

## **B&W Y-12 and 14 Years in Oak Ridge**

I well recall the transition that began in November, 2000, when BWXT Y-12 (now B&W Y-12) took over the management and operating contract for what had just been renamed the *Y-12 National Security Complex*, a name that replaced the age old *Oak Ridge Y-12 Plant*. From the earliest of times, February 1943, Y-12 has been the mysterious and distinctive name given to the place where John Hendrix predicted, "There will be a great factory in Bear Creek Valley that will help win the greatest war there will ever be!"

Unlike the transition that took place in 1984 when Union Carbide Nuclear Division was replaced by Martin Marietta Energy Systems, Inc., my personal involvement in the BWXT Y-12 transition made me much more aware of the many detailed actions required when such contract changes occur. In 2000, I was an integral part of the process. My job was to support the Due Diligence effort to locate all 800 of the buildings on site and document the condition of each one.

Because of the large number of people who came with the transition in 2000, most all of the top level managers changed. Although early communications were tense and often a bit awkward, both the new managers and the Y-12 employees who had been here before the transition worked hard to make up for the lack of a common language.

An interesting side note to such transitions has to be recognized. After having gone through such changes the people who are here before the change tend to think of themselves as "we-be's," short for "We be here before you came and we'll be here after you leave."

That humorous comment often helps lighten the atmosphere and tends to bring a more relaxed interaction and better perspective to the roles both the new management and the experienced employees bring to the transitions. I have researched contract changes at Y-12 from Tennessee Eastman Company to Carbide Carbon and Chemical Company (later Union Carbide Nuclear Division) to Martin Marietta Energy Systems, Inc. (later Lockheed Martin Energy Systems, Inc.) to BWXT Y-12 (later B&W Y-12) to now Consolidated Nuclear Security.

I have personally experienced the last three changes as well as the change from DOE Defense Programs to the National Nuclear Security Administration. With each change I found reinforcing evidence that regardless of who comes on board and regardless of the role they have, immediately the newcomers realize that the missions of the Y-12 National Security Complex are vital ones supporting not only our nation's freedom but many other vital national interests.

Soon each new team member sees that they bring new perspective and insights that can help support the missions because of a fresh look at the way things are done. They also soon realize that those individuals who have experience at Y-12 can also help them see the missions for what they truly are and together the new and the old pull Y-12 ahead to continue to meet our nation's needs.

Over the past 14 years, during the tenure of B&W Y-12, there have been many achievements at Y-12. In 2000, as BWXT Y-12 (later B&W Y-12) was taking over the management and operating contract, Y-12's name was changed from the Oak Ridge Y-12 Plant to the Y-12 National Security Complex.

At the same time, the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) was created. Within three years, Y-12 had resumed all operations, many of which had remained out of operation for more than six years, having been shut down in September 1994 when the rigor of nuclear operations had been determined to

be less than adequate resulting in the stoppage of all operations until improvements could be made and demonstrated as effective.

Since 2000, Y-12 has celebrated both the 60th and 70th anniversaries since its Manhattan Project beginning. These anniversaries marked the continuing importance of this site to the nation. We have consistently delivered all our missions for NNSA and for the nation, meeting or exceeding our defense program requirements.

Y-12 has been a key contributor along with the Oak Ridge National Laboratory to making the world a safer place by securing nuclear material from around the world as part the nation's efforts to prevent nuclear terrorism. The first such effort began in 1994 with Project Sapphire and has continued over the years.

In 2004, our joint efforts to secure Libyan material garnered praise and visits from then-President George W. Bush and then-National Security Advisor/Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. Since then, we have supported the removal of nuclear material from a number of countries, including Chile, Argentina, France, Italy, Canada and Australia.

There have been other achievements during the past 14 years of B&W Y-12's tenure that will be covered in a following article.