An Interview with ED MUELLER

An Oral History produced by
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Esmeralda County History Project
Esmeralda County, Nevada
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PREFACE

The Esmeralda County History Project (ECHP) engages in interviewing people who can provide firsthand descriptions of the individuals, events, and places that give history its substance. The products of this research are the recordings of the interviews and their transcriptions.

The Esmeralda County Board of Commissioners initiated the ECHP in 1993 in order to collect information on the origin, history, traditions, and quality of life of Esmeralda County communities that may be impacted by the construction of a high-level nuclear waste repository located at Yucca Mountain, adjoining the Nevada Test Site in Nye County. Though the repository has yet to be built, the ten oral histories in this group of interviews were paid for by county monies received in connection with the Yucca Mountain effort, which is now in hiatus.

In themselves, oral history interviews are *not* history. However, they often contain valuable primary source material, as useful in the process of historiography as the written sources to which historians have customarily turned. Verifying the accuracy of all of the statements made in the course of an interview would require more time and money than the ECHPôs operating budget permits. The program can vouch that the statements were made, but it cannot attest that they are free of error. Accordingly, oral histories should be read with the same prudence that the reader exercises when consulting government records, newspaper accounts, diaries, and other sources of historical information.

It is the policy of the ECHP to produce transcripts that are as close to verbatim as possible, but some alteration of the text is generally both unavoidable and desirable. When human speech is captured in print the result can be a morass of tangled syntax, false starts,

and incomplete sentences, sometimes verging on incoherence. The type font contains no symbols for the physical gestures and the diverse vocal modulations that are integral parts of communication through speech. Experience shows that totally verbatim transcripts are often largely unreadable and therefore a waste of the resources expended in their production. While keeping alterations to a minimum the ECHP will, in preparing a text:

a. generally delete false starts, redundancies and the *uhs*, *ahs* and other noises with which speech is often sprinkled;

b. occasionally compress language that would be confusing to the reader in unaltered form;

c. rarely shift a portion of a transcript to place it in its proper context;

d. enclose in [brackets] explanatory information or words that were not uttered but have been added to render the text intelligible; and

e. make every effort to correctly spell the names of all individuals and places, recognizing that an occasional word may be misspelled because no authoritative source on its correct spelling was found.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As project director, I would like to express my deep appreciation to those who participated in the Esmeralda County History Project (ECHP). It was an honor and a privilege to have the opportunity to obtain oral histories from participating individuals. I was welcomed into many homes and was allowed to share in the recollection of local history. I thank the residents throughout Esmeralda County and Nevadað too numerous to mention by nameð who provided assistance and information. They helped make the successful completion of this project possible.

Appreciation goes to the Esmeralda County Commissioners who initiated the project in 1993: Chairman Wade Barton, Virginia Ridgway, and Joyce Hartman. Appreciation also goes to current Chairman Nancy J. Boland, William C. Kirby, and Dominick Pappalardo, who initiated the current project in 2012, and to Ralph M. Keyes, who became a commissioner in 2013. Ed Mueller, Director, Esmeralda County Repository Oversight Program, gave enthusiastic support and advocacy for this effort. The United States Department of Energy, through Mr. Muellerôs office, provided funds for this round of interviews. Thanks are extended to Commissioners Boland, Kirby, Pappalardo, Keyes, and Mr. Mueller for their input regarding the conduct of this research and for serving as a sounding board as we worked out methodological problems. These interviews would never have become a reality without the enthusiastic support of the Esmeralda County commissioners and Mr. Mueller.

Jean Charney served as editor and administrative assistant throughout the project; her services have been indispensable. Jean Charney and Robert B. Clark transcribed a number of interviews, as did the staff of Pioneer Transcription Services in Penn Valley,

California. Julie Lancaster and Suzy McCoy provided project coordination. Editing was done by Jean Charney and Darlene Morse. Proofreading and indexing were provided at various times by Darlene Morse and Marilyn Anderson. Joni Eastley proofed all the manuscripts and often double-checked, as accurately as possible, the spelling of peopleôs names and the names of their children and other relatives. Jeanne Sharp Howerton provided digital services and consultation. Eva La Rue and Angela Haag of the Central Nevada Museum and Suzy McCoy served as consultants throughout the project; their participation was essential. Much-deserved thanks are extended to all these persons.

All material for the ECHP was prepared with the support of the Esmeralda County Nuclear Waste Repository Oversight Program, funded by the U.S. Department of Energy. However, any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed herein are those of the author and the interviewees and do not necessarily reflect the views of Esmeralda County or the U.S. DOE.

ð Robert D. McCracken
2013

INTRODUCTION

Historians generally consider the year 1890 as the close of the American frontier. By then, most of the western United States had been settled, ranches and farms developed, communities established, and roads and railroads constructed. The mining boomtowns, based on the lure of overnight riches from newly developed lodes, were but a memory.

Yet, even in the 2010s, the spirit of the American frontier can still be found in Esmeralda County, Nevada, in the attitudes, values, lifestyles, and memories of area residents.

Esmeralda County was established by an act of the Territorial Legislature of Nevada on November 23, 1861. The first boom camp in the county, Aurora, named after the goddess of dawn of Roman mythology, mushroomed into existence in the early 1860s with a population of at least 5000. The name Esmeralda, Spanish for "emerald," was provided by a member of the party that made the initial discovery of gold at Aurora; the individual probably had some beauty in mindð the term was then a common name for girls with green eyes. Another version is that the name referred to the Gypsy dancer Esmeralda in Victor Hugoôs novel, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame.* Discoveries at Aurora were followed by others at Columbus (1864), Red Mountain/Silver Peak (1864), Gold Mountain (1866), Palmetto (1866), Montezuma (1867), Oneota (1870), Sylvania (1870), and Lida Valley (1871). Goldfield, which sprang to life in 1902, was the last great mining camp of the American West, and one of the greatest gold camps in the history of the world. Along with Tonopah (1900) and Rhyolite (1904), its two sister boomtowns, and several score of

smaller, shorter-lived daughter camps located on the central Nevada desert, Goldfield was the last magnificent flowering of the American frontier.

Between 1903 and 1942, Goldfield produced approximately 7.7 million tons of ore containing more than 4.1 million ounces of gold and over 1.4 million ounces of silver, worth $90 million, mostly when gold was priced at $20 per ounce. Goldfieldôs glory days were from about 1904 until World War I. After approximately 1918, mine production declined to a fraction of what it had been, yet the town lived on. It survived a terrible flash flood in 1913 and a catastrophic fire in 1923 that wiped out a substantial proportion of the townð at least 33 square blocks, by some old-timersô estimates. Another fire in 1924 nearly applied the coup de grâce to the grand lady, but still she persevered.

Much has been written concerning Goldfieldôs prosperous years, but relatively less material is available on the town and its people from the decades following the end of World War I. Much of the history of Esmeralda County is stored in the memories of individuals who are still living.

Aware of Esmeralda Countyôs close ties to the land and our nationôs frontier past, and the scarcity of written sources on local history after 1920, the Esmeralda County commissioners initiated the Esmeralda County History Project (ECHP) in 1993. The ECHP is an effort to systematically collect and preserve the history of Esmeralda County. The centerpiece of the ECHP is a set of interviews conducted with individuals who had knowledge of local history. Each interview was recorded, transcribed, and then edited lightly to preserve the language and speech patterns of those interviewed. All oral history interviews have been printed on acid-free paper and bound and archived in Esmeralda County libraries, Special Collections in the James R. Dickinson Library at the University of Nevada at Las Vegas, and at other archival sites located throughout Nevada.

The interviews conducted between 1993 and 1994 vary in length and detail, but together they form an unprecedented composite of life in Esmeralda County after 1920. These interviews can be compared to a bouquet: Each flower in the bouquet is uniqueð some are large, others are smallð yet each adds to the total image. In sum, the interviews provide a view of county history that reveals the flow of life and events for a part of Nevadaôs past that has heretofore been largely neglected by historians.

A second set of interviews was initiated in 2011. The goal here was the same as for the interviews collected 20 years earlierð provide a view of Esmeralda County history unavailable elsewhere through interviews with county residents. However, in this series interviews were also conducted with a second goal in mind. Over 97 percent of the land in Esmeralda County is controlled and managed by the federal governmentð more than any other county in Nevada; indeed, in any state outside Alaskað and of the private land approximately 50 percent consists of patented mining claims, leaving little opportunity for community expansion on private land. A large percentage of Esmeralda County residents consequently believe the county is in large measure governed by the federal government as opposed to elected state of Nevada, county, and local officials. Many feel the strong presence of the federal government has the effect of constricting economic opportunity and personal freedom for local residents in many areas of life and would like to see changes made in that arrangement with the transfer of more control to local and state government. Those issues formed part of the focus of these oral histories.

ð RDM
2013

This is Robert McCracken talking to Ed Mueller at the La Quinta Inn in Las Vegas June 28 and 30 and November 9, 2012, at Edôs office in Goldfield, Nevada.

CHAPTER ONE

RM: Ed, why donôt you tell me your name as it reads on your birth certificate?

EM: Edwin Alfred Mueller, Jr.

RM: And when and where were you born?

EM: I was born in St. Maries, Idaho, October 10, 1939.

RM: Where is St. Maries?

EM: St. Maries is in North Idaho, up in the panhandle, 55 miles from Coeur dôAlene and 65 miles east of Spokane, Washington. St. Maries is located on the south end of Lake Coeur dôAlene. You can go by boat down the St. Joe River 14 miles into the lake and right into Coeur dôAlene. The St. Joe runs from the headwaters and eventually turns into the Spokane River, and then into the Columbia River, and then runs down the Columbia into the ocean.

RM: Was your town a mining town?

EM: Logging. We were over the mountain from Kellogg and Wallace, where the silver mines were, so we were involved in mining, but my dad was a logger; logged for 27 years.

RM: What was your dadôs name, and when and where was he born?

EM: My dadôs name was Edwin Alfred Mueller, Sr. He was born in 1910 in St. Maries, also. The house that he was born in is located on the banks of the St. Joe River, and itôs still there.

RM: And what was your motherôs name, and when and where was she born?

EM: My momôs name was Helen Jane McWilliam, and she was born in Lethbridge,

Canada. The family came to the United States and ended up in San Francisco. She went through grade school in San Francisco and graduated from Galileo High School there. My dad and my mom met in California, and my dad moved her to St. Maries, Idaho. My dad lived to be 94 years old. My mom is 96 years old and she still lives in St. Maries. We just put her in assisted living a year ago (2012); she lived by herself until then.

RM: Well, they say if you want to live a long time, pick parents who live a long time.

EM: Right. I have a twin sister, Alverna Marie Mueller Thomas, and our birthdays are on different days. She was born at a quarter to twelve and I was born at ten after twelve, so my parents made up different birth dates and we always celebrated two birthdays.

RM: And where is she?

EM: Sheôs in Moscow, Idaho. Sheôs a retired schoolteacher. She taught home economics there for 18 or 20 years.

RM: Talk a little bit about how your father earned a living.

EM: My dad had two twin brothers and an older and a younger brother, so there were five boys, and they were all born within nine years. When my dad was nine years old, his father passed away with pneumonia. His father came from Germany. The name was Müller, but he changed it when he got over here and put the ñeò in it because in those days, they didnôt really want people to know you were from Germany, and if you left the Müller with the ñschwigò on the top of it, thatôs the way they do it in Germany. He came to the Northwest, and he was a carpenter.

In those days, the only way you could get up the valley was by boat on the St. Joe River. He built most all the barns and the houses up the St. Joe Valley. They were mostly Swiss and French people who moved in there because that valley reminded them so much of Switzerland. Most everybody in that valley was related one way or the other. They had

big families, but there were just four or five major families that lived on the river, and they homesteaded there.

RM: About when did they homestead?

EM: That was in the late ô80s and early ô90s. My grandpa built a house on the river and they homesteaded the property. He passed away and my grandma Mueller was left with the five little boys, but her father was rather wealthy and he owned a lot of property in St. Maries. His name was Jucot.

RM: And where did he come from?

EM: He came from Switzerland and as I said, my grandpa Mueller came from Germany. There were some French people in there, too, and most of them spoke French. When my dad was first born, thatôs all he knew, was French. They lived what they called ñacrossò the river, and on the other side of the river was the schoolhouse and the church. He and his brothers all went to the eighth grade; they never went beyond that. You had to go to St. Maries to go to high school, which was eight miles down the river into town.

RM: And there was no road?

EM: By then, there was a railroad. Thatôs why they say ñacrossò the river, because on the one side was the railroad, and on the other side was where they eventually built the highway. My grandma had a little farm there and her dad helped her financially. She raised her own beef, own chickens, a big garden, and she canned the fruits and vegetables and provided for the family.

After my dad graduated from the eighth grade, he and his older brother, Herman, who was a year older, started making what they call cord wood, which was three-foot long wood, from up on the mountain behind their homestead. They bought the stumpage from the Ohio Match Company. The Ohio Match Company was a sawmill in Coeur

dôAlene, and they owned a lot of that land.

RM: Were they getting wood for the matches?

EM: No, they were selling the cord wood to the steamboats coming up the river. There was a gigantic sawmill up the river at St. Joe City, which was another 8 miles up the river. They came all the way from Coeur dôAlene to St. Joe City with the steamboat. If you didnôt go into St. Maries, you went on west to Coeur dôAlene, and then from Coeur dôAlene they would get a bus or a train to go to Spokane. The Milwaukee Railroad came through there, all the way from Chicago clear to Seattle-Tacoma. That was the main line of that east-west railroad. It ran in front of the homestead house about 300 yards; the house was on a hillside

So my dad and his brother were selling cord wood. They did such a good job, and Ohio Match was so happy with them, they said, õWhy donôt you do our logging?ô

RM: And they were really just kids, right?

EM: Yes, they were just kids. So they started a little logging job and, long story short, they logged everything from their house way past St. Joe City, which was over a 27-mile stretch. They did that for 27 years, logging all that whole river, clear back several miles. My dad and Uncle Herman only logged for about a year, when a snag fell on top of Uncle Herman and killed him.

RM: Oh, my God.

EM: The two twins, Clarence and Walter, had just started working for my dad. They bought a couple of trucks and a little tiny Cletrac bulldozer, and they were just starting to blossom a little bit. My dad then took the twins as partners, and the company was called Mueller Brothers Logging Company. Mueller Brothers logged for 27 years. They went from Ohio Match to Diamond Matchð Diamond Match bought out Ohio Match. Back in

those years, those were the two match companies.

RM: I remember Diamond Matches.

EM: Yes, Diamond Ohio Matches. They logged for them for 27 years.

RM: Were they still using the wood for the steamboats?

EM: Oh, no, they got out of that. By that time, the roads were starting to open up and steamboats were going down. During the war, lumber was a big thing, and they all were exempt from the service because lumber was of such importance. They had a camp and a cook and cookhouses and everything. They were only seven miles out of town at the logging camp, but the only way they could keep the loggers on the job was to bring them out there and keep them in camp during the week. Most of them were single guys, and they were Swedes. It was kind of a work camp and a place for them to live, because they didn't have homes. When they went to town, they stayed at a hotel, so camp was their home. That was a big deal, and I can remember as a little kid, sitting at the cookhouse with 15, 18, 20 lumberjacks at a great big long table. The food was fantastic.

RM: I'll bet it was. Were they big trees up there? What would they be at the stump?

EM: They were white pine, some of them up to 36 inches, and big cedar trees up to six, eight foot on the stump. They logged a lot of the cedar trees in the wintertime because you could get the bark off easy– the bark would slip off. In those days the snow was deep, so they would dig around the tree, and they'd cut a notch out and put a little board in there like a ladder, so they could get up. That's why you see high stumps in some of the pictures. Usually in the wintertime, they made cedar poles. The cedar poles ran from 35 feet up to 90 feet high.

RM: Wow. And they were using those for telephone poles?

EM: Yes. Back in those days, B. J. Carney was a big pole company and Diamond sold

the poles to B. J. Carney. In all the years that they logged with Ohio Match and Diamond Match, they never had a written contract; it was a handshake.

RM: With those big corporations, it was a handshake? Wow.

EM: Yes. And they would get an advance, twice a year. My dad had a jeep. I can remember getting in that jeep, and we would drive to the office and sawmill at Coeur dôAlene. Weôd drive to Coeur dôAlene because it was draw time. He would go there and get a check for $30,000 to $50,000.

RM: Which was a huge amount of money.

EM: In those days, it was gigantic. And that was just off of what he estimated theyôd put in the river, in logs.

RM: So they were sending the logs down the river?

EM: Yes. At the peak of their time, they would put in a hundred thousand board feet a day. They had three short log trucks. They had a five- to six-mile haul, all downhill. And they were all short logs.

RM: How long were they, just out of curiosity?

EM: They were 16 foot-plus.

RM: Was it hand sawed? And how were they skidding the logs down to the docks or whatever?

EM: It was hand sawed at the stump. Iôve got movie pictures that my dad took, and I have it converted to a video. My dad had a 16-mm camera. Delmer and Louie were the two Swedes who pulled those crosscut saws and he had a picture of it. He said, ñDelmer and Louie, they were working by the hour,ò and he had the movie going real slow. Then he said, ñWe werenôt getting the production out of them, so we paid them by the logò and he sped it up.

RM: [Laughs] How did they get them to the road after they cut them?

EM: They had jammers. A jammer was a truck with an A-frame boom clear on the back of it, kind of like an old-fashioned wrecker. It had dual drums and a regular car engine with a transmission that went to the drums. You had two drums so that you had a haul-back. One drum was a haul-back to bring the cable back, and the other one would let it go out.

RM: How did they get the truck up to the logs in the deep snow?

EM: They didn't haul anything in the wintertime.

RM: Oh, they just let them lie there?

EM: They didn't do any logging in the wintertime, either; just the cedar because they would peel it. When they started building roads, Ohio Match or Diamond Match had the big expensive bulldozers and it was their land, so they came in and built the roads. But my dad would run the roads. I can remember going with him with the tripod and measuring it all out, and getting the right grade level and everything, and he would blaze out the terrain for the roads. They would come in maybe two or three weeks out of the year in the summertime and build the roads that they needed for that summer. I can remember that white pine was so thick that those short logs would be piled three, four, five on top of each other.

RM: Was it hard to get them out of the woods?

EM: No, not too bad with the jammer. It was an endless cable with the two drums, if you can imagine it– one released and the other pulled. They could only go so steep– they would probably go down 150 feet at the most. They would take the cable and put tie-offs on the jammer so they wouldn't tip it over. They had a hooker, a man with a hook, down there, and he had a whistle. When he whistled one, that meant stop. When he

whistled two, it meant go.

They would throw the tongs on the logs, bring them up, and put them in decks. There would be 100 to 200 logs in gigantic big decks alongside the road. Iôve got movies of all thisð youôd see these decks of beautiful white pine or red fir logs. They had different jammers, skidding jammers and loading jammers. The skidding jammers were a little bit more beefed up. The loading jammer was an A-frame, but it only had one drum on it because all they did with that, they had the cable come down, and then they had a Y with two cables and a tong that went into each end of the log. They had a rope on the end of each one of those tongs, and they had a man on each end of the logð they were called hookers.

Usually the young college kids, or kids getting out of high school, started their first job as a hooker because it was physical. You had to drag that cable down and throw it in there, both at the same time. The jammer would lift it up and drop it down on the truck. Youôd have to run up there and pull it out with the rope, take those tongs, and run down and put them in it. The young guys loved that. You had to be fast and physical, and you got paid so much a log. My dad had students who were studying to be attorneys, and he had a dentist, who worked there every summer. They were going to college and that was their summer job. It was a great summer job, paid well, and kept you physically conditioned.

My dad would never let me work in the woods. When I got out of high school I wanted to hook the first summer, and he said, ñNo, youôre going to go to college.ò He said, ñIf you go to work in the woods, youôll never get out of there, and itôs too dangerous.ò Now, my cousins did that. Iôve got a cousin a year older and a younger cousin. They both worked as hookers through high school and never went to college.

Once they were 21 or 22, they each bought a logging truck.

RM: It was a little bit that way with my dad and mining; he didnôt want us to go into mining.

EM: After 27 years, the cousinsð the twin brothersô boysð came on board and their dads helped them buy the trucks. My dad always said, ñNever go in partnership with anybody, including your relatives. We did it for 27 years and we got through it. Do you know what the biggest problem was?ò my dad asked me.

RM: What was it?

EM: The wives. He said, ñWe could have a handshake, we could agree at camp on Friday, weôd come back Monday and theyôd all changed their minds.ò After 27 years, and the cousins coming in, it was four against one. My dad had always been the boss because he started the company and he had a good business head. He kept the books and he did all the purchasing for the camp and was the detail guy.

He could also work. If a truck driver didnôt show up, he could drive a truck. If a hooker didnôt show up, he could hook. If the sawyer was short, heôd go saw. I mean, he could do it all. He did the grading of the roads. They had a grader and he would keep the roads up when he wasnôt doing anything else. But after 27 years, heôd had enough. The boys came in and of course, their dads wanted to give them big money. And by that time, theyôd gone from short logs to long logs, and thatôs a whole different operation because you had to have bigger equipment and everything else.

RM: How long is a long log?

EM: Itôs 32 feet. They had done everything they could at what they called the ñhome,ò the St. Joe logging job, and they moved up to Avery, which was 40 miles up the river. My dad didnôt like that because they were away from home a lot. And they were hiring

bigger trucks in. My dad had a good outfit that was doing the hauling, but then the boysð I call them the boys, the twinsð brought their sons in and they wanted to pay them way more than my dad had contracted for with the other guys.

So Dad said, ñIôm getting out.ò I was working in a grocery store, and I knew everybody in the little town of St. Maries. Milwaukee Land Company, which was Milwaukee Railroad, owned every other section of land between Seattle and Chicago.

RM: Sure, the government gave them that land to build the railroad.

EM: Right. They had an enormous amount of land in north Idahoð good, rich logging and mining land. Bill Cochran was the manager of Milwaukee Land, and I got to know him and his wife; I went to school with their children. His wife had heard Dad was going to get out of logging, and she said, ñWhatôs your dad got in mind?ò

Well, Potlatch Corporation had come in and built a big plywood mill. They had interviewed my dad to come and be their woods boss; he could have had that job. I told Cochranôs wife, ñHeôs interviewing at Potlatch; I donôt know what heôs going to do.ò

She said, ñHe needs to come work for Bill.ò The guy that Bill had as a timber boss was retiring. So she went home and talked to Bill, and long story short, within a week my dad went to work for Milwaukee Land Company and he worked for them for 15 years.

RM: As a timber boss?

EM: As a timber boss. He loved that. That was the ideal job. He was his own boss. He got to see all the loggers. (They called them ñgyppoò because they gyppoed by the thousand.) You got paid by what you did.

RM: That term was used in mining, too.

EM: Yes. Well, he loved that. They furnished him a vehicle, and he was out every day.

And he did a lot of hunting and fishingð he could spot the game, he could stop and fish when he wanted to. It was a dream job for him.

He retired at 62, and he said, ñI donôt know how I ever had time to work.ò He had a garden and he fished and he hunted. My dad and my whole family were devout Christians, and they lived a very conservative lifeð they paid cash for everything. They were loved in the community. When he passed awayð itôs emotional for me to say, but he had every logger in north Idaho at the funeral.

RM: What a tribute.

EM: Yes. So he was well respected.

RM: And he was 90 . . . ?

EM: He was 94 then. And he was a great fisherman. They said, ñEd can catch a fish in a mud puddle, just get him a pole.ò Thereôs nothing he liked better than to go to a stream and fish. He fished a lot in Canada. When my oldest son, Randy, was nine years old, we flew a pontoon plane out of Coeur dôAlene into a remote lake in Canada that was 30 miles off the highway, accessible by trail or pontoon airplane only. And we took my second son, Rick, in there when he was nine years old. We used to stay in a log cabin there and there were eastern brook trout, two and three pounds. He just lived for that fishing. And of course, Randy and all of us hunted and fished. Randy got his first elk when he was 12 years old. We had a tradition on opening season, my dad and my boys, to camp and hunt in Idaho. My dad had a Winchester Model 70 30-06 that he bought in the late ô40s. Thatôs a famous rifle. I donôt know if you know anything about guns.

RM: It rings a bell, but I donôt know much, no.

EM: Okay. Winchester Model 70.

RM: Right. They made a movie of that name.

EM: I bought the latest edition a few years ago and my dad gave his to Randy. My dadôs gun had 19 notches in it, for 19 elk that he had killed with that gun. Every time he killed an elk he put a little notch in it.

We still hunt and fish the same places that we always did. Dadôs brothers had a section of landð I donôt know why my dad never got in on the section of land, but the twins had it for years. Theyôve both passed away, and now itôs been inherited. My one cousin has half of that section now and we hunt that every year; he built a cabin on it. And we just reminisce. Iôve got a picture in that cabin of the four brothers at a family picnic on teeter-totters. I mean, thereôs a lot of tradition in our family.

RM: How great. The winters there are tough, arenôt they?

EM: They used to be, but theyôre not much anymore. That river used to freeze up and you could skate. My dad was a great ice skaterð he could skate backwards as good as most people could skate forwards because they lived on that river when it had ice. I canôt remember in the last 15 or 20 years that we could skate on the river; thatôs how times have changed.

RM: How about the snowfall? Is it less or the same?

EM: Itôs just like the rest of the country; itôs changed a lot. Youôll get some snow, and youôll get a lot of cold weather. I havenôt moved there because of the winters. I used to love the winters. I used to ski, snowmobile, ice fish, do all that stuff, and look forward to it.

RM: I canôt take really cold weather any more, either. Well, talk a little bit about your mother. How did your dad and mother happen to meet in San Francisco?

EM: It was through their church, the Plymouth Brethren. Thatôs a conservative old English church. My dad was raised in the Plymouth Brethren, and my momôs family was

Plymouth Brethren, and they used to have a church conference in Oakland, California, every year. Couples meet at those conferences because they have youth groups and what not. One of the twins met his wife there, and my mom lived across the street from her, but they all went to the same church.

My dad and his brothers were good-looking guys, and my grandma did a great jobð I mean, she dressed them right. And in those days they were pretty prosperous. My dad had a brand new 1937 Ford coupe and went down there for a conference, and thatôs where they met. They wrote letters back and forth, and my mom had never been to St. Maries until they got married. He moved her up there bag and baggage in 1938. My parents lived in the same house where I was born. We just sold that house last summer when we had to put my mom in assisted living.

RM: What did her family do in San Francisco?

EM: Her dad managed a parking garage and a service station on Lombard Street, the one that winds down. The parking was underneath a hotel; all the executive businesspeople parked there, and inside, there was a service station where they lubed and washed and serviced the cars, and he managed that for years. He died young; I donôt remember him. I guess I was maybe two years old when he died.

He died of a heart attack. The church owned a rest home in Burlingame, California, right by the airport. They had rich people who came and retiredð it was an old mansion with private bedrooms and a big fancy dining room. After my grandfather died, my grandma worked there for 20 years, maybe. We went down there every year for Christmas all the time I was in grade school and high school. My momôs brother lived in Palo Alto, and weôd go down to visit with Grandma and we stayed at the rest homeð they had a little apartment upstairs for guests. My mom was a homemaker.

RM: Did she have a hard time adjusting to such a radical change of environment?

EM: We asked her that and she said, ñWhen I married Edwin, ćtil death do we part,ô and I went with him and we were happy and I never looked back.ò She did go to business school, but she never used it. She was a pretty little lady, and of course, my dad loved her to death. I never saw my mom and dad have an argument.

RM: How nice. I wonder if the church contributed to a unity there.

EM: I attribute the whole thing to that. There was no stress in their livesð everything was left up to prayer.

RM: Plus, he had a steady income, and they had a secure position there.

EM: We never hurt for anything. I think it was a blessing. Now, a lot of people hold that against youð they say you had a ñsilver spoonò or something like that. But I started working when I was 12 years old in a little neighborhood grocery store stocking shelves; I always had my own spending money. My twin sister and I both went to the University of Idaho. I paid my way, my parents paid her way, and we never questioned it.

RM: Yes, boys were treated differently than girls.

EM: Yes. So I paid my way all through college.

CHAPTER TWO

RM: What did you do after college?

EM: I only went to college two and a half years; I went to the University of Idaho. I was working at a grocery store weekends and summers, and I learned everything in the grocery storeð the produce and the stocking and the ordering and everything. One of the sons of the grocery store owner in St. Maries was the produce manager and he came down with prostate cancer, and he had to have surgery. This was right at the end of the fall semester. Iôd gone to college two and a half years.

RM: This was when, in the ô50s?

EM: This was in the ô60s. I graduated from high school in ô57 and I started college when I was 17 years old. Anyway, they asked me if Iôd come and run that produce department, take a semester off, and I did. That was probably the biggest mistake I ever made, because I didnôt go back to college until 25 years later. I fell in love with a gal in St. Maries and we got married, and I worked. Then he came back and it really wasnôt a full-time job then. But I learned a lot and I built the produce business way up. I did lot of new merchandising and displays and stuff.

I filled in there, and then there was a friend of mine who had a laundry route and a laundromat. He had to have back surgery and he wanted to know if Iôd come and run that for him while he had his surgery. In the meantime, I had applied at the post office to be a postal carrier and they hired me as a temp. So I had the post office and the laundromat going at the same time. And I got married, bought a house . . .

RM: This in St. Maries?

EM: Yes. And then the Chevrolet dealer, who I knew pretty well, was having trouble

with his bookkeeper. He had fired the bookkeeper, and he said, ñWhy don't you come work for me? I'll send you to General Motors school.ò My background was business, and I always liked accounting. He said, ñI'll send you to General Motors business school and also turn the insurance over to you.ò

I said, ñWell, that sounds like a deal.ò So I quit all those part-time jobs, including the post office. I didn't like the post office. It was hard work but I couldn't see a future in it— you were stuck right there. It would have been good for retirement, but I was always active. And I loved cars. In fact, I bought my first car in 1958, when I was 18 years old, from the Chevrolet dealership. It was a '54 Chevrolet, and I paid cash, $850, that I'd saved. He wouldn't sell it to me without my dad's signature because I wasn't of age; you needed to be 21. So he thought a lot of me because I bought that car. Not too many kids that young paid cash for a car.

I went to work for Chase Chevrolet and they sent me to GM school, and I took over all of the accounting. That dealership was a going concern— we had Chevrolet, Pontiac, Jeep, GMC— and across the street were a Ford dealer and a Chrysler dealer. The town had a big sawmill then, and we had a JC Penny's, we had a Safeway store, we had Radio Shack. That was a lot for a little town of 3,000 people. It was the county seat, and the county was 20,000 people. It was the biggest town in the county so everything came into St. Maries. And we were so close to Spokane and Coeur d'Alene that we had a planning potential of 250 cars a year, which is pretty good.

RM: That's almost one a day.

EM: And the trucks were big. The owner, Chase, was a creative-type guy; we did a lot of financing of logging trucks. Then I had to go to school to become an insurance agent, and I got my license. We had MIC, which is Motor Insurance Corporation, through

GMAC, and we had GMAC Financing. So I handled all that, all the books. They have a pretty extensive bookkeeping system. You had your monthly sales, a monthly statement, and then a year-to-date, and theyôre side by side so it all has to balance. That had to be in to Chevrolet by the tenth of each month.

Well, I did that for a couple of years and I saw all the money that was to be made in sales. I had a lot of friends and relatives and I asked the owner, ñCan I do a little bit of selling?ò He said sure, and so I started selling. And we were taking cars to the auto auction and also buying at the auction. I started going to the auto auction with him, and then he turned that over to me. So I was doing all the bookkeeping, all the insurance, and all the buying and selling at the auction. Finally I said, ñYou know, we need another salesman, and Iôd like to be the salesman.ò

He said, ñWell, I need you where youôre at.ò

I said, ñIôm working too many hours, and I could make a lot more money in sales. Iôve got to look out for myself and my family.ò

Well, he was going to promote the service manager to salesman. I had a client in Spokane who had a little sawmill in St. Maries and a box factory in Spokane, and this guy was a millionaire. I sold him a car and pretty soon I had all of his employees and all his family, and I was selling them probably a car or two a month. He took a liking to me, and I told him what Chase was doing to me, and he said, ótTell them to shove it and come work for me.ô

EM: I thought, ñWell, Iôve got to do what Iôve got to do.ò And our accountant also had the sawmill businessð in fact, heôs the one who put me on to them to buy cars. He was from Ernst & Ernst, a national accounting firm. They did our tax work and everything. I asked him about this guy in Spokane and he said, ñWell, heôs good. If he likes you, heôll

take care of you. Itôs got a good future.ò

So I went to Chase and I said, ñHey, Iôm leaving.ò

Man, he teared right up. I can remember to this day, we were both in my office looking out the window and I said, ñIôve got some bad news for you, Cy. Iôm going to work for Arlen Mooney.ò

ñWhat?ò

I said, ñYeah, you know, I wanted that selling job really bad.ò

He said, ñWell, I donôt want to lose you. You find me somebody to take over your books, take over your job, and you can go sell.ò

There was a friend of mine who was an accountant for JC Penney, and JC Penney was closing down. I went to her and I said, ñHow would you like to learn the General Motors accounting and come and take over the office for me?ò

She said, ñOh, that would be great.ò About that time computers were coming in, so the work was getting easier. Everything up until then, I was doing all in longhand. I was working until 10:00, 11:00 at night, doing the bookkeeping, because I was doing everything else during the day. Iôd work right up till the tail end on that financial statement. Iôd get it done on the ninth and it had to be in to General Motors on the tenth, so Iôd take off at midnight and drive 425 miles to Seattle and have it into the office by hand that day, go to the auto auction, sell the car that I drove over there, and then fly back. That got tiresome. So long story short, she took it over and I went to selling full time. The first month I made $3,500.

RM: Which was a lot of money then.

EM: A lot of money in the ô60s. But I had friends and relatives, and I worked hard at it. I did that for ten years, plus I managed the dealership on top of selling because Chase was

a state senator. He was the minority leader in the Idaho Senate and I was his campaign manager, so I had that responsibility. I signed all the checks and everything, and hired and fired, so I was pretty deeply involved.

I did that, and for ten years in a row I made what they call the Legion of Leaders, which was the Chevrolet sales award. You had to sell so many cars and you got a diamond each year, and then at the end of ten years they took all the small diamonds plus one big one and made a ring. (That ring got stolen later on in life.) But he had told me all that time, ñIôm going to make you part owner.ò I was working for that because I could run the whole thing.

He had gotten involved in real estate, buying land and development, and he bought a big property, an old ranch on the river. They were going to have it all subdivided, and they were building houses, and they were going to put a golf course in. His partner was a car customer out of California who came up fly fishing every year, and he bought two or three cars a year from us. He had an orange grove in L.A. and he sold that for a subdivision. So he financed this thing up in Idaho. They were partners and they made a pile of money on that.

But Chase had a son who graduated from high school and went to college. Chaseôs wifeð there you get the wife againð thought that Chuckieð their son, Chuckð should come work at the dealership. So they brought him in there. Well, I could see that once they brought him in, he wasnôt going to turn it over to me. And the son was making mistakes but I couldnôt manage him because bloodôs thicker than water.

I had a really good friend in St. Maries who was the district attorney and an attorney in Idaho. He had been my neighbor, and his kids grew up with my kids. (He was such a good friend that I never paid him a dime for legal work. I could go in there and

have anything done and he never did charge me.) I was telling him about this situation, and he said, ñEd, youôre so well liked here and you know the car business. Why donôt you open up a used car lot of your own? We donôt have a used car lot.ò And the three dealers werenôt really merchandising used cars. RM: Theyôd sell them at the auction?

EM: Right. And there was a demand for good used cars, but they didnôt know a whole lot about merchandising them. The way to do it was to take the old, no good ones, sell them, and buy better ones at the auction. My friend had a friend who had some property on the main street in town whose mother had passed away, and he had inherited the old house. Have you ever heard of Peet Boot Dryers?

RM: No.

EM: You look in any kind of sports magazine and youôll see Peet Boot Dryers. Theyôre built in St. Maries, Idaho.

RM: And what are they?

EM: They are a boot dryer that you put your shoes on to dry. This guy invented them, and itôs worldwide. Heôs a multi-millionaire, and his son is running it now. They were really good friends of mine; I grew up with them. My attorney friend and Gene Peet had grown up together and he said, ñI think Gene would sell you that property. Tear that old house down and put in a nice lot.ò I didnôt have a lot of money, but I went and talked to my dad. My dad had retired, and he had ended up with the homestead, and he had just sold it.

So my friend went and talked to Gene Peet, and Peet said, ñYeah, Iôll sell it to him. I wouldnôt sell it to anybody else, but Iôll sell it to him.ò

RM: When was this, now? About what year?

EM: This was in õ76. I was at the Chevrolet dealership from õ62 to õ76ð 14 years. It was a nice lot, right on the main drag. Actually, it was four lotsð it went from the main street to another street, so it went right through. You could come in the back or in the front. I bought that, and I had friends with big equipment and Cats and we tore that house down in a day, leveled it all off and rocked it. I bought a pre-fab office and had that brought in. Landscaped it all nice with fancy lights and everything. Anyway, I told Chase I was leaving, and I said, ñYouôre probably not going to like what Iôm doing, but Iôm going into competition with you.ò Oh, man, he just threw a fit.

And when I put a nice sign up, he came by one day and he called me a son of a bitch. I mean, I had bled and died for this guy, you know? Anyway, I went on, and man, I was pumping those cars out, beautiful cars.

RM: Were you getting them at the auction?

EM: Yes, in Seattle and the Tri-Cities.

RM: How far is Spokane from St. Maries?

EM: Itôs 65 miles. I had some dealers that I knew there. I could get new cars from anywhere. I had enough experience with dealers that I could call them up and theyôd sell me a new car for $100 over.

RM: So you were in effect dealing in new cars, too? Of any model, any make?

EM: Yes. I took on campers and travel trailers, too. In the Chevrolet business we had Arctic Cat snowmobilesð I built that up to an enormous business. And we had boats and motors, and I managed all that. So when I went on my own lot, I had travel trailers and campers, and there was a big demand for that. I also had boats. I didnôt stock a lot of them, but I could take orders on them. I did that for three years and I was just working myself to death, seven days a week. I was even renovating the cars myself; I had a little

shop. I was young and ambitious and I wanted to make a go. But I saturated the market, and then the other dealers started wholesaling their used cars in town to compete with me.

RM: So they were undercutting you in price?

EM: Yes. But anyway, I made a good chunk of money on it. The Honda bike dealer adjoined my property and down the street a ways was the Yamaha dealer. At the same time, I was in the city council and mayor of the town.

RM: Oh, wow.

EM: I mean, I was stretched out. I got my real estate license and I hooked up with a real estate office in Coeur dôAlene as a branch office, and I started dinking around a little bit with real estate, and gee whiz, that was taking off. And it wasnôt as demanding as the car business. Every time you sell a car, youôve got to go buy another one. And I had to leave somebody there at the lot to watch it for me, and see that things donôt happen.

It just so happened that the Yamaha dealerôs son-in-law had heard that I might be selling the property, and he came in and said heôd be interested in buying that property for a car wash. I said, ñWell, thatôs fine.ò So I gave him a price.

But then I thought, ñIôm going to make sure this sells,ò so I went to the Honda dealer, and I said, ñWould you be interested in blossoming out?ôIôd been selling some new Honda cars and they were a hot deal because the gas shortage was coming on then and people wanted cars that got good gas mileage. I got to know the Coeur dôAlene dealership pretty well; they even consigned some to me. I said, ñI donôt think you know the car business, but this would be an ideal spot for you to blossom out your bike business. I have a buyer for the place, but I owe you the courtesy to give you first chance.ò And when I told him who the buyer was, he jumped right on it.

So he went to the bank. I still owed my dad a little bit of money, so I set my dad

up to finance the whole thing, and Dad got the down payment. That made a nice contract for him for some extra income. I bailed in about a weekôs time and I went full time into real estate. With my realtor in Coeur dôAlene, we opened up a branch office in St. Maries, and I got my brokerôs license so I could manage that office. I did that for three or four years. I got so spread out, working so much, that I ended up in a divorce. I came home one day and my wife had packed up our kids and was gone.

RM: Had you married a local girl?

EM: Yes. We were married 19 years, and my oldest son was going to college. I met another gal, and I said, ñWeôve got to get out of St. Maries. I want to go back and get my education.ò So I started working on my education, and took a few classes and what not.

RM: At the University of Idaho?

EM: Actually, it was the junior college in Coeur dôAlene. When I was mayor, my maintenance manager had moved to the Tri-Cities and gone to work at Hanford. I was still good friends with him, and I called him up one day and I said, ñI might be wanting to move to the Tri-Cities. Is there any work down there?ò

And he said, ñThereôs all kinds of work. Man, itôs booming.ò That was in the ô80s. He said, ñCome on down and spend a week.ò So my girlfriend at that time and I went down there and I went around to all the contractors. And everywhere I went, they wanted admins. I told her, ñI think you can get a job. I donôt know if thereôs any jobs here for me, but you can get a job.ò She went and applied and within three days she got a call for an interview. The very same day, after she had the interview, she got a call for an offer; she got the job.

I kept looking, and there was a parts house that was looking for an outside salesman. I applied to them, and they said, ñWell, you havenôt had any experience with

parts.ò

I said ñHey, Iôve been in the car business, Iôve been in the motorcycle business and the snowmobile business, and itôs all about selling. I know I could sell. Give me a chance.ò

ñWell, we have to talk about it.ò The next morning they called me and they said, ñWhen can you start?ò So within a week or ten days we both had jobs.

RM: What is the Tri-Cities, exactly?

EM: Richland, Pasco, and Kennewickð on the Columbia River in eastern Washington.

RM: How far is that from Hanford?

EM: That is Hanford. Hanford originated in Richland. Theyôre all right on the Columbia River. Richland is the closest to Hanford, because that was a brand new city when they started Hanford. So she got a job in the employment office, which was ideal for me for getting a job.

RM: For the city?

EM: No, for the Hanford contractor, who at that time was Rockwell International. So I took that sales job. The guy was retiring, and he taught me the route and everything. I was there two months and I doubled his sales.

And it was interesting. I went out to all these big ranches, big gigantic farms, and a lot of the body shops and stuff like that. There was really no money; I mean, it was strictly on commission. But I made a pretty good living. I did that for about eight months, and then a job came up where they wanted a parts coordinator at the 2 West shop, which was a big shop out in the Hanford Site. I put in for that and I interviewed, and it so happened that the manager had been a service manager for Chrysler Corporation. He knew the dealership in St. Maries, and he knew a lot of dealers that I knew, and we hit it

off because I knew the car business. I had set up the parts department in St. Maries for the snowmobiles, and I could get parts. I mean, I knew how to get parts for Chevroletð I could look them up and so on. I knew I had the business end of it, the coordination of it.

So he hired me and they sent me out to 2 West. They had a great gigantic shop downtown. They maintained everything from diesel trains to buses, to cars, trucks, motors, all that stuff. But they had a small satellite office, satellite shop, out in the area, the 2 West garage, and they had gas pumps and lube there. Well, they had no inventory; everything was just thrown in a room. I went out there and set up a parts department and got it all organizedð put them on a purchase order, put them on inventory control. I did that for about two and half years, and got it all straightened out.

I saw where there were a lot of other opportunities in production control at the Hanford plant, and I kind of wanted to do that. Iôd been in parts work, and everybody that has a problem comes to you and they want it fixed. So there was an openingð they were opening up the PUREX facility, the plutonium and uranium extraction plant.

I had started finishing my degree at Eastern Oregon State College, which was down at La Grande, Oregon, about an hour and a half from the Tri-Cities. They have an external degree program, where they gave you credit for your past experience, and I had signed up for that. In the business world, Iôd had experience in advertising, Iôd had experience in banking, sales, everything. You had to document all that and build a portfolio, and I had to get letters from people. I got my degree within two years and I got 42 credits for that portfolio, for actual experience. It included political science because I had experience there, too. I took the catalog where they offered classes, and it shows what you learn, and I applied what I already knew about the various subjects, and had to write a white paper on each one of them, and then it went to a board.

RM: And they took it all.

EM: Because the experience was better than anything you could learn in a classroom. I still had to take a lot of classes on weekends and nights, but I graduated with a B.S. degree in general studies with an emphasis on business.

There was a job opportunity at PUREX for a materials coordinator to coordinate all the chemicals and parts and stuff. I applied for that, and I had great recommendations and good appraisals. They hired me there and I was working double shifts, six, seven days a week. I had a son in college; I put three boys through college. But I was making good money there, again, with all the hours I was putting in.

They were getting ready to start the plant up, and they gave me a title they called ñessential material coordinator.ò That was an exempt job. The other was a union job, by the hour. I became the head of essential materials, and I was responsible for all the chemicals that would keep the plant running.

RM: And they were processing plutonium?

EM: They were extracting plutonium from uranium and putting the powder out the back door for weapons.

RM: Were they taking spent fuel?

EM: Yes, melting it down and turning it into a powder, then extracting the plutonium.

RM: For nuclear weapons.

EM: Yes. It was highly classified; I had a Q clearance. So I set that all up. I had to find out from the engineers what they needed.

RM: Itôs a complex chemistry, I guess.

EM: Yes. We had gauges, and they had to be kept up to a certain level. Like I say, it was called essential materials. This was actually a factory and you couldnôt let it run

down. And if they had a need for an essential part, I had to find that part so that they could keep running. I got that all going, and then the manager came to me, and he said we got written up.

RM: Now, what year was this?

EM: This was in the middle ô80s.

RM: By then, Yucca Mountain had become an issue.

EM: Hanford was one of the potential sites for a spent fuel repository; they had dug a great big hole, and my wife was working on that project.

RM: Yes, Hanford was one of the three finalists for the countryôs nuclear waste repository.

EM: Right. We had just brought in a tunnel-boring machine, which went straight down. We also went into the mountain, and they had done some testing there.

RM: Just as an aside, since you know Hanford, what do you think of the idea of putting a lot of spent fuel there since itôs so close to the Colombia River?

EM: Itôs not a place for it; itôs too close to the river. And there are too many unknowns. They didnôt have the high mountainð Yucca Mountain is 1,000 feet above the water and 1,000 feet underground, where Hanford was shallow both ways. Even where they were boring straight down, they knew it wasnôt right. But they spent millions of dollars. They had a tunnel-boring machine where they were going to go down and it never even operated. I donôt know what they did with it. Itôs like the tunnel-boring machine at Yucca Mountain, it just wilted away.

Anyway, the manager said they had gotten written up by QA, quality assurance, because they werenôt separating and storing their materials, like their metals and what-not. They all have to be marked and inventoried, and their parts werenôt inventoried right

and we had a gigantic amount of parts that were going to start coming in with the maintenance for the PUREX operation. He took me over to N Reactor and showed me what they had over there for inventory and storage stages, and he said, ñI need somebody that will make this happen over at PUREX. You think you can do it?ò

I said, ñYeah, I can make that happen. Youôve got to support me with funding and people, but I know what you want.ò

So long story short, I took that challenge on. But he made me a promise. He said, ñI tell you what, Ed.ò He said, ñYou get this done in a year so that we can get this off of our back, and Iõll make you a manager over in Material Control and Planning.ò

I said, ñWell, I can make that happen.ò And I did. I had been doing some planning already. I had 27 people working for me. But in the meantime I had gotten my degree and once I went into management, I got a gigantic raise because I had a degree. Thatôs how I finished out my career there until they shut the plant down.

RM: When did they shut the plant down?

EM: When they did the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, they shut it down in 1994. I was one of the last people out of there. So then, because I was familiar with material and the plant and everything, my responsibility was to move everybody out. We had millions of dollars of parts that we shipped to Savannah River and Oak Ridge because they had the same kind of plants there. They had a tunnel and they had the cooling ponds and all that remote control stuff and everything, so we shipped all that to them.

RM: Did they shut down Oak Ridge and Savannah River too, or did they just shut down that N reactor?

EM: They just shut down the PUREX facility because we were doing things a little bit differently.

RM: You were making plutonium for nuclear weapons and the others werenôt?

EM: Right. So in ô96, when I got that all done, I still had a job with Fluor Daniels; they were finding jobs for everybody.

RM: Who was Fluor Daniels?

EM: They were the contractor at Hanford at that point and they were running some other facilities; B Plant and I donôt know what all. But they came out with an early retirement. I was 52, and they added five years to my seniority and gave me health insurance for lifeô thatôs an option I could have when I retired. I wasnôt ready to retire, but I took it and took a year off.

I went back to Idaho and reinstated my real estate license, and I dinked around with that. I had a friend who had an office and I did a lot of fishing and hunting with my dad, played golf, and just kind of kicked back. I knew I wasnôt ready for retirement but it was a good time to spend with my dad; he was in his late 80s.

EM: Then I got a call from some of my buddies that I had worked with at Hanford who were down at Yucca Mountain. Tim Fisher was the guy I had worked with at Hanford. We were really good friends and he was in production control, where I came out of, and he knew what I could do. One of my jobs at the PUREX facility, before I got into management, was I was responsible for all of the working policies and procedures for the maintenance department. They needed somebody down at Yucca Mountain to write what they called a business system description, which was a procedure to get all the different departments, including DOE, to work togetherð how you interfaced.

I went down to Las Vegas to be interviewed, and I interviewed with three or four of the managers and what-not and Tim planned a barbecue for me to meet a lot of the people. They set me up for about eight interviews in one day. We got done about 2:00 in the afternoon, and Tim was leading me aroundð because you had to have a badge. I had a visitorôs badge but you had to have an escort with you. And the last big shot manager said, ñTim, youôd better take Ed around and show him the area so heôll know where he wants to live.ò So I knew I probably was set.

Two days later I got an offer, and they wanted me there within two weeks. So I packed up and went down there in two weeks. I had gone through a divorce after the Hanford deal. She didnôt think I should retire and I thought I should; thatôs another story. So I went down there and wrote that system description. It took me two years to get it all done.

RM: Living in Vegas?

EM: Yes, I bought a house and everything. It was really interestingð I met everybody

on the project, including upper management at DOE. I had to get all the managersô approvals and comments inserted and go back and negotiate and set up meetings for them to discuss it. You had engineers, scientists, project control, HR (human resources), quality control, and then you had DOE. You had all those people working together, but they never had figured out what kind of procedure they should follow, and we had that all worked outð how the paperwork went where and where and where, and how you did it.

RM: It seems like an enormous challenge to interface all that.

EM: It was, but it was fun and I was kind of my own boss. The worst thing was getting time to have them review things and give me their comments and get it back. Then I had to work through the printing people and it had to go through editing. And I had to get production reports to the managementð where you are, who has assignments. I had worksheets on who had what and when they were supposed to do what; I had it all planned out. And when I got that done, I was Employee of the Year for SAIC (Science Applications International Corporation); I got a big plaque and a bonus and everything. I got it done on the 20th of December, and took it over to the manager to sign.

RM: Who was that?

EM: George Dials was the manager.

RM: Where was your Vegas office?

EM: We were over at Hillshire. We had 12 buildings on Town Center. DOEôs headquarters were right there at the loop.

RM: What year did you finish that report?

EM: I came there in ð98 and I finished it in 2000, and then thatôs when they changed contractors. As I said, I worked for SAIC, a subcontractor to TRW. I took it to George Dials and got it signed. TRW had the contract and lost it to Bechtel. They awarded that

contract on the 22nd of December, and two days before that, I had had it signed. I went to my manager and said, ñWhat do I do with this?ò

He said, ñThrow it in the wastebasket. Weôre not giving it to Bechtel.ò So I had two years wasted.

RM: So you did all that work and they threw it in the trash can? What did you think when he said throw it?

EM: Typical government. But anyway, everybody was applying for new jobs because TRW and SAIC were out and Bechtel was hiring. I really didnôt know where I was going to go or what I was going to do for a job, but they said they would put me in the hopper. After about ten days, two weeks, I got a Dear John letter that said Iôd been terminated.

I went to the guy who was the main SAIC manager, who had signed my plaque and certificateð Dennis Sorensen was his name. I made an appointment. I said, ñI want to meet Dennis Sorensen in a closed conference.ò

They set me up and I went in and he said, ñWhatôs up, Ed?ò

I said, ñWell, Iôm a man without a country. I got a Dear John letter.ò I said, ñHow can you let somebody go who was Employee of the Year?ò

He said, ñThat canôt be. I saw you on the listò of employees to be retained.

I said, ñHereôs the letter, Dennis.ò

ñWell, somethingôs not right. Let me check this out and see what I can do.ò Bee Riley in Bechtel Communications and Public Affairs was a good friend and I knew a lot of her staff members.

Of course, they were all devastated. When I got that letter, I said, ñWell, I donôt have any choice but to go back to the Northwest.ò They didnôt want me to leave.

So Bee called up Dennis and she said, ñIôve got a job that would just fit Ed. Itôs

the coordinator between DOE and the counties.ò And the guy that had that job was leaving.

RM: Who was that?

EM: That was Bob Lupton. He was not really good with interfacing with people. He was retired military, a marine, and just not a people person. I fit the job perfectly because I had been in politics in a small town and I knew how the commissioners and everybody worked, and I was a good salesman; I could communicate with people and get things done. Bee said, ñI think youôd fit this job perfectly. Go over and see the employment office,ò where SAIC was taking care of their people. The Bechtel people had already taken over, but SAIC still had something to say about it.

I went over and saw them, and they said, ñEd, youôve got a perfect background, but you need to tweak your resume to match this job description.ò So I did, and he said, ñGet that in to me ASAP.ò I took it to him, and he said, ñThatôs great. I can go ahead and get this through, but youôve got to go through the interviews.ò So I interviewed with everybody in the communications department.

RM: And by then, these people are Bechtel?

EM: Yes, theyôre going to go to work for Bechtel or they actually are Bechtel. Bee Riley was on the transition team for communications, so she was already in. She said, ñAll your interviews have gone good. The only snag youôre going to have is Allen Benson.ò He was the head of communications at DOE. ñYou never know what heôs going to do. Thatôs going to be a tough interview, and I canôt hire you without his okay.ò

I said, ñWell, Iôm fine. Iôll take him on. Whatever, Iôll just be myself.ò

She said, ñYeah, just go in and be yourself.ò So I went and I spent about an hour with him. I couldnôt read him, but I felt it went good. Later that day she called me and she

said, ñEd, Allen thinks youôre great! You got the job.ò

RM: Now, tell me exactly what the job was.

EM: Well, DOE had an AUG (affected unit of government) representative. He worked for Allen Benson, but he was the DOE side of it.

RM: And who was that guy?

EM: Max Powell. He had had 20, 25 years with DOE, and he had dealt with the counties and he had done a lot of work with the tribes and the universities, so he was well experienced. But they had to have a contractor to do the gofer work, and thatôs what Bob Lupton had been doing, the guy I replaced. That was the liaison between DOE and the counties. Youôd set up the meetings and youôd go twice a year to the county commissioner meetings. Thatôs nine counties, eight counties in Nevada, Inyo County in California, and the state of Nevada. AUG is affected unit of government, which includes the state. And then AULG, affected unit of local government, is just the counties. It was my responsibility to set up meetings with them, keep track of who all the commissioners were and when the elections changed them. Then they all had coordinators that I worked with, which would have been somebody like Darrell Lacy, who runs the Nye County Nuclear Waste Repository Project Office, and so on.

RM: I know Steve Bradhurst held that position initially for Nye. Was he there then?

EM: No, at that time it was Les Bradshaw; he was the very first one I met. And we had Irene Navis in Clark County, and at that time for Esmeralda County, it was Paul Seidler and Ace Robison, and they had a young fellow who was covering Esmeralda County. Every county had contractors that were kind of the head of the countyôs programs.

RM: Can we list the counties, just for the record?

EM: Okay, Clark County, Churchill County, Esmeralda County, Nye County, Mineral

County, Lincoln County, White Pine County, Eureka County, Lander County, and Inyo County. I had to learn all that; I didn't know them. I got in with all those people and I set up their meetings with DOE, and I helped prepare what we were going to tell them– we had presentations to give them.

I was the contact to help them when it came time for funding, and if they had any questions, they would usually call me and I'd run the questions through DOE. I was also what you'd call a second party sounding board; I mean, they would come and tell me things that they wouldn't tell DOE. I was kind of in the middle.

I did a lot of presentations with the procurement people to try and help the communities so that they would know how to do business with DOE. And coming down the road, if a project went forward, we wanted as much business to be local as we could. I set that up, and I went to all the counties with the procurement people at least once a year, and made a presentation to the commissioners and to the chairmen, to the chambers, or we may have just advertised a special procurement meeting. We did that in each one of the counties.

And I kept DOE informed on what was going on in the counties. I read all of the news articles for each one of the counties and I kept track of their commissioners' meetings. Was there anything said about Yucca Mountain? I was kind of a go-between. And it was fun. I got to know all the people and was out in the field a lot.

RM: Did the counties tend to stay on top of things pretty well?

EM: Yes, really well. I also did a lot of presentations at conferences all over the nation, national conferences. We had exhibits, and one of my jobs was to go to those exhibits and stand there and explain things.

RM: To show what Yucca Mountain was going to be all about.

EM: Yes. And I did it locally. For instance, I always had an exhibit at the Nevada Association of Counties.

RM: Were you interfacing with the public at all in these counties?

EM: Yes. Most counties had citizen advisory councils and weôd go to their meetings and answer their questions and give them a presentation. I got to know a lot of those people. Some of the counties were more hungry for information than the others; especially the rural ones. They wanted a contact, and I was always available. They could make a phone call any time they wanted, and Iôd find out what they wanted to know. In contrast, if you ever dealt with DOE, they think theyôre a little bit better than the rest.

RM: Smarter.

EM: ñBring it to us and weôll take care of it. You handle it first,ò you know? A lot of times when I went to a county, someone like Nye County Commissioner Joni Eastley or some of the other commissioners would want to go to lunch or what-not, and theyôd spill their beans.

RM: You mean, tell you what they were really thinking? Kind of off the record?

EM: Yes. Iôd say, ñWell, bring it up in the meeting.ò So they would. Then when I went back to DOE, I had the minutes from the meeting where this was discussed and that was discussed, and there was stuff that would come up that they wouldnôt tell DOE face to face. Or theyôd tell them face to face and it never got on the record.

RM: Could you give an example of that kind of information?

EM: Funding was one of them: ñAre we going to get some more money.ò A lot of it was, ñWhoôs really in charge?ò We had an awful buffer in the Las Vegas office with Allen Benson.

RM: He was in charge of the Vegas office?

EM: He was in charge of the communications of the Vegas office. He was transferred from Washington, D.C. He didn't like the rural counties at all because of the money they were getting. And the contractors were getting money. He didn't think that they should get all of that. But the counties and the contractors are watchdogs so they're not always going to agree with him, and they always would put pressure on him. We would have an AUG meeting every quarter, when all the counties came into Vegas. DOE would stall us around— when the meeting was going to be and who was going to be the speakers, and what did we want to know.

One of the things that I had to do was tell him, "The counties want to know this," or "The counties want you to bring this person in from D.C." Benson wanted to keep it all in Vegas. He was powerful, you see? You'd tell him something or want something, and he'd give you an opinion off of his cuff, but hadn't even run it through Washington. It got to be, if you wanted something done, you had to go to Washington to do it. Nye County is an example of that. They had their own attorney and their own contractor back in Washington, as did Clark County, and they dealt right directly with DOE in Washington. Benson was really jealous of that because they'd gone over his head. That's the only way you could get something done and get it through.

RM: So you had to interface with him.

EM: I was actually working for him. DOE was my customer, in contractor terms. He was my customer.

RM: So he was an impediment to communication, would you say?

EM: Right. Max Powell worked for him for years. Max was a heck of a nice guy and he wasn't intimidated by Allen Benson; he'd do his own thing. His motto was, "Don't ask for permission, just ask for forgiveness." So we got a lot of things done. Max Powell

retired and Bob Lupton, who I had replacedð I told you about that earlierð went to work for Bechtel in the transportation department because he had been a dispatcher for vehicles in the marines. He didnôt like dealing with the counties and he didnôt like dealing with Allen Benson, so he got that job.

But then when Max Powell retired, Bob Lupton decided to come back and go to work for DOE because it had so many more benefits. Heôd had the experience that I was doing, and he knew the counties so he got the job that Max left. He came back and he died within three years, of a serious blood disease. I honestly say that Allen Benson put him in his deathbed. He drove that poor guy nuts. He was so intimidated by him.

RM: Did DOE understand that he was an impediment to the program?

EM: Oh, everybody did.

RM: Well, why did they keep him in the position?

EM: You canôt get rid of government people. So they just let him roll, you know.

RM: Do you think that he, even a small way, played a part in the failure of Yucca Mountain up to this point?

EM: Absolutely, because he wouldnôt let us communicate with the public. We had to go through him. For example, when they were talking about the Caliente route for the railroad to transport waste, he ordered Max Powell and me to go out and meet with every one of those property owners on the route in Lincoln County. We were supposed to take them a packet of information, but we couldnôt answer any questions or give them any decisions about things that might affect them. We had to keep a log of what their responses were. In other words, when we got done, we had a log sheet. We knew who was pro, who was con. We had a pretty good idea of what they were going to demand. There were some big ranchers and family-owned things that all assumed they were going

to get a big pile of money. But we couldn't discuss any of that with them. I mean, we just played dumb. We were just there to tell them what the railroad was.

RM: You're the messenger.

EM: Yes. "Here's how they'd shipped nuclear materials before." We'd have an idea where the railroad was going to be— we walked it with them so they could see where it was going to be. But all that time, they're wanting technical, detailed answers that we couldn't give them. And that's the way it was all the way through. When it came to the tail end, we decided that we'd better start promoting the Mina route rather than the Caliente one.

RM: Why?

EM: Because we found out about all the opposition to the Caliente route, and the expense of the route, and the experts said that Caliente would never work.

RM: Who was opposed to it?

EM: Any engineer who knew anything about railroading would tell you that that the Caliente route was a nightmare. It was going through wetlands, it was going over tops of mountains, it was going way out of the way. The expense was enormous and the engineering wasn't done yet. Whereas, the Mina route was an existing route.

RM: It was an old railroad route, wasn't it?

EM: Yes. There's no comparison.

RM: Was the Lincoln County government for the Caliente route?

EM: Yes. Kevin Phillips, a great guy, was the mayor of Caliente. He was the Yucca Mountain project's biggest promoter, and had been since day one. I mean, DOE used him to go back to Washington, D.C., and lobby. They were probably the only ones that had worked out some benefits, where they were going to have a switchyard and all kinds of

stuff in Caliente. If you look at what it was, the Caliente route was really only a spurð it went from Caliente to Yucca Mountain and back out; thatôs all. The Mina route had some economic benefit. It would be a north-south railroad from Reno to Las Vegas.

RM: Oh, it was going to go to Las Vegas?

EM: That was our intent, or to miss Las Vegas and go down and hook up somewhere down in California. You have things all along thereð mining and farming and everythingð that could utilize that railroad. Plus, we could hook up with the ammunition base in Mineral Countyð they needed a new railroad. They were under a lot of serious stipulation from the Department of Defense because they only had one way into the base, and they needed a separate way out, kind of like a house with a front door and a back door. The Mina route made nothing but common sense. Nye County hired consultants and engineers to do a comparable study on it, cost-wise and economically wise. I donôt know if you have access to that book, but you need to get that.

RM: Which book is that, now?

EM: Iôll give you a copy of it. They hired some railroad engineer to do a study that shows plainly how much more beneficial and how much cheaper the Mina route was. The only problem that we had on the Mina route was the Walker Indians. We had a side meeting with DOE. I went to DOE myself and told them, ñHereôs what weôre doing. Could we get your approval to start talking to the Walkers and see if we can make this thing go?ò They gave us a verbal deal to do that. So we started negotiating and we hired a consultant who was a formal tribe member to work with the Walkers; we paid him some pretty good money. We did that through a working agreement with the four counties (Esmeralda, Mineral, Lander, and Churchill) plus Nyeð we all pitched in on that. We felt so dedicated that that should happen that we did that. And we got it right down to where

it was time for DOE to come in . . .

RM: And the Walkers were on board initially, werenôt they?

EM: They were all on board. But DOE went in there, and they sent a guy in that had no checkbook in his pocket and no authority to negotiate with them. All he could do was make false promises. And he kept trying to put the monkey on their back: ñWell, what would you think it would take?ò Or, ñWhat would you want?ò Rather than to go in and say, ñWe need this bad enough, hereôs what we would give you.ò And then politics got involved.

RM: Talk about that.

EM: Harry Reid came in. Heôs got people out in the field all the time, you know. Heôs well-greased with his contacts. They got a whiff of that so they went and started negotiating, meeting with the Walkers, and they said, ñWeôll give you the Walker Lake, and weôll fill it up with water for you, if you get off of this Yucca Mountain thing.ò

RM: They were going to give the tribe Walker Lake?

EM: Yes. And they were going to provide water to it. To this day, theyôve never done anything.

RM: I thought that Walker Lake was a public place.

EM: Theyôve got tribal deals all the way around it. And the federal government can do anythingð they can take anything away.

RM: So that was part of the deal that Reidôs people negotiated with the Walkers to get them to go thumbs down on crossing the reservation with the railroad?

EM: Thatôs right. The last meeting we had, they were just numb. They had nothing to say. They wouldnôt even talk. Thatôs the problem. And thatôs whatôs going to happen the next time. Thatôs whatôs coming out of the BRC, the blue ribbon commissionð youôve

got to be progressive. In your interview with Carl Gertz, I think he told you that he had a check in his pocket when he went to the state of Nevada.

RM: Yes.

EM: He told me that. He said he had the power to negotiate before he went in. He had a blank check: ñHereôs what weôll do.ò And thatôs what they needed to do with the Walker Indians.

RM: What year was this Walker Lake business?

EM: It was 2008 or 2009; right before everything went limp with the Yucca Mountain project.

RM: Iôve got two questions on top of my mind. Iôve followed Yucca Mountain from almost the first day and early on, there wasnôt a lot of resistance to it in the state of Nevada. Governor Bryan made his big pronouncement about being opposed to Yucca Mountain, but the newspapers in Vegas were not really down on it that much. Clark County soon kind of became negative on it, supposedly because it would hurt tourism. Did you find a difference in interfacing with Clark County versus the rural counties?

EM: Absolutely. Outside of Inyo County and Eureka County and Clark, all the other counties are pro Yucca Mountain, and weôve got surveys to prove it.

RM: You did a survey?

EM: Yes. I did it through the school in Esmeralda County. I took four or five of the best students in the eighth grade, and I had a contract with them to do the survey so that they could earn some money and use it for their school-end trip, or anything else that they wanted. They learned how to write a contract, how to live up to a contract, how to interview people, and they went out and they did a great job. We did it in all the communitiesð Silver Peak and Fish Lake Valley and Goldfieldð in Esmeralda County. I paid them so much an hour.

RM: And it came out pretty pro, I guess?

EM: About 70 percent for Yucca Mountain. Churchill and Lander and Mineral have done three different surveys that I know of, and they just did one recently. Every one of those came out 70 to 80 percent pro. I also did a survey at NACO conference two years ago. Thatôs the Nevada Association of Counties. They have an annual conference. (Thereôs also a National Association of Counties (NACO). I used to do exhibits there, but

Iôve always done one at the state convention.) Two years ago I did a survey, and it had four questions about Yucca Mountain. One of them was, ñAre you in favor of Yucca Mountain?ò You know, are you pro-nuclear or are you anti? I gave them a coffee mug if they would fill that out. I explained to them, ñIôm not bribing you; this is just for your time.ò It came out 80 percent pro. And these are county commissioners from all the rural counties. The only negative ones were two or three that came out of Clark County and Eureka County.

RM: Why is Eureka opposed?

EM: Do you know Abby Johnson? Sheôs a wonderful lady but sheôs a former hippie with Judy Treichel and Steve Frishman, all anti-nukes, and she got on the bandwagon as a consultant there. Former county commissioner and current Nevada state legislator Pete Goicoechea is pro. Iôve talked to him within the last four months, and heôs still promoting it, but heôs got to be careful because itôs political suicide. If somebody would break away, heôd jump right on the bandwagon; heôs not afraid to say that heôs for it. My last conversation with him was what a boost it would be for the economy.

Abby Johnson has put something together kind of like what weôre doing called Lessons Learned, proving that theyôre opposed and itôs not safe. But sheôs talking to the choir. Sheôs taking bits and pieces from news articles and she has a video. She had a statement from Goicoechea on an interview that kind of indicated that he was anti-nuke. He didnôt even know that it was in this video. I told him and he was mad, but thatôs how sheôs put that together. Clark County, Inyo County, and Eureka County are opposed to Yucca Mountain, but they donôt want the project to go away because their funds will go away.

RM: Why is Inyo County opposed?

EM: The tribes there are all opposed to it. They're anti-nuke all the way. They're taking their land away from them, and their privileges.

RM: How is Yucca Mountain taking their land?

EM: Yucca Mountain is on a reservation, you know.

RM: Whose reservation? Shoshone?

EM: Yes, I think Shoshone. That's not been settled, either. The government's strong enough I guess they figure they can go around that. And there is a lot of friction between the Nevada counties and Inyo County. The AUGs negotiated every year about how they were going to divide up the AUG funding, and DOE always said you work that out amongst yourselves. Well, Inyo always wanted a gigantic chunk, and we never did feel that they had a big enough piece of the pie. But they had a counterpart of mine who went to Pelosi and Boxer, and when it came time for appropriations, they put their share right in the appropriations bill— that they get 7% of whatever amount is appropriated. They're locked in, and so Lincoln, Clark, Nye, and Inyo get the biggest chunk of the money.

RM: And Nye, rightly so, because it's in Nye County.

EM: Absolutely. With Lincoln, it's because of politics, because they thought that they were going to have the railroad. They've always got a gigantic chunk. Esmeralda is right in the middle of Nye County, and I've always taken the stand, what's good for Nye is good for Esmeralda, and what's bad for Nye is bad for Esmeralda.

RM: To me, Nye and Esmeralda are like twin sisters. They're different, but they're the same.

EM: The project sits on Nye County's land, but we work together with them and we've got a good relationship. I really feel bad we're going to lose Joni Eastley when her term is over. I had breakfast with her a couple weeks ago in Ely, and we can work wonders. And

I was back in Washington, D.C., with Darrell Lacy and Cash Jaszczak and Commissioner Hollis last week for four days. We went to a major league baseball game together, ate dinner and breakfast together.

RM: How nice. Okay, hereôs my next question. And this one is personal with me, because I was there early on. Iôm a social scientist by training. Iôm an anthropologist out there, feeling the pulse, and I had quite a bit of training in quantitative methods. Starting within the first year of Yucca Mountain, probably in 1983, before opinion had hardened in Nevada, I said, ñI know Nye County. Let me do an in-depth socio-psychological analysis of opinion and attitude and feelings about Yucca Mountain. It could be confidential. Let me find out what DOE can do to help put this project over in Nevada.ò I talked to people at DOE in Washington and in Las Vegas. They would never fund that. To me, DOE failed in putting Yucca Mountain over, in significant measure, because they gave the opposition a free ride for years.

EM: Absolutely. That was our problem in communicationsð we couldnôt counter these people. They could put anything they wanted in a newspaper. It was all lies, but we couldnôt counter it. We should have been countering that. Right is right.

RM: Yes, and countering it with facts, scientific information. Educating the public. I did an interview with someone who started off being kind of opposed to Yucca Mountain: ñWeôve got enough radiation from the Test Site,ò and so forth. Then she went on some of the tours that DOE gave to Germany and Switzerland and France and so on and sheôs now pro because she was educated, and she learned what was going on and how important it was.

EM: Thatôs what weôve done in the small counties; thatôs what weôve done in Esmeralda County. I put that information center in as part of the Esmeralda County

Repository Oversight Program; people come and see what itôs all about, ask their questions. We get people every day. But let me tell you, the public in Clark County arenôt as opposed to Yucca Mountain as you think. My doctors, my dentistð anybody I go toð when they ask what I do and I tell them Iôm involved with Yucca Mountain: ñWhy arenôt they getting that thing done? Whatôs going on?ò

RM: No kidding? So if you went out and did a hardnosed survey, not a public opinion poll, but a hardnosed survey to get at the dynamics of the belief system . . .

EM: First thing youôve got to do is ask them, ñAre you familiar with the Yucca Mountain Project?ò Because if theyôre not, we donôt want their opinion. Theyôre not educated enough. But if you take them on a tour and you educate them . . . thatôs another thingð we could never convince DOE how important those tours were. And Allen Benson would always cut back on them because he didnôt like dealing with the public.

RM: The tours in Europe or the tours at Yucca Mountain?

EM: The tours at the mountain itself. He thought, ñWe donôt need all the public getting their nose into it.ò

RM: He didnôt see the public relations value at all?

EM: Not at all. He was the worst guy in the world you could put into a public relations position. I mean, if you were doing a study on public relations, you would write a white paper: ñThis Is How Not to Do It.ò

I keep a logbook at the information center. We get people from all over the world. We get a lot of Hanford people who are going south. I would say maybe one out of every 25 who come through is anti.

RM: Really? The rest are for Yucca Mountain?

EM: Yes. And you can look at the comments: ñGreat information.ò ñGreat job.ò

ñThank you.ò

RM: Do you think the people who are pro Yucca Mountain are self-selecting to come through the center in Goldfield?

EM: No. The first thing theyôll ask you is, ñAre you for or against?ò

My answer is, ñIôm not here to be for or against. Iôm here to educate you. You make up your own mind. But let me tell you, you canôt trust what you read in the newspapers. Hereôs the facts.ò

And then if they start arguing with me, Iôll say, ñWell, do you trust your doctor? Do you trust your attorney?ò All these educated people. ñWhy canôt you trust an engineer? Whatôs the difference?ò And sometimes they canôt back out of that.

Getting into education, thatôs another area where DOE has failed. A lot of that is because nuclear used to be top secret. I donôt know about you, but I never had anything nuclear in science classes when I was in school.

RM: Yes, the structure of the atom was as far as we got.

EM: Right. So thatôs what youôre countering all the time. If somebody, for instance, wants to argue about transportation, I can turn them around in ten or 15 minutes by just being honest with them, saying the Department of Defense has been transporting nuclear fuel from all the submarines for 25 years from Idaho Falls across the United States. Thatôs another good argument: ñYou have anybody in the military?ò

ñOh, yeah, Uncle Joe was in the military.ò

ñWhat did he do?ò

ñOh, he was on a submarine.ò

ñWell, does he glow in the dark? Is he sick? Has he got cancer?ò They canôt answer that.

RM: I asked a person in a position to know, ñAre there any A-bombs stored at Nellis?ò His answer to me was, ñYou donôt want to know how many A-bombs are stored at Nellis.ò Theyôre bellyaching about nuclear waste going through Vegas, and theyôve got a whole bunch of H-bombs, probably, stored at Nellis, and you never hear a word about that.

EM: And you know, people donôt understand about nuclear. Just imagine; is that stuff, inside a cask, inside a mountain, inside the covers over the top of it, going to get enough water to go 1,000 feet down under the ground and get into the aquifer? I mean, it just isnôt logical. Iôm not a geologist, but just common sense tells you that.

RM: The other dimension is that the so-called waste is not going to stay in the ground. Iôve been told that some 90 percent of the energy is still in the rods, and reprocessing and transmutationð which is coming, one of these daysð will reduce the waste volume to about 20 percent or less of what it is now. And that waste will not be as long-lived.

EM: Bob, I really donôt think Yucca Mountain is dead. I went to a meeting of the ECA, the Energy Community Alliance, last week. Thatôs all the communities, all the cities and counties, that are involved in the nuclear issue. Itôs a great organization because we have Washington, D.C., power. The ECA people can go to the Congress and find out anything they want, so that gives us quite an advantage as a small county. But they had speakers there, and it all boils down to politics.

RM: It boils down to Harry Reid, doesnôt it?

EM: Yes. But weôve got to have two repositories. Carlsbad is ready to go, but thatôs salt and theyôve never done the science to see if it would work as a repository. So even if they decide to go to Carlsbad, youôre looking at 20 to 25 years before the first shipment would go in there. Yucca Mountain can happen within no less than 8 to 10 years.

They've got to get it all back and running. At Hillshire, where our campus was in Vegas, there's 12 gigantic office buildings that had, like, 2,000 employees in them. The people are all gone and those buildings are sitting completely empty, and Hughes has not made any attempt to rent them because the DOE is still paying the leases on them. That costs millions. I mean, Harry Reid is destroying us economically and tax-wise. It's crazy.

RM: Yes. In the late '70s or early '80s, I think it was Bechtel, out of Ohio, produced a document on the spent fuel storage issue, and they said it is not a technical problem; we know how to do it technically. It's a political issue. And they said this early on. Why wasn't DOE paying attention?

EM: DOE doesn't have the right people. They're all government people. They've never been out in the real world, they're protected in their jobs, and they really don't care. All they think about is the money. And they're all doing very well. I mean, if you go to Washington, D.C., today, it's a whole different world. Those people are all eating at fancy restaurants— the younger generation, even. You can't get a meal there for less than $20, even lunch, and they don't blink an eye about it. They're secluded in a whole different world— the money there and the jobs that they've got— they've got blinders on. They don't realize what's going on out in the real world. And the more power they get, the more they want.

RM: Well, speaking of the government having blinders on, that relates to the many land issues in central Nevada.

EM: I know enough about federal lands to know that it's just a negotiating tool with the government to get more. They're not going to give the counties or anybody anything unless they can get something like wilderness or water in return; they're just using the federal land for tradeoffs.

RM: Why are they like that?

EM: Egos. Power. They're going to control everything we've got, if we let them. We're getting into socialism, more so all the time. That's why the economy is going bad. I mean, the true, legitimate businesspeople are scared so they're backing off.

RM: And you have a government whose employees are too inexperienced in what you'd call the "real world."

EM: Right. They couldn't ever get a job or hold a job like some of us have done. I don't think any of them have really worked out in the real world. They got out of college, they went right into that environment, and they just feasted off of it and just kept looking for the raises, looking for the promotions.

RM: And always protecting their backsides.

EM: And thinking it's them, you know? You have a whole different mentality in a business. In a business, you have the owners and you have the managers, and it's their business and they're managing it, but this government thing is mind-boggling. That's why the used fuel process is going to have to come out of there. That's one of the BRC's recommendations, is that they take it out of the government.

RM: And turn it over to a TVA or something like that?

EM: Exactly.

RM: And that's the way they'll do it, isn't it?

EM: Yes. There's billions of dollars of rate-payers' money sitting there; they've got to get that out of the hands of Congress, too. You can't build a hotel or a road or anything over a five- or ten-year schedule if you don't know you're going to have funding, and you don't know who's going to be in charge. At Yucca Mountain, every two years, every four years, you've got somebody different in charge because DOE's higher-ups are all

appointed. So theyôre gone and you start over with new people. You donôt know how much funding youôve got to complete the job. You do all the planning, all these people put preparations in, and you plan $13 million worth of work and maybe you only get $8 million from Congress. I mean, you just canôt operate that way. A business couldnôt operate that way. Letôs say you and I own a car dealership, and business is going good, and weôre going to double our size. Well, weôve got to know exactly how much money weôre going to have and how much time weôve got to do it, and go do it.

RM: And these projects like Yucca Mountain donôt have that luxury.

EM: Right, exactly. Edward Sprout was the last DOE manager, but he came from industry. He was brand new. He came in and he made the most sense of anybody. He gave a presentation to the BRC on why the fuel storage system didnôt work. He gave the best explanation that Iôve ever seen.

RM: Can you give a summary of his talk?

EM: He said, ñI came in here and I was here two years, and Iôm making things happen, and now weôve got a new administration and theyôre bringing in a different manager with a different philosophy, and so everything that Iôve done is unwinding. And we never got the funding because it has to go through Congress.ò He explained it like building a casino. He said, ñYou build a casino, youôve got a construction company, youôve got a planning and zoning division, and youôve got a finance division. All three of those have to work together, on schedule and funded. And we donôt have that. DOE is the fundingð they should fund it and get out. Hire a contractor to build it, fund the contractor, and get out.ò

RM: How about oversightð who makes sure theyôre doing it right? How can the public, who are ultimately paying for it, be sure that itôs being done right?

EM: That's part of what the AUGs were for; we were oversight.

RM: But are the counties qualified?

EM: Nye County was. Nye County had a lot of money, and they could hire their own well-drilling, their own engineering. They had a staff of 12, 15 people working, checking out everything that DOE put out. They knew what the water contamination could be and everything else. Then you've got QAs, quality control, within DOE and within the contractors double-checking it. But really it's all up to the NRC, Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

RM: They're the ultimate watchdog.

EM: They're ultimately the ones that are going to make the application. That's why we say, whether you're for Yucca Mountain or not, let's finish the license application. If the license application says it's not safe . . . but politics got involved in that. Jaczko, who was Harry Reid's appointee, was put in as the head of the NRC.

And that's really scary to the nuclear industry, because never before has politics been involved in the NRC. The NRC has always been trusted, and it's always been good, and it's always kept it safe. All the NRC people, the people in the trenches doing the work, are really upset that politics is involved now.

You also have the NWTRB, Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board, which is appointed by Congress. It has a staff of 50 or 60 people and is a watchdog over NRC, DOE, and the contractors. They meet quarterly and bring all those people to the table, and they've got all these high-tech people working. So they hold them to the law, too. And you've got the National Academies of Science. So there are plenty of watchdogs. You can put it in the hands of a private company and still have those people watching it.

RM: What about the new woman who's head of the NRC, Allison Macfarlane?

EM: Iôm pretty familiar with her because she was on the BRC. Weôve done some talking with some people on that, and Tim Frazier, the young fellow who was kind of the director for the BRC, traveled with them everywhere they went and he knew every one of them really well.

As soon as they got done he left, and heôs a contractor now for himselfô heôs contracting to Savannah River. But he knows all the ins and outs. He was at the ECA meeting. We had a sidebar meeting, Darrell and I and Cash, with him. We asked him about her, and he said sheôs pretty levelheaded. Sheôs a geologist and she wrote a book in opposition to Yucca Mountain, but she is not going to influence the rest of the staff with her personal feelings. Sheôs going to look at the science and the engineering and see if she was right or if she was wrong. He thinks that itôs a step in the right direction. So weôll just have to wait and see. But that was a tradeoffô Harry got the blessing on her so that they could keep the other lady, whose term was up, who was a Republican.

RM: Thatôs interesting. Discuss more about how interfacing with the counties evolved, and recollections and insights that you might have about this whole thing.

EM: Well, I was recruited by Esmeralda County to come and take over there.

RM: When was that?

EM: That was in 2006.

RM: So you interfaced with the counties between ô98 and ô06?

EM: All the way from 2000 to 2006.

RM: Is there anything you want to say more about your career interfacing with the counties?

EM: When I was with the project? It was a great experience, meeting all those county commissioners and being out in the field. Coming from a small logging town and being

in politics there, involved with my county commissioners and being a mayor, and being involved with the governor . . . the guy I was in the Chevrolet business with was a state senator, and we could walk in and meet the governor any time we wanted.

That was a great experience, and what I probably learned from that was that no matter how high that people are, they all put their pants on the same way, so Iôve never been intimidated by people in those positions. Donôt let them think theyôre any better than you are. Thatôs the way I was with DOE, and I think they like it when you hold your own. When I went out into the counties, I was on the same level with themð I could understand where they were coming from. I always told them, ñI admire what you have to do. Everybody should do it once, just to find out what itôs like.ò

When I went to Eureka County the very first time, Goicoechea was the county commissioner, and it was Bob Lupton and I. When it was time for us to make a presentation, they brought us up to the table, and Bob said to me, ñIntroduce yourself, Ed.ò

I said, ñWell, Iôm Ed Mueller, and I admire what you guys are doing here. I come from a small town in north Idaho where I was a city councilman and a mayor, and also ran for the state legislature.ò

Goicoechea says, ñWhere at in north Idaho?ò

I said, ñSt. Maries.ò

He said, ñIôve got all kinds of relatives in St. Maries.ò

I said, ñSure, I remember that name. In fact, on my homestead, your brother-in-law, Shangles, was bringing horses in from Nevada. They leased the farm. The first time I ever got bucked off a horse was on a Sunday afternoon when we went up there to visit them and they put me on one of those Nevada wild horses.ò

ñBoy,ò he said, ñitôs a small world, isnôt it, Ed?ò And Mrs. Shangle, his sister, had moved back to Eureka; it turns out she was the county clerk.

The meeting broke up, and we went out and I was at the coffee pot and she came over and said, ñEd, you donôt remember me but Iôm Sharon Shangle, and you sold some property to my husband and I in Emida, Idaho, when you were in real estate.ò

I said, ñGee whiz, I remember that.ò So what a small world. I think the experience that Iôd had in Idaho, being from a small town, not being indoctrinated into the big cities and everything else, I could relate to people from rural Nevada. Not everybody could. That was DOEôs problem. Allen Benson would always dress upð he wanted them to know he was important. You donôt do that. When in Rome, do as the Romans do, you know? He always made them feel he thought he was just a little bit better. Weôd have a public meeting and heôd go around in there with his chest puffed out.

RM: Did he wear a tie?

EM: Oh, yes. And they didnôt like that. Youôve got to be at their level, and youôve got to be honest with them, and youôve got to be productive. When they want to know some information, youôve got to get right back to them. DOE would string them out to make them think DOE was important: ñWell, when we get to it, weôll get back to you.ò If somebody called me up, I tried to get an answer and get back to them the same day, and they appreciated that. They will respect you for that and they will come back to you for more.

RM: In a way, DOE was kind of programmed for failure, weren't they?

EM: Absolutely, right from the start. Anybody who's dealt with them will tell you that. It's the same in every community you go to.

RM: How would you list some of the things they did wrong?

EM: Well, first of all, it's communication— that's the biggest thing. And then honesty and integrity. I mean, keeping everything in-house and not telling it the way it is. And keeping failures to themselves: "Don't get that to the press," and not letting you go to the press.

I was in Lincoln County when we were doing the EIS hearings. Allen Benson always gave me the grunt work, so I drove the van. I drove the van up to go to the hearing with a whole bunch of dignitaries, including the No. 1 person from Washington with DOE. I arranged for them to go to a little restaurant, and I had told them how many people there were going to be, and how many at the table, and I had included myself at the table. When we got there, he said, "You're not sitting at the table. You get another table."

RM: Benson said that to you?

EM: Yes, that's the way he treated you. And if you took it, he'd just keep doing it. So I was sitting over there, and a lady from Nye County was there with her husband. She was the head of emergency preparedness for the county, and she was there for that hearing. I'd known her from going to Nye County. So I went over and sat with them. And he came over and said, "I want to see you outside." So we went outside and he said, "Don't you be talking about Yucca Mountain with those people. That guy over there at that other table

with a computer could be from the press. I don't know who he is. But don't you dare be talking about Yucca Mountain.' So I went back in and I just poopoohed it. But I mean, that's the kind of mentality they had.

RM: Not only is it ignorant in terms of policy, but to treat a fellow worker like that.

EM: Exactly, like you're dirt under their feet. That's the attitude that most of the DOE people had. Not all of them— Ed Sprout was a great guy, but he was not DOE. He had come right out of the utilities into DOE. Russ Dyer was a senior engineer and scientist who was on the project with DOE from the start. He was a great guy and very smart and knowledgeable about the project. And I had people who were good people. Here's another story: Did you ever hear of Eric Knox?

RM: No.

EM: He was an appointee, and he was in the D.C. office of communications. He was kind of over whatever happened locally. He was here for every kind of public meeting— the hearings and things like that— making sure everything were working good. Well, my son was the general manager of the New Orleans Saints, in the NFL. We were at a staff meeting at Benson's office, in his conference room, and Eric Knox came and tapped me on the shoulder and said, "Can I talk to you a minute, Ed?'

I said, "Yeah.'

He took me out in the hallway and he said, "I just put it together that Randy Mueller is your son! I was raised with Tom Benson (the owner of the Saints). I was raised in the same neighborhood and grew up with his kids. What an accomplishment for your son!' He said, "I just wanted to meet you and shake your hand and tell you that.' And from that time on, we became close friends.

I went back into the meeting, and as soon as the meeting was over, Benson said,

ñMueller, I want to see you in my office.ò

I went into the office and he said, ñWhat did Knox want to know?ò

I said, ñIt was just something personal. Had nothing to do with the Yucca Mountain project.ò And I left it at that; I figured that was an honest answer. He didnôt need to know. It had nothing to do with him, and I knew Knox would back me up if he tried to find out from him.

RM: Did he leave it there?

EM: Yes, he left it there. But to this day, Iôve got Eric Knoxôs phone numbers and I can call him any time. Iôve met with him in Washington, D.C., had lunch with him, and everything. Heôs a great guy. Well, heôs out now. He was a Republican appointee, so now heôs working for URS Corporation. But heôs tried every way possible to support Yucca Mountain. Now heôs kind of a rover in the communities and what not for new projects and things like that. I could tell you all kinds of stories about Benson, but I think youôre seeing what kind of a person he was.

RM: He sounds like a very difficult person. What about interfacing with the stateð Bob Loux and so forth. Was that part of your job, too?

EM: Yes, I went to all of their meetings. He was respectful of us. I could have a one-on-one conference with him, off the record, and his deal was, ñWe have to agree to disagree.ò

RM: I did an interview with Loux and he said their goal from the beginning was to obstruct and obfuscate because they figured if they delayed Yucca Mountain long enough, it would go away.

EM: Yes, that was all about money. As I said earlier, they were anti-Yucca Mountain, but they didnôt want it to come to a halt; they just wanted to prolong it. When it came

time for funding, they were right on top of it. The state was back in Washington lobbying everybody, trying to get all the money they could, as was Clark County.

RM: They say that money was what was behind Bullfrog County.

EM: Oh, absolutely. They were going to ace Nye out and take it on their own.

RM: The state was for Yucca Mountain before they realized they couldn't milk the project with Bullfrog County, and when they weren't going to make a lot of money on it, that's when they turned negative. Do you agree that that's a valid scenario?

EM: Oh, absolutely— that's no secret at all. But as far as the state goes, we'd give presentations. I gave a big pitch for the Mina railroad route, and we just had to gut it out because we knew we were preaching to the enemy. We tried to get it in the newspapers, but we got very little coverage. All the antis would get the coverage. They were polite, they would listen, but you knew you couldn't trust them. I have a good relationship with Bob Halstead, who is now Loux's guy.

RM: You mean, he's the state's man?

EM: Yes. He was always the expert on transportation. I could work with him on the side, and he supported us on the Mina route. In fact, he told me, "We've got maps, Ed, showing that we can get around the Walker Reservation if we have to." And he gave me the maps.

RM: It sounds like he was trying to be helpful.

EM: He was. He only said, "We're absolutely opposed to it but if it ever came through, this is the way we would want it." They were death on the Caliente route. So we had pretty good relations. We'd go to these meetings and Halstead would be there, and he'd invite me to come over and sit down and eat with him and we'd hash it all out. They weren't bitter enemies— but there again, it was, let's keep it going. Let's don't kill it, let's

keep it going.

RM: Yes, keep this goose alive.

EM: But they sold so many lies. On the transportation, he would come with these presentations that showed where the proposed route was going by a school, and how many people it would kill, and all that kind of stuff. Where in essence, chlorine would do ten times worse damage, and thatôs being transported every day. Thatôs what DOE should have been countering, and really been out there fighting.

RM: Letôs continue with a list of reasons the project failed.

EM: Undependable funding was another thing, but thatôs Congressôs fault. That affected DOE the same as it did us. As far as DOE goes, I think bad communications and not addressing the impacts, and mitigation. We were starting to get there when it looked like the railroad was coming. We had put together a memorandum of understanding between Lincoln, Nye, and Esmeralda counties for the railroad and we were going to start meeting on that.

You would agree on something like what was in the EIS, and youôd agree on something verbally, and then it didnôt get put in that way. Their engineers would just go ahead and put it in the way they wanted. An example of that was, I was always lobbying to get the maintenance facility on the railroad to be put in Goldfield. That would have been 50 full-time jobs, and it was almost halfway on the route. We had water, we had everything. But it wasnôt in the EIS.

RM: Who didnôt do that?

EM: DOE didnôt. There were three proposed routes, and the one where the maintenance was going to have to be, was going to have to be it; the other ones went away from Goldfield. We had a chance to comment on that, and I hired a guy to help me

do some investigation. He was a geologist, and I found out that those other routes had some wetlands in them and there were some mining claims that you couldnôt get through. So we put a case togetherð we wrote a white paper of comments on why those routes wouldnôt work, and why the railroad should be on the route through Goldfield. We also protested, like we had previously, that we wanted that maintenance setup to be there. I hand-carried that to DOE and took it to the people who were responsible for it. Long story short, we got that changed in the final EIS.

RM: So it was possible to get them to change.

EM: But that wasnôt the thing. I was fortunate enough that I knew some of those people and I could go get in the door and sit down with them, and actually did the homework for them. They were elated to have that scientific information to back it up, and so it worked. So yes, you could negotiate with some of them.

RM: But as a general principle, they were not responsive enough to local feeling and opinion. Would that be a valid statement?

EM: I would say so, yes. And the lack of substance and power to make decisions and answer questions. And not opposing the opposition to Yucca Mountain. But thatôs all part of communication. I mean, you could write a whole book on communication, how you should communicate. Thatôs all going to happen the next time, Iôll guarantee you. The BRC recognized that as a big issue.

RM: Communication?

EM: Yes, and then negotiation.

RM: And responsiveness?

EM: Right. And negotiationôs got to be done early. You donôt just go in and say, ñWeôre going to build it.ò You go in and say, ñHereôs what weôd like to do and hereôs

what we will do for you. We'll build you some hospitals. We'll build you some highways. We'll support your school systems. Now, can you work with us? And here's what it's going to bring in– jobs and all that.' They didn't do it that way. They just went on their way, picked the three original sites, and said, "We're going to do it.'

RM: Right. I've talked about this to other people, but I want to get your take on it. Senator Chic Hecht, who I talked to after he retired, considered himself to be Reagan's man in the Senate. When Reagan was president, Hecht was called into Secretary of Energy Herrington's office one day, and Herrington made a proposal. He said, "If Nevada will take the repository, we will build a huge nuclear research medical nuclear facility on the Test Site, associated with UNLV, that will cost billions. In a few years, it will have more Nobel Prize winners working there than any institution on earth.' Senator Hecht told me that when he was back in Nevada, he went to Bob Maxim, then the head of UNLV. He told Maxim about the proposal.

And Maxim said, "If I signed onto that today, I would be out of a job tomorrow.'

I told this story to Troy Wade. He said, "I was at that meeting.' He confirmed it.

EM: How did Maxim think he would be out of a job?

RM: Because by then the negative opinion had built up. "Oh, he's signing on with DOE.' What's your take on that?

EM: My take is, he should have done it.

RM: But he probably would have lost his job.

EM: So be it. I mean, why should one man have that much power? That's what's wrong. That's politics, and that's a problem, too. But that was a great negotiation. That's the way it should have been done. That's a good example. But also, Bob, the universities have made millions of dollars off of Yucca Mountain to date.

RM: True. But if the repository had been approved at Yucca Mountain, UNLV would be world class in physics.

EM: Absolutely.

RM: Hereôs another example; Steve Bradhurst told it to me. He said that he was with the head or something of NEI pretty early on. He said that the NEI guy asked Steve, ñWhat would Nevada take to accept the repository?ò

Steve said, ñHow about the superconductor-supercollider?ò Thatôs when that was being planned.

He said, ñOkay. What else would they take?ò

Steve said, ñHow about the super train to Los Angeles?ò

And the guy said, ñOkay. What else?ò

And Steve said, ñIôll have to get back to you on this one.ò It never went anywhere.

EM: No. Thatôs why theyôre talking to the right people.

RM: Good point. Maybe he should have told the RJ, the *Review-Journal*.

EM: I maintain itôs got to start with the state legislatures of the locations of potential repositories. I mean, right now is a good time for that to happen, but you still canôt get DOE to budge.

RM: Itôs probably suicide for just one guy to go out there.

EM: Political suicide, yes, I guess I have to agree with them on that. But what is it going to take to change them?

RM: Right. I have one more incident to tell you. I ran into Bob Loux early on, in the first couple of years that Yucca Mountain was being considered, and I said to him, to show you how stupid I was and how smart he was, ñYou know, Governor Bryanôs on the

wrong side of the Yucca Mountain issue.ò

Loux said, astonished, ñAre you kidding? Itôs the best political issue heôs got.ò

And in my interview with Chic Hecht, we were talking about whether or not the opposition by Bryan and Reid was cynical and I asked Hecht, ñHow was it Reid and Bryan knew that anti-Yucca Mountain was going to be a good political issue?ò I thought it was stupid to be opposed to it because it meant jobs, billions of dollars and everything.

Chic Hecht said, ñFear always makes a wonderful issue for a politician.ò

EM: Thatôs exactly true. And itôs easier to say no than it is to say yes to anything.

RM: Thatôs right, because when you say yes, youôre sticking your neck out.

EM: Yes, and then youôve got to suffer the consequences.

RM: Yes. Chicôs take on it was that their opposition was cynical. In other words, it was not principled. I did an interview with Senator Bryan, and I asked him why he was opposed to Yucca Mountain, and he said several times that itôs because he did not trust DOE. He said they had screwed up so badly with the downwinders on the Test Site that he just didnôt trust what they said.

EM: And Iôll honor that. Thatôs an image that DOE has got to get over. And thatôs why, Bob, I was successful when I was representing DOE with the AUGs. I was a contractor. They trusted me more than they did DOE; I was kind of an outsider so I had a whole different relationship with them. I would go to NACO, and the people there were all over me, where they were a little bit skeptical with the DOE guys. As I said, the DOE guys were stuffy. They thought they were a little bit better.

RM: Plus, as you pointed out, they didnôt have any flesh in the gameð they had civil service jobs regardless of what happened.

Ed, Iôve been asking the Esmeralda County people Iôve been interviewing their

take on various land issues vis-à-vis federal land in central Nevada. You've touched on it before, but what's your take on the whole wilderness phenomenon as far as central Nevada is concerned?

EM: I haven't lived in rural Nevada that long to really be on top of the issues. I know you have to have some wilderness areas to protect the environment and the fish and the wildlife and the habitat, and keep the land's originality, but the way the government has operated in Nevada is that they already have control of all the federal lands. For the locals and the smaller communities and counties to get ahold of any of that land, there's always got to be a negotiation and a tradeoff.

What I've seen in the last few years is that whenever something like that comes up, the government wants to add more wilderness. Every time they would give them some BLM land or something, it would be, ñWell, we want to add more wilderness.ò A good example of that is Gold Point, which is a little town down the road from Goldfield that's never been settled as far as the property lines and the ownership of properties within the town. They've got records going way back, but things didn't get filed and what-not. In the last few years, the people that live there have aggressively tried to get that settled with the government so they can keep ownership of their lands. And every time they get down to the nitty-gritty, the government wants to trade something for it. I don't think that there is any opportunity for the communities to really take advantage of getting the federal lands. They are getting their hands on some of it now for alternative energy, windmills and things like that, but the government also is getting something out of that.

Personally, coming from north Idaho, I've always been on that end of it where wilderness has been a big detriment to the hunting and fishing, and to the logging

industry because theyôve locked up beautiful country, beautiful streams, beautiful mountain lakes and made it difficult to get to.

RM: You can hunt on wilderness but you canôt drive into it, is that right?

EM: Right. So it limits the access to just a few people. I was heavily involved, when I was in politics in Idaho, on the St. Joe River, the river on which my dad had the logs towed down to Coeur dôAlene. It was a navigable river. In fact, itôs the highest navigable river in the United Statesð itôs 2,800 to 5,000 feet above sea level. The federal government tried to lock that river up and we fought that tooth and nail, and finally ended up winning it. Had they locked it up, it would have been devastating to the community and the people; there are farmers all up and down the river.

RM: And they use the river for access and getting their crops out and everything?

EM: They used to, but now itôs mostly recreation. But people up and down the river use the waterð thatôs the only water access they have. That was the Scenic and Wild Rivers Act, and we fought that.

Thereôs got to be a happy medium. Some of the high country where it was tough to get into, I feel should be wilderness, and thatôs the same way, probably, in Nevada, too. But itôs tough to win, dealing with the government. I sound like Iôm anti-government, but especially in the small-populace counties and the small areas, itôs a constant fight.

RM: Where do you see the future of wilderness in central Nevada going?

EM: I canôt predict that, but it all has to come to politics. Senator Reid, being the environmental Democrat that he is, is 100 percent for wilderness. Heôs traded a lot of deals in the county, and as long as heôs around, thatôs probably going to continue to happen.

CHAPTER SIX

RM: As long as weôve mentioned Reid here, do you want to talk about his role in Yucca Mountain?

EM: Thereôs no question that heôs been the key to stopping Yucca Mountain. Thatôs been his goal since day one, and to show you how strong he is about it, heôs never even been on a tour of the mountain.

RM: He hasnôt?

EM: Heôs never been to the top of the mountain to tour the project. He doesnôt have a broad mind on it at all. Itôs not only no, but itôs ñhell, no!ò Thatôs the stand that heôs taken, and he wonôt budge one iota. Itôs tough to deal with somebody like that, and heôs so powerful in Congress. But youôve got 49 other states that have nuclear waste that want to get rid of it and he knows that, and thatôs why heôs not been able to change the law. The only way heôs been able to stop it is funding, and all the funding comes across his desk. If he sees anything that says ñYucca Mountain,ò he just scratches it off. So yes, he controls it. Everything points to that, including the blue ribbon commission, which just got done trying to make a decision on what to do. Their final decision is that itôs politics.

I was just in Washington, D.C., last week to the ECA, Energy Communities Alliance, which is all the communities in the United States that have nuclear-related power plants and what-not in their communities. Itôs pretty powerful, but the final decision from that meeting was that we have to wait for the election in November, and that will make a difference. Again, to prove that itôs politics, Obama cut a deal with Harry Reid that if Reid would support him in the last presidential election, he would support Reid on Yucca Mountain, and thatôs what they did. I donôt dislike Harry Reid

himself. Iôve been back to Washington. Iôve sat down in his office, face-to-face, and heôs a fine gentleman, heôs very down to earth.

RM: Would you say that heôs uninformed on nuclear power?

EM: Not at all. He just knows that itôs popular politically to be opposed, and thatôs the stand he takes. And everybody on his staff is directed to be the same way.

RM: So his position is political, in your view; itôs not information-based?

EM: Yes. Just the fact that he doesnôt want to learn about it. Youôd think heôd want to go on a tour, and heôd want to sit down and discuss it, but he just takes the same stand that most all the congressional people from Nevada, that we can agree to disagree. End of story. Theyôre not going to change their minds on it. A lot of the state legislators that Iôve talked to and that have been on tours are open-minded. Theyôve studied it, but they take the same stand. Until somebody powerful in Nevada politics comes out in favor of it, theyôre going to all hide. And I would do the same thing. Iôve had some of them come in here when theyôre campaigning and want to talk about it, and Iôve told them, ñThereôs no use hanging yourself if you donôt have anybody to go with you.ò

RM: You mean, theyôve been to your nuclear repository waste office in Goldfield?

EM: Right, our Oversight Information Office. Weôre right on the main drag between Vegas and Reno and we get a lot of people stopping in here. Theyôll stop to say hello and look at some of our information.

RM: What is the future of this office, given the budgetary changes?

EM: Itôs on budget for now. We had a meeting in June to decide what the plan was for fiscal year 2013, which starts next Monday, July 1. We came to an agreement that weôll keep the office open here until December of ô12; thatôs six months. By then, the election will be over and weôll know what direction weôre going.

But if we don't get any more funding . . . it all depends. The only thing we've got going right now is the license application. We've got contentions that we have to defend in the hearings for the license application, but we'll need money to do that, too. If the license proceeds, I'm pretty sure they will have to fund the affected units of government, and if we get funding, then we can continue to get going. If we don't get any additional funding after January, I'm going to have to close this office and it's going to be a matter of me working a little bit, just keeping track of the activities and so forth.

RM: At the recent meeting that you went to, what was the feeling about the politics? I realize this can change in a few months, but what is your sense from the people there about what's going to happen?

EM: Well, the BRC recommended that they possibly should have two repositories. Carlsbad, New Mexico, which is the low-level WIPP site– Waste Isolation Plant– lobbied real hard to get the repository there and put it in the salt. Salt as a place for a repository hasn't really been studied or perfected yet but the people at Carlsbad understand nuclear, and the community is in favor of it because they've not had any accidents and they've been successful with WIPP. So rather than put Yucca Mountain against WIPP– we discussed it there, and it has been discussed many times– Nye County is one of the communities that's really affected, and they came out in favor of supporting the project, which is big.

The discussion now has been, and the assumption is, that we need to have two repositories, as recommended by the BRC, and that would be Carlsbad, New Mexico, and Yucca Mountain. Yucca Mountain can probably be up and operating in eight to ten years, if we got back on track in 2013. The WIPP site would take at least 20 years because they've got to do all their NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) work and all their

safety studies and prepare a brand new license application for construction, and an EIS (environmental impact statement), and all the stuff thatôs been going on for 20 years at Yucca Mountain. So Carlsbad is way behind schedule. But two repositories would take care of the spent fuel for a long time.

The other thing is, youôve got the defense waste that is at some of these places, which is not included in the funding of Yucca Mountain, not included in the Nuclear Policy Actô that funding comes out of the Department of Defense. But that waste is ready to go right now.

RM: Where is the waste now?

EM: Itôs at Idaho Falls, Hanford, Savannah River, Oak Ridge, and some up in New York. They would like to get that stored right away. Yucca Mountain could take that pretty early, more so than they could the spent nuclear fuel. So thatôs another issue that theyôre debating. The defense waste is really important because weôve got to keep the submarines going, and theyôre plugged up. Theyôre running out of spaces to put it.

RM: What is the option if they canôt get rid of that? What do they do with it?

EM: Continue to go to Savannah River, and so on. Both Hanford and Savannah River are putting in vitrification plants to turn it from liquid into glass. They were planning on taking that to Yucca Mountain. Well, when they get into operation and start doing that, then theyôve got to find a place to store it at Savannah River and Hanford until there is somewhere to go.

RM: What does vitrification do to reprocessing?

EM: After itôs vitrified, it canôt be reprocessed. Itôs put into a glass log. But thatôs from the defense waste. They never did plan on reprocessing that, whereas the spent fuel is a whole different thing.

RM: Whatôs your take on the local storage around the country? How many sites do they have where high-level waste or spent fuel is being stored?

EM: Iôm not up on my math on that, but let me think. Itôs in 148 locations in 38 states.

RM: Oh, my God. What is your take on the safety of that? Because when I think of local storage and then putting it in pools and everything, I think of Fukushima.

EM: I think itôs safe. But thatôs a possibility of 148 accidents as opposed to one. And on top of that, theyôre out of space. As you know, just in the last month or so, thatôs gotten changed, too, as far as temporary storage. The NRC, about a year ago, said that temporary storage would be safe up to 100 years, but the utilities people came back and sued the NRC and said, ñYou havenôt done enough homework to secure that as being safe.ò That ended up going to the federal courts in D.C., and they just determined in June that the NRC didnôt do their homework. So it canôt be stored for 100 years until NRC does a NEPA and an EIS on that.

RM: Do they have to do it on every site, or just in general?

EM: Just generally, as to how long it can be stored. Dry storage is the same everywhere.

RM: I would think that dry storage would vary from one site to another, like a high earthquake area would be a different story.

EM: Well, every site is different, but theyôre talking about how safe is it? And in that case, theyôll pick the worst scenarioð given an earthquake or sabotage, how long can that endure? Right now they say it canôt be up to 100 years, so thatôs made getting Yucca Mountain going all the more urgent.

RM: As you know, theyôre still collecting user fees on nuclear power to use in building a repository.

EM: Yes, theyôre collecting one-tenth of one cent per kilowatt, per user. Itôll show right on your bill that maybe 20 percent of your electricity was nuclear, and theyôll take that tax out of it. Theyôre still collecting that, and thatôs in a lawsuit right now. The lawsuit says that the Department of Energy has got six months to determine why they continue to justify that fee without having a repository. It will be interesting to see how that comes out. The pressure is really coming down on them to think of something.

RM: And I donôt think that money is sitting in an account at Bank of America. It probably goes into the general fund, right?

EM: Itôs going into the general fund.

RM: And itôs been spent, so that means that they will have to re-appropriate it.

EM: Exactly. And thatôs got to be changedð that money should be there, and it shouldnôt take an appropriation every year to get it out, as we discussed before.

RM: To me itôs shocking that Chu, the Secretary of Energy, went along with Obama on refusing to approve Yucca Mountain because heôs a scientist.

EM: Thatôs politics. He knows different. We sent Chu a letter last month that the commissioners signed saying that we support Nye Countyôs position at the site. And they never answered the letter. He had a representative at the ECA meeting last week so I questioned her as to when we were going to get an answer to that letter. She said, ñLet me follow up on it.ò And of course, sheôs in Washington. Within an hour after she left she sent me an e-mail: ñI found out where itôs at, and you will get an answer here within the next week or two.ò

RM: Thatôs great. What other kinds of things are the officials of Esmeralda County doing as far as Yucca Mountain is concerned?

EM: Theyôve been really supportive of the project and theyôve been really supportive

of my activities, but right now, itôs just on hold. They support me going to the meetings, they encourage me to keep on top of it and keep them informed, and I give them a monthly report that tells them exactly whatôs going on. And I tell them whatôs going on in the media. For instance, this month Iõll tell them about the two people who were replaced at the NRC, and about the two lawsuits and whatôs going on there. And I tell them about what meetings I went to, and I give a report of the meetings. They appreciate that I keep them up on all that. Basically, thatôs all thatôs going on right now. We still get people at the officeð I can show you the logbook. We probably get five, six, eight people a day that come by here and want to stop. And then we have the Information Center next door, and they can go in and check it out.

RM: In general, what is their response?

EM: Like I said before, I would say one out of 20, 25 people that we get in here is maybe anti. And for the rest, the first thing theyõll ask you when they come in is, ñAre you for or against it?ò

RM: They ask you that?

EM: Yes, or theyõll ask Carol. Our answer is, ñWe have our personal opinions, but weõre here to educate you. Weõve got all the materials for you to learn about it, and we can tell you how to go on the Internet and learn about it. Weõd like to have you make your own decision.ò When we were doing tours, weõd invite them to go on a tour, and weõd get their name and address and phone number. We had people come all the way from Washoe County to come down and go on the tour. They loved that tour.

That tour was the greatest thing there wasð let them see with their own eyes. When you go in that tunnel and you realize that itôs 1,000 feet underground and itôs 1,000 feet to the water, youõre pretty well secluded. And then to drive 50 miles through that

desert and then straight up the mountain . . . have you been on the tour?

RM: Yes.

EM: Well, you know what thatôs like. Itôs pretty convincing.

RM: Yes, it is.

EM: And you can answer all the questions that they have. I used to do a lot of the tours, and one of the things that convinced me is that right at the base of the mountain thereôs all kinds of black rocks on the hillside, and theyôve got what they call black tar on them. If you roll that rock over, itôs a complete different color. Theyôve had earthquakes out there, and those rocks have been there for hundreds of years and never even rolled over.

And going inside the tunnel . . . there are other tunnels on the site besides the main tunnel. We had one of the biggest earthquakes we ever had out there, and the scientists had been in one tunnel the day before the earthquake and they did some videotaping in there. They had offices there, and there were coffee cups on the shelf and different thingsð a severe earthquake would have shook them down. Well, they looked at the video before, and then they went back in and videoed the next day, and nothing had moved.

RM: And that was a big earthquake?

EM: Thatôs a good-size earthquake.

RM: Whatôs that mountain, Skull Mountain?

EM: Yes, thatôs where it was. So that kind of proves that underground isnôt affected unless youôre in the middle of a fault. Do you remember the big earthquake they had in San Franciscoð the one when the World Series was going on?

RM: Yes, very well.

EM: Well, that was devastating to San Francisco, but they shut down the underground transit that goes from Oakland, BART, for four or five days to inspect it, and the inspection proved there was nothing wrong. Within four or five days, they were going again. Thatôs another proof that underground tunnels are safe from an earthquake. But Iôm not trying to persuade people, Iôm just telling them the facts. You try to educate somebody, and you have the opportunity to really educate them, and not just put anti stuff in the newspaper. Thatôs what weôre fighting all the time.

Getting back to the people who come in here, thatôs what we do. We say, ñWell, weôre here to educate you. Do you have any questions?ò A lot of people think the waste is a liquid in 55-gallon drums; they donôt even know what it is. Or they donôt know where itôs located, so we show them maps. And my exhibit even shows the state of Nevadaôs opinion. We never had any of this educational stuff until I came here in 2006. Being on the outside of the project when I started working for the county, my goal was, this location was so good for people going by that it would be a great place for a public information center.

RM: So you built this?

EM: I did all of this. When I came in, this place was an old gas station and there were cobwebs and dust and dirtð it had been empty for eight or ten years.

RM: So you started from scratch in building this information site? What were some of the challenges you faced in building it?

EM: Oh, getting people to do it. I had the funding, but getting help to do it was a challenge. I got right in and did most of it myself, but I found a young fellow who was in town for the summer from college and he was looking for work, so I hired him to do some of the painting and he put these shelves together and what-not. I had all the signs

made in Vegas and brought them up here. That gas station was filthy, full of grease and oil and old engines and parts.

I got that going the first year; it belongs to the school district. The school bought the facility so they would have gas pumps for their fuel, for the school buses. They paid $25,000 for the whole thing. They put some money into pumps, but they just left the building sitting. I worked a deal with the superintendent to lease this, and they were excited about that, once we got it all cleaned up and fixed up. They could only collect $600 a month without having to put it out to bids, so we rent it for $600 a month. The next year, I told them weôd like to rent the building next door to put our exhibit in because they were closing down the science center in Las Vegasð DOE had a big science center in Las Vegas, and they had one in Beatty. I saw the opportunity to get a lot of that stuff out of those two places and bring it up here, which I did. I had an awful struggle with DOE on that.

RM: Really?

EM: Well, they favored Nye County and Lincoln County. They didnôt think Esmeralda should have it. But long story short, I got what I needed out of them. I had worked with the people at those two facilities so they were sympathetic to my needs and they helped me to get the material here.

RM: So this information center is basically your baby, your doing?

EM: Right. I worked two weekends gutting that thing all outð I had to pressure-wash it all down and everything. Then I hired a guy to come in and paint it. I had seen that the ceiling was just an open ceiling with the vents and everything. But if you go into some restaurants, you see where they paint the ceilings and pipes all black, and thatôs what I did. I had the guy paint the whole ceiling black. We cleaned it all up and painted the floor

and moved all our exhibits in there, and I paid the school another $200. So they get $800 a month. Well, if you figure it out, since 2005 theyôve gotten more than $25,000 back.

RM: Oh, thatôs wonderful.

EM: So thatôs a shot in the arm. And some people were opposed to that. They didnôt even realize that we were giving them rent. So thatôs been a win-win for both of us. And I told you the other day that I contracted with the students for the survey of the county, so we got that covered.

RM: Where did you come up with the idea of a survey?

EM: My counterpart Rex Massey, who has Lander and Churchill counties, had done that for years.

RM: And did he work with the schools, too?

EM: Yes, he did it the same way. I thought, well, if they can do it there, we can do it here.

RM: Plus, it was cheap, right? It didnôt cost that much.

EM: Yes, it would have cost a lot of money to go through the university. So that was a win-win, too. And then I supported Kirbyôs Hike Fund.

RM: Oh, hiking across the range?

EM: Over the mountains, 34 miles over the mountains.

RM: He told me about it. I couldnôt believe it.

EM: I did that in 2006 with him, and I broke all records. Faster than anybody had ever done it. I did it in ten hours and fifteen minutes.

RM: Wow. Are you a jogger?

EM: Yes.

RM: I think Kirby told me he did it in 11 hours or something last year. But how can a

guy do that across the desert mountains?

EM: Well, a lady did it the year after I did, and she did it in eight hours and something. But she ran the whole thing. She spent all year training for it. Of the 34 miles, I probably ran 14 miles, a lot of it downhill. But anyway, that raises a lot of money. Last year, I gave them $1,500 out of my own pocket because I couldn't do the run, but I always raised about $3,000 in pledges when I did run.

RM: What's the elevation gain on that run?

EM: 6,000 feet. You go from 2,000 to 8,000 the first six miles… straight up.

RM: That's astonishing.

EM: Then there's the other side.

RM: It makes a marathon look like child's play.

EM: Kirby's done a good job on that. He's got water and Gatorade and stuff like that stashed every two or three miles.

RM: That's incredible. Have you always been a jogger?

EM: Yes, for the last 30 years. It's what keeps me young.

RM: How far do you run?

EM: This morning I did five miles up to the summit and back. And I did that yesterday morning, too.

RM: Oh my Lord, I'm impressed. I used to jog, for years. But I never was in that class.

EM: There's a race through the streets of Spokane, Washington, called Bloomsday. It's a 12K. They usually have 50,000 to 60,000 people, and 100,000 spectators. At the five-mile mark, it's a half mile straight up. I did that 26 years in a row, and I was always in the first 1,200 out of the several thousand and I was always in the top 25 of my age group. I always trained. Since I've been so far away, I haven't done it the last two years. The last

year I did it, three years ago, I came in seventh in my age group. And there were 2,500 in my age group.

RM: Thatôs amazing. I really admire that.

EM: Iôm 72 years old.

RM: I think running is quite possibly the best exercise.

EM: Running or walking, but youôve got to walk a lot longer and farther than you run.

RM: Yes. In talking about opposition to Yucca Mountain, aside from the Harry Reids and the Richard Bryans of the world, what is the wellspring of opposition? Where is it coming from?

EM: What people read in the newspapers. The *Las Vegas Sun* is one of those.

RM: Iôm wondering if there are vested interests that do not want nuclear power.

EM: Theyôre very limited. The antis are very small groups, but theyôre noisy and theyôre powerful. Theyôre being funded by all the environmentalists and what-not. There are some anti-nukes that get some kind of federal funding; I donôt know how they get it. If you go to a hearing like the BRC hearing or the EIS hearings, you might have 50 or 75 regular people there, including the engineers and the industry people and what-not, and you may have five to 15 antis, and the antis get all the press. The press will run to themð they wonôt come to any of us.

I think that if a TV station took a microphone and just went into Vegas neutrally and started interviewing, you might find two out of ten that would be opposed to Yucca Mountain, if that many. Like I said earlier, my dentist, my accountant, my doctors, everybody in Vegas that I would see two or three times a year who knew I was at Yucca Mountain would ask me, ñWhen is that thing going to get done? How crazy is that? We spent all that money, letôs get it done.ò

RM: And get some jobs and economic development.

EM: Yes. First of all, let's prove that it's safe. And that's why we promote the license application. Let's get that thing done and, if it's not safe to build, then we'll move on.

RM: Would you say that it's been proven safe by now? I mean, with all the research they did, 20 years or whatever?

EM: I can say from my experience of almost 30 years in the nuclear industry that anything nuclear is going to be safe because it is so dangerous that they go way overkill in the work and processes. As you know, we have a high-radiation facility at Hanford, and to go into the radiation zone and, say, take an electric motor out, might take three days; on a regular open construction job, you could do it in an hour. But the workers could only be in there for so long, they had to dress up in three suits and a mask. That's why it's so safe. People don't realize that. It's like messing with guns or gunpowder or flying an airplane. You're really, really super cautious because one mistake is going to do you in; so safety is first. In the nuclear industry, you probably spend at least 50 percent of your time on safety training and upgrading. If you're in the heart of it, the contaminated zone areas, about half of your time is spent on safety.

RM: I had no idea. In general, would you say that the federal government does a pretty good job in regulating the whole nuclear industry?

EM: It's all up to the NRC, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. They govern it all. Today people are skeptical because of what happened in Yucca Mountain and because of Jaczko – they let politics get into their decisions. That's never happened before and they've lost respect because of that. Now people don't know if you're going to get a license application or if you're not going to get a license application because of the politics.

RM: Because itôs not empirically based, itôs politically based.

EM: Right. So the process has been corrupted and contaminated. And itôs scary. Iôve said that at all these meetings, all the time.

RM: Has anybody written a book on that?

EM: Not yet, itôs just too new, but there are articles on it. You could Google it. I Google ñYucca Mountainò and I probably get 15 to 20 e-mails a day on just Yucca Mountain. I get every article in the USA from every newspaper or media, TV or radio station, that mentions Yucca Mountain. Thatôs how I keep up with it. There are days when I get 15 e-mails a day. If thereôs an article in the *Sun*, if thereôs an article in the *Review-Journal*, if thereôs an article in the Knoxville, Tennessee, newspaper, or Savannah River or Hanford or Tri-Cities, that article gets sent to me.

RM: Thatôs a great way to keep up with it.

CHAPTER SEVEN

RM: Now, how did you get associated with Esmeralda County? You were interfacing for DOE with the counties, and then what was the transition? What happened?

EM: One day in early 2006, I came up here with a load of binders that DOE had excessed. Any time theyôd excess something, theyôd say, well, is there any of the AUGs that want it? I always kind of looked after Nye and Esmeralda counties, so I had a whole vanload of boxes of empty notebook binders to bring up here to the school that were donated by DOE. I had made arrangements. I called Esmeraldaôs school superintendent and said, ñCould you use some binders?ò

He said, ñYeah, we sure could.ò

So I came up here. Well, they wanted me to put the boxes in the service station here. It was a cold wintry day in March, and I was out there unloading them, and R. J. Gillum, who was a county commissioner then, drove up. He said, ñYou want to go to work for the county?ò

I said, ñWhat are you talking about, R. J.?ò

He said, ñWeôre getting rid of Robison/Seidler and weôre going to hire somebody to run the countyôs repository oversight program. Youôd be a great guy.ò

I said, ñWell, Iôd have to think about it, but Iôve got too good of a gig going. I donôt think I want to work for the county.ò

ñWell, give it some thought and let me know.ò

So I went back to Vegas. Now, former governor Bob List and I were friends. We went to the same church and we were in a small group together, and he was the head of the NEIð he had the communications contract for the Nuclear Energy Institute. He had

four western states: Nevada, Washington, Oregon, and Utah. He was kind of public relations for them. He did a lot of speaking, and being the only governor from the state that was ever pro-nuclear, he was well-respected for that. He knew a lot about the project. I was telling him about the Esmeralda County situation and he said, ñWell, come and work for me. Iôll make you vice president of my company and we can bid on that thing and do it.ò

I had been kind of skeptical about going on my own; I had a heck of a job with DOEð I had benefits and everything. But having him kind of added to it. I called R. J. up and I said, ñIôve got an idea for you.ò I told him that weôd like to bid on it, the same way that Robison/Seidler had it, as a contractor, but Iôd be the main person.

He said, ñThat would be a great idea. Come up and talk to us.ò I brought Bob up here and we went out and talked to him, and Bob had never met the other commissioners, Nancy Boland or Bill Kirby, so I took him out to Nancy in Silver Peak and we went over the hill and saw Kirby in Fish Lake Valley. Well, they were all excited about it.

I went back to Vegas that afternoon and went up to my boss at Hillshire, at DOE, and said, ñIôm turning in my resignation. Iôll give you two weeks.ò

He said, ñOh man, we hate to see you leave, but youôve got to do what youôve got to do.ò (I didnôt tell him what I was doing.)

Then I said, ñIôm going to use my vacation for the two weeks.ò I boxed everything up I had in my office and left that day and I was up here the next week.

RM: Who did they fill that position with at DOE?

EM: Bobbie Pope. She was in the same organization and she knew all about it from what Iôd been doing, and knew the countiesð sheôd been out to the counties on presentations and things like that.

RM: So you came on board here, and what kinds of things besides the information center here have you done for Esmeralda County?

EM: When the tours were going, I scheduled tours every year. And when the commissioners or anybody in the courthouse wanted to go to a power plant, I arranged for tours and took them to the power plants. I put out a newsletter every quarter. There's nothing to do that with anymore, but that was big. I sent that to everybody in the county. I just kept everybody informed. I had an advisory council and we would meet every quarter, and I kept them all informed on what was going on (but there's nothing to be advised about now). We had public meetings whenever there were issues or something. I would go to Silver Peak or to Fish Lake Valley or here, and have a public meeting, and bring some officials in. I would bring DOE people in for them to meet. I was really involved in the transportation issue, as I told you, when we formed that partnership to try and get the Mina railroad route. We were working really hard on that.

Just staying on top of it, keeping everybody informed, and looking out for the county. When DOE is going, you're putting out fires all the time. And then, of course, I represented the county at the AUG meetings, and the AUG doesn't even meet anymore. The four counties meet at least once a quarter just because we're so small– we can compare things and do things together. The report that I gave you that we put on the archive will kind of help you. The counties have all shared in that. And it's a lot of work keeping the records here, keeping everything straight.

I hired the gal who works here for me, Carolyn Fitzpatrick. When I opened up this office, I had an awful time finding anybody who was experienced who could represent the office, who knew something about Yucca Mountain, knew something about computers, and had the right personality to meet and greet. I want somebody here who

can meet and greet people and be nice to them and answer their questions.

The school district was in the process of getting a new superintendent. They had just hired Bob Aumaugher to come in as the superintendentð this was in July and August. The superintendent who was here had gone to Lander County, but heôs the one I worked with to lease this building. He left within a week after I got here. They had hired Bob Aumaugher to be a teacher at Fish Lake Valley and they couldnôt find anybody for superintendent. He had the credentials to be a superintendent, but he didnôt want to do it for the pay.

So the former superintendent called me up and said, ñYouôre looking for somebody in that office?ò

I said, ñYes.ò

He said, ñThe wife of the guy weôre wanting to put in for superintendent is really talented. She can drive a bus or she can do admin or anythingð how about hiring her to run your office? That would give them some income, and be an incentive to get him into town.ò

I said, ñWell, Iôm all for that.ò

He said, ñTheyôll be there next week with a load of furniture.ò I watched every day, and I went over there and there they were. I introduced myself, and told them what I had in mind. She was kind of timid, Pat Aumaugher.

She said, ñI donôt know anything about Yucca Mountain.ò

I said, ñI can teach you everything about Yucca Mountain. Iôll bring you the whole kit.ò

And she said, ñIôve got to go back to Minnesota and get another load of stuff. I wonôt be back for a week or ten days.ò

I said, ñThatôs all right. Iôm not rushing you. You donôt know me and you donôt know anything about it, but Iôll bring this packet to you, and you take it back there and look it over. And if youôre interested, let me know. Iôll hold off on everything until I hear from you.ò I told her how much I was paying, which was more than anybody else could pay anywhere in town; but it was comparable to what the school could have done if she had been a teacher.

The minute she got back to Minnesota she talked to some of her family, and they told her, ñWow, if you can get a job like that, you better take it.ò

So she called me up and said, ñCan I still have that job?ò

I said, ñItôs here waiting for you.ò

So she came here and I had her for four-and-a-half years, and it was a great relationship. They were good people. We became friends. It was just me, and theyôd invite me for a meal, and Iôd invite them for a meal. We went to Tonopah to the football games and things like that, and they just really fit into the community. It was a great win-win. Everybody liked her, and it was another advantage for the school, to get Bob Aumaugher as the superintendent. He did a great job. But they retired a year ago and went back to Minnesota.

RM: Oh, and thatôs when Carol came in?

EM: Yes, Carolôs been here a year now. She works for me; thatôs part of my contract. Because having a county employee is toughð Iôd have to advertise the position, and people in the courthouse with seniority could apply and you have to follow all their rules; itôs just easier to do it this way.

Thatôs the way I felt when I took over this oversight program. Plus, I couldnôt do it for what the county could pay for wages, and they could only pay so much. Most all the

AUG counties have private contractors except for two or three of them, and theyôre struggling, like poor old Linda Matthias in Mineral County. Sheôs a county employee and she puts in as many hours as I do, but she doesnôt make near the money I do.

RM: If you were a Las Vegas bookmaker, how would you book the odds on Yucca Mountain and various scenarios? Too hard to say?

EM: Weôve got too many ñifs,ò but Iôd say right now itôs 50-50. If the 2012 election goes the way it should go, the thing will be back on the table by next March. But it will be two to three years before it will ever be back with the employees that they had and what-not.

RM: And then in ten years it will begin accepting spent fuel.

EM: I would think so, yes.

RM: Based on your experience, how do you see the future of nuclear power, vis-à-vis America and vis-à-vis the human race?

EM: Oh, itôs a must. But I think what youôre going to see is small reactors, not these gigantic big ones. I think youôre going to see a reactor farm with several little ones. They are cheaper to build, faster to build, and more efficient.

RM: And theyôre self-contained, right? Turn them on, and 30 years later turn them off.

EM: Yes. That was a big discussion at this meeting. We had two or three presenters, and they talked all about: ñsound modular reactors and nuclear research development and deployment.ò There was a big presentation on that.

RM: And the little reactors donôt take a lot of management.

EM: They donôt take a lot of management or land.

RM: And if something goes wrong, they just kind of shut down?

EM: Right. You can plug in on the computer and find out anything you want to know.

RM: Do you think that nuclear power is essential for the future of the human race?

EM: Oh, definitely. There's too many ifs on natural resources like coal. I mean, nuclear power is an economically sound, smart way to go. And it's been so efficient in the past.

RM: In your experience here in central Nevada, and also with your background in Idaho, how do you view the grazing issues that ranchers are facing here in central Nevada, vis-à-vis the government policies and everything?

EM: I think water is the biggest issue. Water is the future for everything, and it's not bright at all. Water is a gigantic issue, especially in Nevada. It's already caused ranchers up in the basins in northern Nevada to go down because they can't get enough water.

RM: Oh, really? They've actually gone out of business?

EM: Yes. A lot of the basins have dried up, and if they get a pipeline to Las Vegas from that area, it's just going to be worse. You've got Lincoln County, all the ranches over there that sold out their water. The Southern Nevada Water Association is trying to run those ranches, and they're going bankrupt and shutting down, and that's all about water and money. It's a serious issue.

Living in Las Vegas, I think within ten years, you'll be paying $300 to $500 a month for water. They obligated themselves to this underground tunnel in Lake Meade, which they're behind schedule and behind budget on, and then this pipeline to northern Nevada. They were all banking on increased residents and it's gone the other way, but they're obligated to pay that off. So what are you going to do? You've got to charge your existing users.

RM: Yes. Plus, the scientists are predicting less flow in the Colorado River and a general drying-up in the Southwest.

EM: The only solution, and I don't know why they haven't done it, is desaltation.

RM: Yes, why haven't they done that?

EM: I don't know.

RM: My scenario is that California has the big straw on the Colorado River. They should be taken off of the Colorado River and go to desalinization, and upstream states would help pay for it. And the Imperial Valley has to be taken out of agriculture. There are just too many domestic uses for water in the cities.

EM: But Bob, answering your question about ranching, I think it all boils down to water.

RM: Well Ed, this interview and the other interviews I've done will be a valuable contribution to the history of Esmeralda County, and they'll be a valuable contribution to us in trying to understand, if the Yucca Mountain project does come back on line, how can they do it better this time?

EM: Right. There have been a lot of lessons learned. We're working on that right now; that's what I'm working with the four counties. The draft that I gave you is going to tell you some of that stuff. That's strictly about lessons learned. Has this interview been beneficial for you?

RM: Oh my God, yes.

EM: Because I don't want you to come up here and waste your time.

RM: Not at all. Did you have some final remarks?

EM: I think you can see from my record and my experience that I've put my heart and soul into this thing, and I've done everything I could for the county.

RM: Yes, I would agree. Moreover, you're a very competent and enterprising person.

EM: They appreciate what I've done; I don't have to toot my own horn. It's not

coming in here and taking their money, but giving them something. I always have felt that youôve got to produce a product. It doesnôt matter if itôs a report or a newsletter, youôve got to show something for your effort. And my handwriting is all over the place on the things that Iôve done for the county. Itôs been great. I love it, but Iôve got to retire here pretty soon.

RM: Myself, I donôt believe in retirement.

EM: Well, if they come back in March and say itôs full speed ahead, I may just keep my finger in it and hire somebody to do the day-to-day work, because I want to keep it going.

CHAPTER EIGHT

RM: I was thinking about your family background. As you know, Iôm an anthropologist, and Iôm ultimately interested in culture. In your background and in yourself you show the spirit that built America. You see it in your dad, and in your grandfather, and your kids. Itôs like you had a really good antenna, and in you there was a will to go try this and make something out of it.

EM: I always told my boys, ñYou donôt worry about the money. Donôt worry about how big a position youôre going to get. Just go do the job, and prove to your immediate manager that you can do it, and they will take care of you, if youôve got good people around you. Every once in a while, youôre going to have a bad guy. But learn from that, too. And when you have a bad guy, tell yourself, ôI donôt want to be like him.ôò Two of my boys have gone from the little town of St. Maries, Idaho, all the way to president and general manager of National Football League teams.

RM: How impressive. And where did you get that attitude, to be able to pass that on?

EM: From my dad.

RM: How did he communicate that to you, other than you just watching him?

EM: Mainly me just watching him. In the summertime when I was just a little kid, I went to camp with him. I was driving a jeep when I was ten years old. He was grading the road and I was following him with the jeep. He showed me where the clutch was and he put it in gear. I never shifted. He put it in one gear, and I had the clutch and the gas.

But youôve got to give back, too. You just canôt take. Thatôs why I got into politics. I was in Little League baseball. I was the State of Idaho Administrator for Little League baseball. I was over all the leagues; that was volunteer work. And I was a county

emergency preparedness director; that was volunteer work. City council, mayorð but that was only because I wanted to make my community better. I tell people, everybody should get into politics at least once, just to see what itôs like.

RM: Do you miss Idaho?

EM: Iôd go back there in a heartbeat. But it was my choice to go to North Carolina.

RM: I was wondering; itôs such a huge contrast.

EM: My son Jim Mueller is at Athens, where the Georgia Bulldogs team is. In fact, they live right on the campus. Iôve got a little three-year-old grandson, and heôs been wanting to take him fishing, so he called me up and said, ñHey Pop, why donôt you come down for the weekend? Weôll take Sam up in the mountains for stream fishing.ò

I said, ñGreat!ò I went down there last Saturday morning and we went Sunday. We got up early, and it was about an hour-and-a-half drive up to the mountains, and we stopped and had breakfast and got our fishing license and everything, and we took this little guy up to the stream. But Iôm telling you, the streams there are nothing like the streams in Idaho.

I didnôt disappoint them, but I told myself, ñWhy would I want to give up fishing in Idaho to come to something like this?ò Theyôre not the mountains; you donôt have the white water. Youôve got flowing water but you donôt have any great big holes to fish in. And the fish were all planted. They plant every Wednesday, but by Sunday it was fished out. It was a good outing, the little guy had fun. But there is no comparison. And coming from north Idaho, where I hunted and fished for 25, 30 years, all those places are still there; I donôt have to find new places. So itôs so much different.

RM: As I said, itôs a huge contrast. Now, tell me about your sons in the NFL.

EM: Weôd be here the rest of the day. I always felt that athletics was good for kidsð

keeps them out of trouble and what-notö so I always encouraged my boys to play sports. We started with Little League baseball. Thatôs how I got involved in politics, because our townôs parks and ball fields werenôt very good, and I felt if I got in there, I could do something about it. Well, I got on the city council and I found out there was more besides parks and ball fields. Thereôs water, sewer, police, all that stuff.

When my oldest son, Randy, was in the Little League, we won the state championship and we went to San Bernardino, California, to western regionals. I came back from that and got all enthused, and thought the state needed to broaden out. We had just had Little League up north; we didnôt have it in the south. So I became the state director, and I had teams down in Boise. Randy was a freshman in high school, going in to be a sophomore, and I was at a regional Little League meeting in Seattle, and the sporting goods people had exhibits there.

I got to talking to this one fellow who had an exhibit from Bill Hatch Sporting Goods, and they had the contract for the Seattle Seahawks. I was telling him about my son, and he had a son that played sports, and he said, ñYou know, if your kidôs as good an athlete as you say, a great opportunity is for these kids to get a job as a ball boy with the Seahawks.ò And usually they keep them all the way through school.ò He gave me a guyôs name to get ahold of, so I called him.

The guy said, ñNext May, have your son send a letter to us with a letter of recommendation from his coach and his principal, a picture of him, and a resume.ò We did that, and they called in June and said that he had been picked. They had 300 applications, and Randy had been picked, and to be at the training camp on a certain date. Bring one set of dress clothes, and the clothes on your back; thatôs all youôll need. Their training camp was in Cheney, Washington. Cheney is right out of Spokane; thatôs where

Eastern Washington State College is. That's on the eastern side of the mountains from Seattle. They went over there to train at that college to get out of Seattle. That was just 60 miles from our hometown in Idaho, so it was handy.

We took him over there and he spent that first summer, and long story short, he worked for the Seahawks all the way through high school and all the way through college. In his senior year of college, he was the training camp director. He went to college at Linfield College in McMinnville, Oregon. It was an NEI, Northwest Elite, school, and in '82 they won the national championship and he was the quarterback. He was the MVP of the championship game and he was a college all-American. When he graduated, the Seahawks hired him as a scout. So he graduated one day, and the next day he went to work. From the time he was a sophomore in high school, 20 years later he became the president of the Seahawks. He worked his way up clear through to the top.

Well, during that time, he gave my younger son, Rick, a job as a ball boy. Two of my sons were ball boys for the Seahawks. The second one went into scouting, and he was a scout for the Seahawks. The Jacksonville Jaguars were a new franchise, and they hired him as the director of their college scouting. So he moved to Jacksonville, and in fact I was there before their stadium was even done; he was helping put the team together. He was with them for several years.

The Seahawks hired the Green Bay Packers coach, Mike Holmgren, and Holmgren wanted to be the general manager and the coach. Randy stayed with him for two years, and worked under him– he was still kind of a vice-president then or something. But after two years under Mike Holmgren, he had an opportunity to interview for the New Orleans Saints. They hired him to be the general manager. In fact, I went there when he gave his first public speech. He was with the Saints for five years, and his

second year there they won the conferenceô first time theyôd won the conference. He made some big trades. He traded Ricky Williams off to Miami. I donôt know if you follow the ins and outs.

RM: I kind of remember it, yes.

EM: But he got crossways with the owner, and it turned out the owner is a real jerkô you can see the stuff thatôs going on with the Saints now. Randy was the GM for five years, and he brought my other son, Rick, from the Jaguars, and he made him the director of all the scouting. The Seahawks had fired the guy who was their head accountant when Holmgren took over and Randy left, Mickey Loomis. He was out of work for two years and he was begging Randy for a job, and so Randy hired him to come to the Saints and he put him in the finance office. When the New Orleans Saints fired Randy, they made Mickey Loomis the general manager. Heôs the general manager now, and heôs the guy that was involved in that bounty thing.

RM: Oh, okay. Where are your sons now?

EM: When Randy got fired from the Saints, they owed him lots of money, but if he went to work for another NFL team, he couldnôt collect that money. So he collected that money and he was an analyst for ESPN. As an analyst, you would recognize him.

RM: I might.

EM: He did that for two years. I could turn the TV on any day of the week and he was on.

RM: How great.

EM: Then he was hired by the Miami Dolphins as the general manager. After two years, they hired Bill Walsh. Miami owed Randy a large amount so he took the money and they moved back to Spokane and he took three or four years off. Now heôs with the

San Diego Chargersô heôs over all their scoutingô but still lives in Seattle.

RM: What a career.

EM: My other son stayed with the Saints, and then they fired him, and they owed him a pile of money. He went to work for the UFL, the new league that started, and he was the general manager of the Omaha, Nebraska, team. Then they shut down, and now heôs with the Philadelphia Eagles. Heôs the head of scouting, right under the owner.

RM: Thatôs really an interesting story. There are some values and ways of looking at the world being transmitted down the generations. Well, thanks so much for talking with me.

Addendum

RM: Ed, itôs now November 9, the 2012 election is over, and I think you have some more things that you would like to discuss.

EM: I think we probably should discuss Yucca Mountain a little bit more. From my standpoint, the project was going really well from 2006 on, especially here in Esmeralda County. As I told you earlier, we were able to open up an office with property that we rent from the school district. It used to be a convenience store and we turned it into a real nice office.

Eventually, we took the service station itself and made it into an information center and were able to get a lot of the stuff from the information centers that they had in Las Vegas and in Beatty and move them up here. From my vast experience of working on the project in Las Vegasð as I said, I worked for Bechtel in the communications department, which was the tours and informing the public and what notð I was familiar with all that information. Consequently, we are the only information center in central Nevada outside of Nye County, but you have to go to Pahrump for the Nye County center. We got people in here from all over the worldð we keep a log book, and itôs interesting how many people stop here. Of course, weôre on the road for people going to Death Valley or going from Vegas to Reno, or vice-versa. Itôs been real successful to have this office here, and weôve worked with the school district in supporting them as much as we can.

We were also successful in getting involved with DOE in the environmental impact statements. We were able to get them to change from their draft EIS to the final one to include a maintenance facility here at Goldfield, which would have been a mile out

of town; it would have meant 50 year-round jobs, had the project gone.

The community here has been real supportive— I mentioned before that we did a survey in the county and it was 70 percent in favor of Yucca Mountain, and I think that contributes to our efforts in educating the people. We've gone into Silver Peak and over to the Fish Lake Valley area and made our presence known there and answered their questions. We worked hard to get people to go on tours of Yucca Mountain and what not. They're pretty well educated, and I think that paid off.

But with the election in 2008, things completely turned around. That's what's sad about Yucca Mountain— even though it's a law, it got infested with politics. The president got the support of Senator Reid, our senator from Nevada, for his reelection in 2008, and consequently made a deal with him that he would help him to cut funding on Yucca Mountain. From 2008 till today, it's just consistently gone down; and as you know, they shut the project down.

It's so discouraging that politics can do that. It even got into the Nuclear Regulatory Commission— the decisions that were made there in the last two to three years were political thanks to appointments by the president suggested by the senator. Senator Reid was successful in getting his former advisor for nuclear, Gregory Jaczko, appointed to the NRC as the chairman, and that was a real blow.

It's what's scary to have politics in the NRC because the Nuclear Regulatory Commission was the savior of the safety for nuclear. They've always been neutral, non-biased, and have made very good decisions in regards to safety. If you get politics involved in it, then that starts to create doubt, and it's done that with the nuclear industry all the way around. Everybody in the nuclear industry recognized that, to the point where Jaczko finally resigned. But the damage was done and the license application is on hold

right now. It should be completed and we should have a decision about whether or not the place is safe to construct.

RM: By law, they're supposed to evaluate the application, aren't they?

EM: That's right. And by law, they're supposed to fund the project and the license application. But they haven't done that; so that's where we're at today. Actually, it's going to end up in the courts because of the election last week– it's not going to change anything politically because you've got the same people in power.

So it's forced all the affected units of government, the nine counties in Nevada and Inyo County in California to close down our offices. For instance, the Yucca Mountain Oversight Office in Clark County in Las Vegas previously had 12 employees in that office. They only have one person left today; the others have all been laid off or moved to other positions. Nye County's the same way. I mean, they've all reassigned people; they've cut back on the contracts. So that leads up to what we're going to have to do here– we're going to have to close this office down in December for lack of funding.

And whether the project comes back or not– and we still have to wait for funding on that– they'll have to fund this for us to defend our contentions. We have six contentions in the license application that we're trying to defend. We joined with Nye County on two of the contentions, and Esmeralda County, Mineral County, Lander County, and Churchill County have gone together on the other contentions and split the costs on them.

RM: Can you say describe the contentions?

EM: Most of it is safety and emergency preparedness. For instance, they didn't provide for the proper highways. A lot of the stuff is going to be trucked on Highway 95 and as you know, the four-lane stops at Mercury. Well, you've got to go on to Lathrop Wells

and you're going to have, like, 6,000 employees coming up that four-lane highway and going down into a two-lane highway, which we feel is a safety hazard. So we're trying to prove to them that they need to change that to a four-lane– it was four-lane to Mercury for the Test Site, but the workers all got off at Mercury.

None of the communities have good enough emergency preparedness for a nuclear accident. We need facilities, we need more fire protection, medical, and those kinds of things. So that's mainly what our contentions are about.

RM: Those are good; yes. You mentioned 6,000 employees?

EM: That would be for the railroad and to build the site. After they did get it constructed, there would still be close to 2,000 people working there.

RM: That's a big source of employment.

EM: Yes, a big operation. So that's kind of the background of where Esmeralda is as far as the oversight goes. I think we've done a good job of staying on top of things. You can see all the backup material here– we've got shelves full of it.

RM: Looking down the road, how do you see Yucca Mountain?

EM: As of today? It's too political to say. There's a rumble that Harry Reid won't be reappointed as the Senate majority leader. But it's just devastating that it comes down to politics. They appointed the blue ribbon committee to find an alternative, and basically they didn't come up with an alternative. It points right back to the repository.

There's so much nuclear spent fuel right now being stored that it's time for a second repository. They not only need to finish the first one, but then they need to find a place for the second one. As far as the future, I would say right now it's probably going to be on hold for another year or two. And then it'll probably all go to temporary storage some place– Carlsbad, New Mexico, or something like that.

RM: Carlsbad would be temporary?

EM: They would like to have a repository there but thatôs salt, and that hasnôt been perfected. Youôre looking at 20 years to get a license for the engineering and the EIS and the transportation, where Yucca Mountain could probably be in business within ten years or less, if they would go ahead.

RM: Whatôs your take on the temporary sites where theyôre storing it now?

EM: I think itôs an accident waiting to happen. Itôs in 131 locations in 38 states, I thinkð that changes. Thatôs not the way it was supposed to be. They had it in pools of water to start with and those are filled up. Some of those are even leaking.

RM: Some are leaking? Oh, my God.

EM: And the material is in what they thought was going to be temporary. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission passed some kind of a policy that they could keep it in dry storage for 60 years, but the EPA wouldnôt accept that. Now theyôre talking about extending the temporary storage to 100 years. So temporary storage is in limbo right now.

Bob, getting back to the political part of it, Iôve gone to NACO conferences, both national and in Nevada (NACO is Nevada Association of Counties and then thereôs the National Association of Counties) and Iôve worked the exhibits at both of them. Iôve done the Nevada ones probably for ten years in a row; this yearôs the first time I didnôt do one. You get an opportunity to talk to a lot of the Nevada state legislators, and when you go to the national one, you talk to a lot of them from states that have spent fuel in their back yards.

When you start talking to the ones in Nevada, Iôve had one-on-ones with a lot of them, and theyôll tell you, ñI feel for you but I have to agree to disagree.ò Or theyôll say, ñYeah, youôre right and it could be an economical boost to the state, but itôs a political

suicide for me. Until somebody comes out and supports it, Iôve got to stay out of it.ò I understand that, but itôs too bad that those decisions are made based on politics.

Governor List is probably the only politician in Nevada at that status who really was in favor of Yucca Mountain. He saw the economical benefits of it from the get-go. He was later contracted to the NEI and so a lot of people say, ñWell, he just made that decision because of the economics to his own pocket.ò But knowing Bob like I do, he sincerely believed in the project. He took the scientific side of it and he could argue with anybody on it. But he was crucified a lot by people because he took that stand.

I think for it to ever get turned around in Nevada, it has to start with the state legislature. I think that could be done if you had the right people and could talk to them. As soon as you got a few of them turned around, I think that it would mushroom, especially with the economy the way it is. They would probably come on board if they could really see the project for what it is. But theyôre not going to do it on their own; theyôre going to want to do it as a group.

I donôt know how that can happen. I would say that Nye County, Lincoln County, Esmeralda County, and Churchill County have pretty well exhausted all the efforts that we can make for turning it around in the state, and we havenôt been able to do it. I even talked to Governor Sandoval when he was campaigning as to how he stood on Yucca Mountain. He made no bones about it: ñWhen I was the attorney general, I was opposed to Yucca Mountain, and Iôll be opposed to it when Iôm governor.ò Youôre wasting your breath to even try to talk to these people. Itôs really in the hands of politics, and thatôs not right.

RM: When I interviewed Bob Loux, he told me right up front that the stateôs strategy from the beginning was to delay and obfuscate. They figured if they did that long enough,

it would go away.

EM: Youôve got people in Clark County and youôve got people like Bob Louxð yes, they were opposed to Yucca Mountain but they didnôt want it to go away because they were making healthy livings off fighting it.

RM: Thatôs right. So they could just delay and delay.

EM: As long as the funds were coming in and somebody had to spend it, they were the ones to spend it. But we werenôt making any headway getting the project. Letôs go back a little bit to when you asked me if I think the project will ever come back. As I mentioned earlier, there are a lot of issues, hurdles, that I donôt know that can ever be settled. One of them is the water. They still havenôt got water rights at the site from the state of Nevada. The state of Nevada was able to shut down potable water. They wouldnôt even let them use potable water on the tours up thereð they were hauling it in from California. If you couldnôt get potable water for just the tours, how are you going to get water to operate that project? Itôs going to take a lot of water.

The ownership of the land is not settled because the tribes still say they own the site. I already told you about the railroadð itôs impossible to build a railroad in the Caliente-proposed site.

RM: Do you want to go into further detail about the Caliente route?

EM: Well, as I said earlier, the main problem was the terrain, but also the land owners. There are some terrific big ranches that you have to go through and those people are going to want big money. The only reason the route went to Caliente was because of Mayor Kevin Phillips. Bless his heart, he put his life on the line for this project, and DOE recognized that and they brought him on board. He went to a lot of the hearings and what not and made some big strides because here was a county in Nevada that was 100 percent

in favor of Yucca Mountain. Also, they already have a railroad going through Caliente. In all respect to him, he really has promoted it, and rightfully so– he should get something in return for all his support. But it's not the right place for that railroad to go. So that's got to be settled.

And then the Mina route has got to be settled with the Walker Indians. So there are a lot of show-stoppers before the thing could even happen if you did get the license application. It's a tough issue and I think that most of us are looking at the reality that it may never happen. I didn't think I'd ever hear myself saying that.

RM: Let me bounce a more abstract idea– kind of a really big-picture idea– off of you. I've wondered– it seems like the American nation now is having a problem with doing big things. The Webb telescope, which was going to be the successor to the Hubble, that would be out in space, is in trouble. NASA– we can't even service the space station– these little private things they're sending up. I think there are a lot of other issues like this. I wonder if Yucca Mountain isn't just a part of this– that something has happened in the American character, or the American nation, where we just can't dream big anymore; we just can't do big things.

EM: Well, I absolutely agree with that and I think it's because of the government's failure to get things done, to complete big things. I mean, there's no way DOE could build and finish this project. And the information that came out of the blue ribbon commission proves that. One of their recommendations was that they had to take it out of the hands– it needed to be taken out of the hands of DOE and put into some kind of private control. But you still have to have the NRC, you still have to have the EPA, you still have to have those watchdog groups. But not them build it; not the Department of Energy build it. And that's just because of their record. I mean, look at the money that

theyôve wastedð $9 billion on Yucca Mountain, probably $3 billion or $4 billion on Hanford, another $2 billion or $3 billion on the other three sites; all for nothing.

RM: Yeah, nothing to show for it.

EM: Nothing to show for it. And so that record has put doubtð and itôs real.

RM: I wonder if we could actually do the Manhattan Project now.

EM: No.

RM: Think of the outcry you would get.

EM: Thatôs what weôre trying to doð weôre trying to do maybe a third of what they did, but they didnôt have . . .

RM: Thatôs right, but we canôt do it because of all kinds of reasons.

EM: License, roadblocks, politics. Back in those days, there was no partisan politics. And they did it safelyð how did they do it? Mankind is smart enough to do it right but we canôt, because of politics, let the smart people do it. I mean, this project should never have any doubt about the engineers and scientists. We educate these people to do itð why do we educate a schoolteacher, a college teacher, a doctor, a dentist, all these professional people, attorneys and what notð and we accept and operate on their decisions, but we canôt accept and operate on the decisions of an engineer and a scientist when it comes to nuclear? Thereôs something wrong with that picture, and itôs because of politics.

RM: Thatôs right. And a couple of other projectsð could we build the Panama Canal now? Could we build Boulder Dam now?

EM: Probably not.

RM: I know we couldnôt build Boulder Dam. And hereôs another factor that may fit into there. I was talking to Carol earlierð 25 percent of the physicians that are practicing in the United States were not educated here. The US imports 10,000 nurses every year.

We can't even train enough physicians for our country. Is this all part of some big problem— we can't do big things anymore?

EM: And the physicians that we do train and that are coming up with the new techniques and what not, where do they come from? India.

RM: Yeah, a big percentage of them are coming from there; that's right. So something has happened. Yeah. And Yucca Mountain is just a special case of this.

EM: Yeah. I think that's about all I've got to tell you.

RM: Okay, Ed. Well, thank you very much.

EM: You're welcome.

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