

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

PORTSfuture is a public outreach project designed to engage a broad spectrum of community members in developing possible future use scenarios for the U.S. Department of Energy’s (DOE) former Portsmouth Gaseous Diffusion Plant (PORTS) site in Piketon, Ohio. The overall goal of the project was to assist residents of Pike, Scioto, Ross, and Jackson Counties with producing an array of possible future use scenarios for the site that would then be vetted with the public at large to determine public preferences. This report both documents the public outreach process and the resulting preferences of PORTS’ community members.

As a community-based public engagement process, PORTSfuture invited participation from all stakeholders including local residents, elected officials, economic development groups, businesses, environmental and community activists, scientists, and others with an interest in the future of the site and the region. Stakeholders were provided with multiple mediums for participating in this community-based process including:

- Interviews;
- Focus groups;
- Telephone survey, paper ballots, and an online survey;
- Local community events such as county fairs;
- Stakeholder community visioning team meetings/town hall meetings/open houses; and
- Project website (<http://www.portsfuture.com>) to engage and inform the public and to fulfill DOE public information laws.

The project was funded by a grant from the Department of Energy, Office of Environmental Management, Portsmouth/Paducah Project Office to Ohio University and involved faculty and staff from the Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs and from the Department of Social and Public Health in the College of Health Sciences and Professions.

REPORT OVERVIEW

This report presents the results from the PORTSfuture project and includes an historical context and detailed results from the three phases of the project. Chapter 1 provides a brief history of

public participation activities at PORTS. This information was gathered from public records both in hard copy and electronic format. This historical account shows that public engagement in discussing PORTS has been a priority of DOE for more than 25 years. However, PORTSfuture is the first large-scale public outreach project focusing on gathering public preferences for the future of the site. Chapter 1 also contains a summary of media coverage of PORTS for the 20-year period of 1990-2010. This summary highlights the impact that the facility has on the economic conditions of the four-county region surrounding the plant.

The three phases of the project are presented in Chapters 2 through 4. Phase One laid the foundation for all of the public engagement efforts by focusing on interviewing key stakeholders, conducting focus groups, completing a telephone survey, and engaging and educating the public about the project through project information booths at county fairs. This phase led to the development of materials that were instrumental in creating possible scenarios for the future of the site.

Chapter 3 summarizes the results of Phase Two which was the visioning phase of the project. Dedicated volunteers who live in the four counties, and have great interest and concern about the future of the site, worked with the data gathered in Phase One to develop future-use scenarios. The project held two kick off events and convened four individual county visioning teams. Members who were residents from outside of the four counties were present at some of these events. The county teams each selected 2-3 members to represent their work on an advisory group and forwarded their county scenarios to the advisory group. The advisory group refined the visioning team scenarios to develop the 9 scenarios that were put forth for public vetting

Finally, Chapter 4 presents the economic analysis data for the 9 scenarios that were put forth for voting and documents the public preferences for each of the scenarios. This report includes descriptions that can be found in the Appendix of all the scenarios developed by the county community visioning teams. This report is being submitted to the U.S. Department of Energy Office of Environmental Management, Portsmouth/Paducah Project Office for their consideration as they make clean-up and risk reduction decisions about the site.