



### For Immediate Release

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## Secretary of Energy, Governor Lee, Senator Alexander visit Oak Ridge to recognize historic environmental cleanup accomplishment

**OAK RIDGE, Tenn., October 13, 2020** – Today, U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Secretary Dan Brouillette joined Governor Bill Lee, U.S. Senator Lamar Alexander, U.S. Representative Chuck Fleischmann, and other state and community leaders in Oak Ridge to celebrate the first time in the world a former uranium enrichment complex has been taken down.

“After years of demolition, the Oak Ridge Office of Environmental Management has cleaned up the East Tennessee Technology Park – safely removing hundreds of old, contaminated buildings and making 2,200 acres available for economic development and recreation. This is the first time in the world an entire uranium enrichment complex has been taken down,” Alexander said. “I’m so proud of these Tennessee workers, the contractors and the entire community, who have gone above and beyond to complete Vision 2020.”

DOE’s Oak Ridge Office of Environmental Management and its cleanup contractor UCOR have been working toward Vision 2020—the ambitious goal to complete major environmental cleanup at the East Tennessee Technology Park by the end of 2020. Today’s celebration marks the completion of that goal.

This environmental cleanup effort, which began in the early 2000s, involved removing more than 500 deteriorated and contaminated buildings that could span the footprint of 225 football fields.

“We are not only celebrating reaching this achievement, but also how this achievement will impact the future of this region moving forward,” Energy Secretary Brouillette said. “We turned what was once an expensive government liability that presented risks to the community into an asset that the community can use to usher in new growth for East Tennessee.”

Originally, the site— known as the K-25 Site at the time— was built in secrecy in the 1940s as part of the Manhattan Project to provide enriched uranium for the world’s first atomic weapon. After the war, the site, renamed the Oak Ridge Gaseous Diffusion Plant, expanded and new buildings were constructed to produce enriched uranium for defense and commercial purposes

and later to explore new enrichment technologies. Those operations continued until the mid-1980s, and the site was shut down permanently in 1987.

The site's closure left behind hundreds of facilities with highly contaminated equipment and piping that had to be carefully addressed and removed. Among those were five massive enrichment buildings, including the mile-long K-25 Building, which was the largest building in the world when it was constructed.

Alexander continued, "I'm pleased not only at the magnitude of what was achieved at the East Tennessee Technology Park, but also the manner in which it was achieved. The Oak Ridge Office of Environmental Management and its contractor UCOR completed this work four years ahead of schedule, saving taxpayers \$80 million in estimated cleanup costs and \$500 million in environmental liabilities. This is truly a model of how to successfully clean up Department of Energy sites."

Together, DOE's Oak Ridge Office of Environmental Management and UCOR have transformed the site into a multi-use industrial park for the community. So far, nearly 1,300 acres of government land have been transferred for new economic development, and more than 3,000 acres have been placed in a conservation easement for recreational use. Another 100 acres has been designated for historic preservation to share the site's rich history.

Earlier this year, DOE completed construction on the K-25 History Center, and future plans include the construction of additional facilities to educate visitors about the site's Manhattan Project and Cold War operations. The foundation of the K-25 Building is now part of the Manhattan Project National Historical Park, the nation's 409<sup>th</sup> national park. With the accompanying history center, its legacy is preserved for future generations.

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More details about this environmental cleanup milestone are available by reaching out to the media contacts listed or accessing the media kit at: [ucor.com/vision2020](https://ucor.com/vision2020).

More information about DOE's Oak Ridge Office of Environmental Management is available [here](#). More information about UCOR is available [here](#).



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