

# 'State of the Site' meetings highlight accelerated cleanup

The Department of Energy, the Washington State Department of Ecology and the Environmental Protection Agency held the second series of "State of the Hanford Site" meetings last month in Seattle, Hood River, Portland and the Tri-Cities. The January meetings were intended to inform the public of Hanford's cleanup goals and progress and to answer questions about Hanford activities.

Participants included Keith Klein, manager of the DOE Richland Operations Office; Roy Schepens, manager of the DOE Office of River Protection; Tom Fitzsimmons, local director of Ecology for the state; and Mike Gearheard, EPA Region 10 deputy administrator for Superfund programs.

In their opening remarks, Klein and Schepens talked about the recent progress at Hanford and their plans to accelerate cleanup. Klein discussed recent successes with the Spent Nuclear Fuel Project, which recently completed removing 957 metric tons of heavy metal from the K West Basin.

In addition, Klein addressed the main concern expressed at last year's meeting, which was the status of Hanford's groundwater. He told stakeholders that DOE has developed a new groundwater-protection strategy and is still dedicated to making progress on this issue.

Schepens spoke about his commitment to moving forward on tank-waste cleanup. He talked about the Waste Treatment Plant and said it is the cornerstone of tank cleanup. In addition, he told stakeholders about supplemental technologies, which are going to assist the Office of River Protection in completing its job by 2028.

The EPA and Ecology officials said that a significant amount of work is being done at Hanford. The agencies plan to continue to establish joint goals and focus on cleanup.

More than 100 people attended each meeting. In Seattle, Hood River and Portland, questions centered around the importation of waste, concerns about groundwater and about alternative ways to treat waste. In the Tri-Cities, the topics included issues about worker safety and health. Fitzsimmons promised that worker safety and health issues would be the focal point of next year's meetings.

Representatives of all three Tri-Party Agreement agencies consider the second annual State of the Hanford Site meetings to have been successful in sharing information about Hanford's past successes and future challenges. ■



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**Roy Schepens, right, manager of the DOE Office of River Protection, discussed the numerous successes at Hanford during the "State of the Site" meeting in Portland.**