

Safety Measures in place



Representatives from the EPA and TDEC helped environmental cleanup team members from the Depot, the Corp of Engineers and their contractors cut the ribbon to officially launch the chemical warfare materiel removal project on Dunn Field.

The Memphis Depot Caretaker Division and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers officially launched the Dunn Field chemical warfare materiel (CWM) removal project with a ribbon cutting on March 17 for the vapor containment structure.

Construction of the vapor containment structure marks the first step towards the safe removal of CWM from Dunn Field. In an effort to provide important information about the project to the community, the Depot hosted a media day and a Community Information Session.

The media representatives who attended the March 17 media day toured the vapor containment structure and the other safety measures – four air filtration systems, video cameras and monitoring equipment – to ensure a safe, effective removal. Similar to other successful removal projects in Washington, D.C., the vapor containment structure will cover each of the areas where CWM will be removed. The air filtration systems will remove any vapors that may be released within the structure.

“The vapor containment structure at Dunn Field is constructed to contain any and all vapors that could potentially be released and remove them from the air through four filtering systems,” said Wilson Walters, Safety Specialist for the U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center. “The structure provides an increased measure of safety and protection to the nearby community.”

The vapor containment structure is an airtight, 32-ft. high, tent-like structure that measures 70 ft. in diameter and covers 3,800 sq. ft.

At the Community Information Session on March 18 at Corry Middle School, representatives from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Memphis/ Shelby County Emergency Management Agency, and the Product Manager for Non-Stockpile Chemical Materiel discussed the project with the 25 members of the surrounding community.

The project engineers and safety specialists conducted two technical presentations during the community information session.

The presentations explained the CWM removal project and the safety measures being used to provide the highest possible level of protection for the community in the event of an emergency, or maximum credible event.

According to federal laws, the maximum credible event for Dunn Field was determined by identifying the scenarios that have the potential to affect the community in the event of a release. Project engineers collected information on the physical characteristics of the CWM being removed, the usual local weather conditions, and the actions that will be taken to handle the release inside the vapor containment structure.

This information was entered into a computer model to determine the “no significant effects” distance. This is the distance from the removal site at which the community would be safe from a release. By containing any release, the vapor containment structure ensures that the distance is immediately outside of the structure. □



Clyde Hunt answers questions from the community during a technical presentation on the CWM removal project at the Depot's Community Information Session March 18.

