

Keeping you connected to the DGR



Marie Wilson

It has been almost five and a half years since I left my desk as editor of The Kincardine News to pursue a career in public affairs for Ontario Power Generation (OPG)'s proposed Deep Geologic Repository (DGR) Project for low and intermediate level nuclear waste (L&ILW). During that time period, I can't even begin to count the numerous DGR discussions, not to mention formal presentations, that my colleagues and I have enjoyed with people and groups from all over Bruce County. One of the things I most enjoyed about practicing journalism in a rural setting was the opportunity one has for meeting people from a wide spectrum of interests, ages, professions – all walks of life so to speak, and it was definitely energizing to see this same aspect reflected in my position with the DGR. I love to talk about the project, and there have been plenty of opportunities to do that over the last five years and a bit.

Of course all of this talk had the end purpose of providing members of the public and Aboriginal communities, both within and outside Bruce County, with numerous engagement opportunities to become informed and updated, ask and receive answers to questions and discuss areas of interest about the DGR. OPG and then NWMO, in service to OPG, have been committed to ensuring that the residents of Bruce County and all interested parties, are kept apprised of this important project.

And just to be clear, these engagement opportunities are going to continue throughout the regulatory process and beyond – you will be hearing about the DGR for many years to come; however, as we have noted several times over the last few months, we are entering another

important phase of the project with the submission of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Preliminary Safety Report (PSR). These documents will be submitted to members of the Joint Review Panel - a tribunal of three individuals selected for their specific expertise and experience in technical and/or social fields who will make the documents available for a public comment period with a maximum duration of six months. The Joint Review Panel will also oversee a public hearing for the DGR Project anticipated in 2012.

The public comment period for these documents will increase the public profile of the DGR and there will be comments from those who have concerns, while there will also be expressions of support for the DGR – the comment period is inclusive of all opinions and positions. As you will recall, the Municipality of Kincardine requested the DGR as its preferred course of study for a long-term management option for L&ILW with an April 21, 2004 council resolution. Council's decision was based on the fact that the DGR:

- Offered the greatest safety margin of the options assessed for the Bruce nuclear site in a study by Golder Associates Ltd.;
- Provided a permanent solution for L&ILW on behalf of both present and future generations;
- Was in keeping with best international practice; and
- Provided economic benefit to the Municipality of Kincardine and surrounding area.

As we enter the next phase for the DGR Project with the submission of the regulatory and licensing documents, the public comment period and ultimately a public hearing, which will influence whether the DGR proceeds to licensing for site preparation and construction, it will be

important to remember how we reached this important point in the history of the DGR Project. From my point of view, although I missed my editor's desk at times, especially in those early years, it has been very rewarding and invigorating to be a part of, and to observe, a significant development in the nuclear industry as it unfolds here at the Bruce nuclear site with the birth of the first long-term management nuclear waste facility for low and intermediate level waste in Canada.

For more information about the DGR Project, call Marie Wilson at 519-368-1639 or visit: www.nwmo.ca/dgr.



The public engagement program for the DGR will continue throughout the regulatory approvals process and beyond.