westcott's works that have artistic merit while providing a rich historic story.

A 16-page booklet accompanying the exhibit gives brief explanations of some example images and provides details about the display. The goal of the exhibit is to remind those familiar with the history of Oak Ridge and to inform the many who may not be as aware of the history. The exhibit is also intended to help the younger generations appreciate the scope of the Manhattan Project and later scientific and technological achievements that have had tremendously positive impact worldwide.

The University of Tennessee's Howard H. Baker Jr. Center for Public Policy was first to request the display of historical Oak Ridge photographs for its main entrance. Next, the East Tennessee Historical Society asked to show Oak Ridge history photographs in their exhibit gallery.

As these two locations schedule their exhibitions, the East Tennessee Economical Council's meeting room in Oak Ridge at 1201 Oak Ridge Turnpike has been selected as the first location in which to display the collection. The room is just large enough to accommodate most of the collection. A visit to ETEC's office and a request to see the room would gain anyone entrance as the room is normally locked when not in use.

Carl Pierce, Executive Director of the Baker Center, is considering if he can arrange to have the current Howard Baker, Jr. photographic exhibit on display at the center loaned to ETEC when the Oak Ridge exhibit moves there replacing the Baker exhibit. This transition, if it can be arranged, should happen in the next few months.

Many of the 100 plus people who meet at ETEC each Friday morning represent companies who contract or subcontract with the Department of Energy facilities pictured in the photographs. With two area locations already committed, we hope to also encourage the Knoxville Museum of Art to display the exhibit.

Future plans for the exhibit include a potential showing in New York City as the publisher of an author who is currently writing a book about women in Oak Ridge has shown interest in Ed's work. I sure hope this comes about.

Y-12, X-10 and K-25 are all represented by photographs grouped on the main walls of the meeting room. Each location takes up one wall, and the fourth wall has a variety of other images. The exhibit has been met with high acclaim and much pride from its hometown crowd. Visitors from Knoxville have expressed appreciation for the images as well.

Many of these same images in the exhibit are also displayed in the *Ed Westcott Gallery* and other halls in the Jack Case Center and the main lobby in the New Hope Center at Y-12. The gallery is the large open-spaced hallway with a tall ceiling and a large expanse of glass leading to the cafeteria in the Jack Case Center.

The huge gallery is dedicated to Ed and his photography. Signs on each entry door display an image of him at age 27 with a large format camera (now an antique) when he was a young photographer. In the center of the gallery, that same image is displayed as part of in a collage containing a more recent image of Ed holding a modern Nikon camera and a dedication statement. Ed has continued to enjoy photography and even now can often be seen taking pictures at events in Oak Ridge.

A 20 X 50-ft. mural of Ed's famous "Y-12 Shift Change" photograph now graces the north wall of the Y-12 cafeteria. This image, of several women walking up the hill leaving Y-12, was donated to Y-12 by the contractors who designed and built the Jack Case Center.

I have enjoyed attempting to duplicate some of the locations of Ed's photographs of early Oak Ridge. The scenes have changed a lot. One particular image that I wish I could duplicate is the panoramic photograph on display in the main lobby of the American Museum of Science and Energy showing a view of the city of Oak Ridge from atop Pine Ridge. Because of the growth of trees, the same view is not nearly so revealing today.

The New Hope Center has several of the more well-known images by Ed Westcott on display in the main lobby, which is open to the public. The center also was recently the venue for the Oak Ridge Camera Club's Annual Salon whose images were displayed on the huge curved inner wall of the main lobby.

The New Hope Center is available for use by 501 (c) 3 organizations or by other organizations where Y-12 is a sponsor of the event. It is proving to be a valuable community asset. And, of course, the Y-12 History Center, also located there, is a popular tourist stop.

I am often asked about the stories behind some of the photographs on display throughout Y-12. I always call Ed for the answer, and he never disappoints. I am amazed at the detail he recalls about these photographs.

If you have questions about any of the historical images on display in this traveling exhibit, or if you would like to suggest other locations where all or part of the exhibit might be shown, please contact me at 865-851-6423 or smithdr@y12.doe.gov.