



For Immediate Release

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Dept. of Energy breaks ground on major infrastructure project that enables cleanup progress to continue in Oak Ridge

Oak Ridge, Tenn., August 3, 2023 – National, state, and local leaders joined the U.S. Department of Energy’s (DOE) Oak Ridge Office of Environmental Management (OREM) and its lead cleanup contractor, United Cleanup Oak Ridge (UCOR), this week to celebrate the groundbreaking for the Environmental Management Disposal Facility.

The \$550 million project will provide a new onsite disposal facility that is essential for OREM and UCOR to maintain environmental cleanup momentum at the Y-12 National Security Complex (Y-12) and Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL). Cleanup projects at those sites are eliminating old, dilapidated facilities and clearing land that is being reused to support scientific research and national security missions.

OREM’s current onsite disposal facility is nearing full capacity after 20 years of safe operations; however, hundreds of buildings still require demolition at Y-12 and ORNL. The Environmental Management Disposal Facility will provide the capacity needed for OREM to complete cleanup at those sites.

Dignitaries and officials at the event included: U.S. Representative Chuck Fleischmann, Lt. Governor Randy McNally, Senior Advisor for the Office of Environmental Management Ike White, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Acting Regional Administrator Jeananne Gettle, Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) Commissioner David Salyers, OREM Manager Jay Mullis, and UCOR President and CEO Ken Rueter.

“As the leader for the cleanup program for the Department of Energy, I very much feel the responsibility that we have to address the legacy of the past,” said Ike White, Senior Advisor for DOE’s Office of Environmental Management. “This facility is an incredibly important part of making sure we can continue to do that here, and the teams doing cleanup in Oak Ridge are some of the best in the country.”

In his remarks, U.S. Representative Chuck Fleischmann also discussed the importance of the project.

“Because of what we are doing here today, legacy cleanup will continue in Oak Ridge for the next 30 or 40 years until it’s complete,” said Fleischmann, “That means that Oak Ridge National Laboratory will be able to take down excess facilities. That means that our friends at NNSA will be able to do the critical work on our nuclear arsenal to keep our country safe.”

DOE is complying with all federal and state requirements, and it is also incorporating numerous engineering features into the facility’s design, under the oversight of EPA and TDEC, to ensure the waste remains isolated from the environment. Additionally, DOE will continue sending all highly contaminated waste out of state for disposal.

This week’s event marked the start of early site preparation for the facility. The project will be conducted in three phases, and it is scheduled for completion in 2029.

- **Phase 1:** Early site preparation includes moving utilities and rerouting portions of Bear Creek Road and the Haul Road.
- **Phase 2:** The groundwater field demonstration study will help OREM confirm modeling of how groundwater levels will adjust when construction begins. This phase will capture data for two years and inform the facility’s final design.
- **Phase 3:** Balance of construction includes completing the final design and constructing the first two disposal cells. There will be four total disposal cells.

“I made a commitment to you—our stakeholders, our community, our client, our labor brothers and sisters—that we would be standing here today because of how important it was in that what you saw happen at the East Tennessee Technology Park would then be eclipsed by what we will see take place at Y-12 and ORNL,” said UCOR President and CEO Ken Rueter.

Additional information about the Environmental Management Disposal Facility is available [here](#).

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

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- **Groundbreaking photo caption:** (Left to right) Steve Arnette (Jacobs, President of Critical Mission Solutions Business), Mark Whitney (Amentum, President of National Security), Wade Creswell (Roane County Executive), Brent Booker (Laborers’ International Union of North America), Kevin Adkisson (North America’s Building Trades Unions), Jeanne Gettle (EPA Acting Regional Administrator), Lt. Gov. Randy McNally, David Salyers (TDEC Commissioner), Ken Rueter (UCOR President and CEO), Jay Mullis (OREM Manager), U.S. Rep. Chuck Fleischmann, and Ike White (EM Senior Advisor)
- **Soundbites and B-roll:** https://youtu.be/Fv_o85XRnx0
 - Note: Sound bites include padding on either side.
 - U.S. Rep. Chuck Fleischmann remarks (0:00 – 0:50)
 - EM Senior Advisor Ike White remarks (:50 – 2:08)

- UCOR President and CEO Ken Rueter remarks (2:09 – 2:44)
- Groundbreaking footage (2:45 – 2:55)
- Footage from the event (2:55- 3:12)
- Rendering of new disposal facility (3:13 – 3:24)
- Dump trucks traveling to current disposal facility (3:30 - 3:42)
- Current disposal facility nearing full capacity (3:43 – 3:48)
- Y-12 aerial footage, where cleanup will occur (3:49 – 3:54)
- ORNL aerial footage, where cleanup will occur (3:55 – 3:58)
- Demolition projects at Y-12 and ORNL (3:59 – 4:31)
- Future site of EMDF (4:32 – 4:39)