

Keeping you connected to the DGR



Marie Wilson

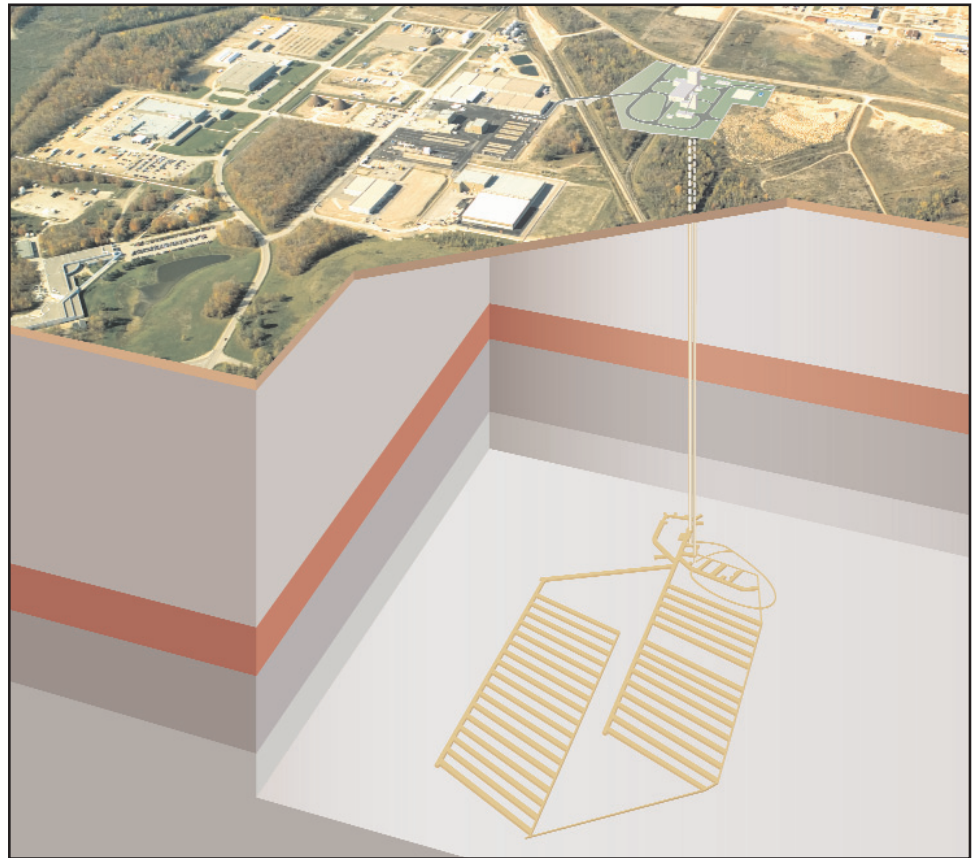
It's going to be an early spring –or at least that's what Warton Willie said on Feb. 2 during the annual Prediction Ceremony held in Bluewater Park where horizontal snow and nip-your-nose winds forced Willie and his faithful flock of adherents (somewhat reduced this year because of closed roads) into the Big Tent and out of the Big Chill for the little marmot's annual prognostication regarding an early spring. Thankfully, the storm was short-lived, and the 55th annual Warton Willie Festival was able to unfold as planned. Numerous successful events and activities took place over the six-day celebration, which ended on Feb. 6 – just in time for a mass exodus home to watch the Superbowl – if you were so inclined. Similar to last year, the Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO) participated in the celebration both as a sponsor and an exhibitor.

Now most of you, if not all, are certainly aware that NWMO, under contract to Ontario Power Generation (OPG), is providing technical services and other support to obtain regulatory approval for the proposed Deep Geologic Repository (DGR) Project for the long-term management of low and intermediate level waste (L&ILW) at the Bruce nuclear site. Community engagement is very important to the successful siting of the DGR Project. So saying, NWMO provides an extensive engagement program to provide individuals throughout Bruce County with opportunities to seek information, provide comment and discuss areas of interest about the DGR.

We are always interested in feedback from the public about our program, and we will periodically have independent consultants conduct surveys and public attitude research to determine if we are meeting our objectives. And of course there is always the informal grapevine of information, which lets us know right away in a less scientific, albeit no less effective manner, whether we are successful in our efforts. We may receive a positive email about a presentation, or someone will ask about a story in a newsletter or we'll have conversations about the Project in the grocery store, the coffee shop, the health club, etc. – grassroots engagement at its best.

And speaking of grassroots engagement, we were very pleased to meet Warton Willie at the festival on Saturday along with South Bruce Peninsula Mayor John Close; the

two were doing a walkabout through the tent, and stopped by the DGR display for both a photo and chat. While we were talking, Mayor Close noted that the subject of the DGR Project had recently come up, in a humorous manner, during a high school play about Warton Willie – something to the effect that Willie would burrow his own tunnel down to the proposed DGR site. Certainly, nothing could be more grassroots than getting mentioned in a high school play in conjunction with a local, cultural hero. On the other side, not to take away from Willie's many talents, but if he attempted to burrow his way through to the DGR site, located at 680 metres beneath the Bruce nuclear site in very low-permeability rock beneath a 200-metre-thick cap of low-permeability shale, it is highly unlikely he would surface in time to predict next year's weather, and that would be a huge disappointment of international proportion to all.



Warton Willie definitely has his work cut out for him if he intends to burrow a tunnel to the proposed DGR located at 680 metres beneath the Bruce nuclear site.

In other DGR news, OPG is getting ready to submit the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and the Preliminary Safety Report (PSR) for the DGR to a Joint Review Panel in March. A public review period will be announced following the regulatory filing of the documents. For more information about the DGR, please visit nwmo.ca/dgr or call Marie Wilson at 519-368-1639.

Hopefully March roars in like a lion andyou know the rest. Let's hope Willie was right!!!