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Reaching out

A PUBLICATION OF THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY FOR ALL HANFORD SITE EMPLOYEES

Thirteen years of the *Reach* will end with this issue

Hanford was a very different place when the first issue of the *Hanford Reach* was distributed by Westinghouse Hanford Company on Nov. 5, 1990. The site was beginning to come to grips with its environmental cleanup mission, as outlined in the Tri-Party Agreement signed the year before. Oversight groups swept through the site week after week, each leaving its own "laundry list" of problems that needed to be corrected.

Much of the cleanup work was only on paper. There was growing public impatience with processes that seemed painfully slow, and with the lack of actual, visible, progress. Bad press about Hanford was a way of life, and employees grew tired of the external media reporting that nothing was getting done at Hanford.



The *Reach* began reporting on the behind-the-scenes progress that gradually led to real and visible cleanup. There was plenty of work getting done, and the Hanford workforce was committed to doing the job right in spite of almost-daily criticism by watchdog groups and the media. In the past 13 years, new technologies have been developed, regulatory issues have been dealt with to allow work to go forward, and workers have overcome many obstacles — finding innovative ways of doing things that had never been done before.

Today, there's no question about our progress in cleaning up the site. It's visible everywhere on site, every day. Perhaps the *Hanford Reach* has contributed in some small way by keeping employees informed and lending some perspective to this important and difficult work. The environmental cleanup is important to our region and the entire nation, and many of the most difficult years of this vital mission have been documented in the *Reach*.

On the next few pages of this, the last issue, is a recap of those years — a tribute to Hanford workers and what they've accomplished since that first issue of the *Hanford Reach* was published. ■