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FERNALD LIVING HISTORY PROJECT
Transcript

Name: Tom Renck

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Tape: 57

Project Number 20012

Tape FLHP0130

14:01:01

(Off camera: We're rolling)

Q:

Okay, first, uh, if you could give us your name, and spell it just so we have it right.

A:

Okay. Thomas Renck, R-E-N-C-K.

Q:

Great, and you can just talk to me, you can ignore the old recorder there.

A:

Okay. All right.

Q:

(Laughing) You and I can just have a conversation. First of all, if you can give us some background as far as how long you've been in the area, um, your family, those kinds of things.

14:01:19

A:

Okay, I was born in Harrison, we moved out on Edgewood Road in the '60s I believe. I'm not real good with these, these date-type things, but lived over there, uh, lived in the city Cincinnati for a while, moved out here about uh, twenty-one, twenty-two years ago.

Q:

Great! And um, first of all, since, do you live right here in the community?

A:

Live right here where we're taping this.

14:01:45

Q:

Okay. Great, great. First of all, let me ask you this um, how do you think that this site, the Fernald site has changed this community?

A:

I think it was, nobody knew what it was doing up until all of this broke, what's this, it's been about ten years I would imagine now since this came out that there were some problems here. And I do think there have been some damage done, the stigma of being this nuclear waste area.

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A:

And I think that's hurt and I think every time it's appeared in the paper, it tends to bring that up again and again to people that it is out here. Okay.

Q:

And how was the site when you uh, first moved to the area? What were your first impressions of it?

14:02:35

A:

I mean there were no impressions. It was always there, and we drove past it as kids, and nobody thought much about it. There was, it looked like a Ralston Purina sign out front there that said, "Feed Stock Materials" so you didn't really know if they were making, feed or, or what they were doing. I knew it was a nuclear plant, but had no idea of really the size of it and, and what they were doing.

14:02:59

Q:

And when did you find all that out?

A:

I don't know if we've found it all out yet, exactly what all they were doing. I think some of it is classified, semi-classified or what goes on, and I think it continues to dribble out what's going on. Uh, so, as these stories have broke, I think you found more and more out about it. Okay, so I think there's still probably things that a lot o' people aren't totally aware of.

14:03:28

Q:

So as a Ross Area Merchant, um, how, first of all, how, how did you um, get involved with that organization?

A:

Well, as a merchant, uh, they invited some people in the beginning of that organization to, to get together and start meeting, and I was one of the people invited and I've been involved every since. So it's just been a long-term thing that we've, we've been with as, you know, Chamber of Commerce or whatever you wanna call it.

14:03:56

Q:

And what did you want to get in uh, accomplished by being a part of the Merchant's Association?

A:

Um, I think initially, we wanted to do a lot more sharing of ideas, and maybe looking at group health plans, and I don't think that's real practical as we look at what's going on. But I guess getting a better sense of what's going on in Ross. Uh, they don't have local zoning. We have Crosby Township, Morgan Township, and I guess it's Ross Township.

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A:

All three of us are real close together, and I don't think any of those people had ever talked together. And I think we were trying to get, get that together also.

Q:

And how do they interact with the folks at Fernald?

A:

How do, which they? The Ross Merchant?

Q:

The, yeah, um-hmm.

A:

There is a, I think it was called an envoy at one time that comes there, uh, we, Curt from the CRO has been at our meetings, and there are people that are assigned from Ross, or from Fernald to come to the meetings, and they help an awful lot with the Silver Queen Festival. So that, that's worked out pretty well as far as what's goin' on over there as far as what we're doing, they've been a big help.

14:05:04

Q:

Have you ever taken a tour of their Fernald site?

A:

The whole thing, probably not. I've been over there on bids for certain projects. I've been over there for some meetings. Um, I've had the mask on and, and walked around like that. I was over there Tuesday morning to look at some trees we'd planted.

14:05:26

A:

Some of my folks have been over in this area. The Paddys Run, where you guys put in the deck, I don't know what they call that exactly, but all those areas I've been in, but it, the whole thing, I don't, I don't think I've had one where you just went through everything. Been back to the waste pits, so I've been to a lot of the places. We went over to see the things blown up a couple times, but I guess yes and no.

14:05:53

Q:

What're your impressions of the site when you're there?

A:

In what regards, as far as?

Q:

As a community member.

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14:06:11

A:

Impressions of the site. Pretty ugly. I mean it is a real uh, 1950s type industrial factory. I mean it's something where I would assume they made something. And I don't think America's into making things any more, we're into massaging and marketing and things like that.

14:06:32

A:

So I would assume it would be like an old steel mill, or a dirty old oil factory or, or something like that, uh, outdated in technology. So that would be my main impression. Uh, hodge-podge. A lot of trailers, uh you know, that type of situation. Temporary/permanent things that I think went on longer than I think most people realized.

14:06:58

A:

Uh, a lot of confusion, you know, there's pits and holes and mounds and, and all that stuff, so I guess it would be a typical government project. Okay?

14:07:14

Q:

Um, you lived here pretty much during the height of the Cold War era, and uh, just what were your personal impressions of the Cold War at the time?

A:

Cold War.

Q:

The threat of Russia, those types of things.

A:

Well, I mean that, that's one of the things that, that had to happen. I mean this factory had to be here to make these things, and in that regard, they were successful. We're still here, and even though we got a little bit of nuclear waste, we didn't get a bomb dropped on us, so I think that that's very important.

14:07:49

A:

That you know, that overall, we had a success here. And you know, I think whenever you move forward, you're gonna get a few things left in the dust, or in the, behind and that's what's happened right now. So, that's one thing we need to you know, realize as we're criticizing what goes on over there is that we did accomplish the primary mission.

14:08:09

A:

So, and I think that's important that uh, if we don't have a United States, then we wouldn't be doin' these interviews and we wouldn't be cleanin' the thing up. Okay?

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14:08:20

Q:

Great, um, tell me a little bit about the CRO. What does C-R-O stand for, and, and what're they trying to accomplish?

A:

Okay, that is the Community Reuse Organization. Originally when we met, we thought we were going to be involved with what is going to happen with the thousand and twenty-one or whatever acres it is over there, and all of the removable-type property. We were informed, and the, and the place was gonna be cleaned up. So when I thought that meant all thousand acres would be reusable.

14:09:02

A:

And we were going to do something with it that would help the community long-term. We were informed very quickly that the environmental restoration would take a large, large part of it, the cell would take a large, large part of it, and that there was nothing left. We then asked for what about the twenty-three acres to the left of the driveway off of Willey.

14:09:26

A:

And I think that's been negotiated to be allowed to be on hold, or on reserve for some type of community development. And we don't know who the community is, is that the three townships, is that some sort of quasi-fire department organization that helps all three, or is it Crosby Township because that's where it resides. Um, so the CRO has been involved with that.

14:09:53

A:

Uh, it's incredible the number of people that come out of the woodwork wanting a piece of this. Uh, who is involved, and where do we fit? And I think people are, you know, we've had people that wanted to fly in airplanes, which is, which is great I think. It probably would work if it's a park, why can't they do that?

14:10:09

A:

Uh, the Indians, the historical society, the fire departments and, and I'm sure there's gonna do a lot, a lot more, and I think we've got a lot of reasons we, to do something over there. And a lot of ways to do it, and it's a matter of uh, getting it cleaned up so we can move on with that. So that's what the CRO is looking at.

14:10:29

A:

Uh, the other thing is we're trying to do some economic development so that the worker bearers over there have someplace to go, uh, and you know, how it impacts the communities here. We're tryin' to look at what we can do to minimize that and maximize the resources you have over there. Again, a lot of, consultant-type people coming in here, tryin' to suck some money out of the community.

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A:

I'm not sure exactly how much they have the interest of the, the communities involved in, and their own interests or getting something checked off on their resumé or some DOE check sheet.

14:11:09

Q:

You mentioned um, helping people that work there right now find jobs and many of those people are from the community. Can you elaborate on that point just a little bit. How is the CRO helping with that?

A:

Okay. There are a lot of union representatives on the CRO and a lot of people that work in the plant on the CRO, so they've got a vested interest in doing that. And there are grants that we've applied to. We're meeting tonight again to review some more grants that would do incubator-type things where if anybody over there has an idea for a business, they're gonna try to get them hooked up with the right folks.

14:11:51

A:

Or provide them with some funds, or, or at least help them get started. So I think that's probably the most promising thing I see that if, people have a skill over there that's needed, how do they go about starting their own business?

14:12:05

A:

Uh, that's the one thing, the other thing is they are going to advertise uh, in a lot of the Chamber of Commerce type papers that we do have these grants, these aids, these research type things, these development people available to do this. Uh, they're also I guess, trying to figure out what the skills are of these folks, and announce that to the world.

14:12:28

A:

So people are short right now, so they're looking for folks, and I'm sure there's people over there that can do something that somebody else needs done, and tryin' to just make 'em aware that all those people aren't, I don't know what they have a lot, a lot, a lot of different skills. Okay, so I think that's primarily what we're doing. Okay?

Q:

What about like job re-training? Is the CRO in-, uh, in sort of that?

14:12:55

A:

Well, see I would think that that would be some of the things that we would hear from there is needed and we would apply if that is part of a program that we would need. So we're still in the planning stages, and we're just getting money to do the planning now. We have applied for the next, next year for the doing money.

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A:

But that I don't think came up, I think that's a whole other part of what's going on over there. Not that we would exclude it, but I don't think that's our primary mission, to re-train workers.

Q:

Has the CRO been involved in uh, major decisions at Fernald, major cleanup decisions like shipping or uh, any of those issues?

14:13:36

A:

Ah, well, I would think the twenty-three acres was a major decision, and the future use of the property is a decision that I think we're supposed to talk about here at this coming meeting. Are we gonna have trails in there, uh, are we going to fence, are we gonna have walking, riding, bicycle, horseback, you know, how, what kind of access are we going to allow in there?

14:14:00

A:

And we're gonna recommend to the, DOE or Fernald what we think would be best for the community. So I think that will have an impact on how it's cleaned up, and we have you know, talked to those folks and, and listened a lot about you know, whether they think they're doing and what does that mean to clean it up? So we have had impact, and I think we've had impact on what, what has happened. I don't think the twenty-four acres was planned for until the CRO got involved.

14:14:33

Q:

And how has Fluor Daniel Fernald helped the CRO develop?

A:

Well, they give you money, and I think, that, that allowed us to hire a consultant because everyone is fairly busy. And he does, he's the glue that holds all this together. Uh, there have been a lot of trips that people have went on to meet with other CRO people and try to decide what Denver or somebody else is doing, because I, we're just not aware of what the possibilities are.

14:15:06

A:

We were kind of thinking, inside the, inside the fence is what we called it, and then we started thinking outside the fence, and now we're thinking back inside the fence of, of what we can do. Uh, I think some, some of the CRO people somewhere are buying the equipment and reselling it to other government agencies, and you know, just, just being aware that that is possible, you know.

14:15:30

A:

Kind of helps us frame where we want to go, so Gary, is it Stang-, Stanger, Staeger, (Response - Stegner.) Stegner? I mean he provides us with the information that I don't think we could move forward unless we had that information.

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14:15:43

A:

And again, there's a lot of confusion of what is Fluor Daniel, and DOE, and the Environmental Resource, and the Ohio State, and there's just a lot of folks that, they also help sort out what the rules are, and give us a place to, to park all of this stuff. I mean Julie records all of our, um, meetings so we get minutes and keeps, and finds information out for us.

14:16:09

A:

And I don't know if that's Fluor Daniel (microphone pops and fades, then pops and comes back) or through DOE but I mean, it's that resource people that they provide for us.

14:16:17

Q:

Now you mentioned trips. Did you go to other trips in the DOE complex to meet with CRO people from other complex, parts of the complex? Like Oak Ridge or Hanford or.

A:

Right. Okay. Well, Lisa is involved, and it's hard to tell which reason she is going where. It may be for CRO, it may be for FRESH, it may be for you know, some other part of the DOE. So she's constantly looking at different types things that were involved. And then the CRO has conferences, so a lot o' times Curt, the consultant, will go and ask other people.

14:16:52

A:

And a lot of those folks are going because they are labor union representatives, or a representative, or that's their job at Fernald. So I don't know if they're goin' for the CRO, or they're goin' for their job, or they're goin' as a combination. Um, and then I know there were things at Columbus at one of the, you know, one of the folks went to because that was one of the local CRO.

14:17:14

A:

They've been to Miamisburg, they've got some tapes from Miamisburg. So, uh they are sharing things with the CRO, and exactly, I have not went anywhere other than the ABC building, and, and the Fernald complex and Ross High School. Yeah, that's it, okay. So I haven't taken any of these luxury trips. And they don't sound like they're much fun anyway. And they, it's people in the Washington obviously for some national conferences I believe. Okay.

Q:

Now does the CRO work closely with FRESH?

14:17:49

A:

No. I mean, they are, Lisa is on there, and I think she is on the CRO because she was a member of FRESH, but I don't see any, you know, a direct relationship.

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14:18:03

Q:

Good. Um, tell us kind of about the early years of your involvement with CRO. What was it like getting it started, and when was that?

A:

Okay, um. They, I'm gonna say, tricked me, would be the best word I'm gonna use, into a three-year commitment. So I'm still there, so I guess that it was less than three years ago this was founded.

14:18:33

A:

And the reason I use trick is any other time I have volunteered for something, I have volunteered, at an open-ended commitment. In these, they made you sign a contract that you will, would be committed, I don't know what they're gonna do if I break it, but uh, three-year contract which I thought was, a little tricky. I mean I didn't realize when I went to this that I was committing to that long of a period.

14:18:58

A:

Uh, so I, we signed a three-year contract, ah, the early years were up at the ABC building, or whatever that thing is up there on the top o' the hill. And Maria Crupple from U.C. was involved as a facilitator I believe.

14:19:13

A:

Well, she actually helped select the people of the CRO, and then we selected a facilitator out of Miami I believe, and I don't remember her name, but she did a very good job of pulling together the fourteen or fifteen people that were there to come up with what we thought we were about. And I was fairly impressed with that process because I didn't see where we were gonna get anywhere.

14:19:37

A:

So that was a, a very good learning thing about what a facilitator can, can do to get some people focused. We met up there for several months, say, elected or appointed Mr. McWilliams, or I guess Maria Crupple appointed McWilliams, or asked him to be the Chair. And we've been meeting up at Ross High School every since.

14:20:00

Q:

How many meetings a month do you have?

A:

One. Now they may call some, we've had more than that depending on what's going on. During the summer, I think we actually skipped the month of June, I'm not positive. They have some executive uh, committee meetings every once in a while, but essentially one, one a month.

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14:20:22

Q:

So tell us what con-, a typical meeting is like. What do you discuss, how is business conducted?

A:

Okay, well it's, there is an agenda. Old business, new business, all that, that good type o' stuff. I'd say Curt, the consultant, runs the meeting, and we talk about you know, what we're gonna do. The last several meetings have been about the grants, and trying to get the money and what, what are we talking about.

14:20:48

A:

Ah, I think there's a lot of problems with, if you read the papers and y-, you have some people that work at the plants, and you have some people going to some meetings, and you have some ideas, and you read the, the minutes, you get five or six different opinions of what, what actually transpired or what we heard.

14:21:10

A:

I know we, the last meeting, I brought up the fact that the, the Indians were gonna be buried over here, the remains of the Indians. And I know six months ago we had voted that that was okay, but we thought we were in charge of the process, or thought we would have something reviewed, so I brought in a, an article from the Harrison paper that said this had all been approved.

14:21:39

A:

And so we had a lot of discussion on has it been approved, or what is the process to get things approved. And I'm not sure anybody really knows. I'm sure there's one person over there that's doing all this and just manipulating everybody else to get the answer they want.

14:21:53

A:

Uh, but there, it was not approved according to Gary and he was going to look into, you know, and talk to the reporter and make sure they understood that these were ideas that were tossed out. We didn't reject the guy with the airplane, we just said that needed to be considered in the future. We didn't say we're gonna have a fire department over there.

14:22:13

A:

We didn't say what we're gonna use the twenty-three acres for. That needs to be looked into in the future when it's available, if it's available. Okay? So tho-, that goes on. There's always um, public input though we ask everybody that's there. And it seems like every week we meet another consultant from some economic government agency that it has some piece of this pie, you know, in his _____.
okay?

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14:22:47

Q:

Do you ever feel sometimes that it's kind of a struggle between the CRO and the government to decide on what's happening with that land?

A:

Oh, I'm sure it is. I mean, if we really, we weren't asked what the cleanup level was. That was another person's decision. And when you know, when we thought it was gonna be cleaned up, in our mind it was cleaned up and done, turned over for another use.

14:23:17

A:

So it, it was quite a shock to a lot o' the people in the CRO when we found out when it was cleaned up it was going be turned into some type of reserve or preserve, or again now, we're s-, hopefully being told that we do have some impact on what, what type of preserve, reserve it is. So, there, there is a conflict there.

14:23:40

A:

I'm sure the CRO can suck infinite money out of the government to do development if they, if they let us, and there seems to be dwindling budgets, but I mean they seem to be large numbers. And it would appear you know, that with the economy booming, that a lot o' these people shouldn't have trouble getting a job.

14:24:04

A:

Now that doesn't mean five, ten years from now when they're actually terminated that the economy's gonna be in the same situation. Okay?

Q:

And uh, what would you personally like to see done with that land once Fernald is all torn down?

14:24:21

A:

Well, I think the uh, and I don't know again, I talked to the people there Tuesday, and I think the road is gonna be left off of Willey Road. I think, and I would like to see some type of memorial to you know, the people that worked there. And then I guess to the environmental people who worked to expose this thing and worked to get it cleaned up.

14:24:44

A:

Because I think those are fairly significant things that we did over there. You know, we made all this nuclear stuff that helped us. And then we did have a process that I think in the long-term is gonna help us to get this stuff cleaned up, and both those people, all those folks worked pretty hard at it.

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14:24:59

A:

So you know, if it's a rock or a monument or a building or whatever, uh, and then I guess it would be nice if the three government agencies, the three townships could get a, a control of that, so they could make the decisions on what's going on over there. And then I would like to see as much access as possible to the, to the public.

14:25:24

A:

Because I think that's the only way we're gonna see that it is act-, there's not junk coming outta the ground and that it is being looked after. And there's, it'd be a shame to waste it if we spent all that money. If it is clean, why can't we go on it. If it's not clean, then it needs to be fixed.

14:25:40

Q:

Let's go back in time a few years (laughs). (Response - Okay.) And in about 1984, late 1984, there was a series of dust collector releases in Plant 9. And uh, then there was an awful lot of media attention. Um, you were in the area at the time, what were your reactions to that whole situation?

14:26:02

A:

I'm tryin' to, 1984, fifteen years. I guess I'm, I think at that same time, is that when all this im-, emotional stress forms were being sent out and all those evaluations being done. And, and then I think at the same time, I don't know if the property, that seems later than, later than that, both o' those type of things.

14:26:34

A:

Uh, I guess I was, I found it incredible that you know, nobody knew what was going on over there. And all of a sudden, all this stuff if, is you know, being out in the paper and in essentially, I think we're living somewhat in the path of this, and that you know, more wasn't done at, at all points in time, to. I mean that stuff's extremely heavy, how can it blow off o' the plant?

14:27:06

A:

And you know, what were they doing about it? It was again, I don't remember everything going on over these, these years, but. Again, I, I think it was, oh well, just another mismanaged government project, what, what, what can you expect?

Q:

So at that time, there was a lot of media coverage, and like Donohue came to town, and *20/20* and *60 Minutes* and Harry Reasoner was on the north access road or whatever (laughs). And um, as a community resident, how did you react to that type of national media coverage being in this

(Tape ends in mid-sentence)

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15:01:05

Q:

Okay. In the mid '80s, uh, lots of natural media attention, um, how did that affect, well both you as a small business owner and you as a community member?

A:

Okay, well I guess it came back to, the media tends to explode these things, and it, again and again and again, and in the newspapers again and again and again, with everything and headlines, and you're seeing all this stuff, and then you're, you're talking to the, the people that're actually on site, and you're getting, we'll call it, somewhat the real information.

15:01:42

A:

But again, I'm sure they're capsulizing to make it look as good as possible. And we're getting the extremes of the worst, so we're, at some point in time I think you, you go through, (demonstrates with hands). This can't be, then it can, and you, then it's all their fault then it's all their fault, and you, you kind of get frustrated with you know, what is actually going on?

15:02:02

A:

And I don't think we're getting the, the true, that we are making hopefully some progress over there of getting this place cleaned up. And that, again, shouldn't make the news, but all these bad things that happen. Um, and I think a lot o' times, the news releases over there that are purely informational, are intended to be sensationalized.

15:02:29

A:

At other times, I find it incredible that those silos haven't figured out and made safe in the ten, fifteen, twenty, thirty, forty years that they've been there. Uh, and what they keep doin' in studying and studying it and it would look like they could almost bury 'em under all the paper and make papier-mâché and, and make 'em safe enough.

15:02:49

A:

Because I'm sure that there are thousands and thousands of pages of, of studies on what's going on out there. So you know, there's lots of frustration on both, both sides o' this. We hear all this negative garbage and we know some of it's true, and there's other things over there, you know, I just don't understand why we can't do a, a quicker job. Or at least a better public relations job on getting this figured out. Okay?

15:03:16

Q:

And what're the challenges of um, operating a business in such close proximity, you can see the water towers from here. What's that like?

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15:03:24

A:

Well, I guess most people are, put this in the back, it hasn't blown up or killed anybody recently, so they're not, they're gonna forget about it. And, we are not Fernald, we are Ross. So you know, we do not emphasize that. We do not send people up and down Willey Road if we're giving directions to come here.

15:03:45

A:

And you know, that water tower is benign as any other water tower. It doesn't have, it isn't shaped like a mushroom cloud; it is a water tower over there, so I think people are aware of it, and I think people are more aware of it the further away that you get than, than you are than people are actually close to it.

15:04:03

A:

I mean it, it does every once in a while impact and ya have to explain to people, and I think it's overall hurt development out here. And you know, if they develop, they're gonna put in bushes. That's hurt us, but there's nothin' we can do about that.

15:04:21

Q:

Tell us about your interaction with site workers.

A:

W-, I don't, I don't exactly, I mean they're there and we're here. Now every once in a while they do come over here and buy something. But I mean, I don't go in there. You know, it says, "Keep Out," and I do. And it, you know, when you get over there and you do try to drive around.

15:04:42

A:

Uh you know, if you have business there, it seems like every time you go there, the, the gates and the procedure has changed. And you know, you waste an incredible amount of time getting checked in and checked out, and so they don't encourage you to go there and we don't go there.

15:04:56

A:

And the people that come over here, you know, they normally have a purchase order. We throw it on the truck, van whatever and they're gone. So we don't have a lot of interaction with them.

15:05:06

Q:

So Fernald as an entity does buy from your organization? (Response - Um-hmm.) What're some of the projects that you've helped with?

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A:

Uh, w-, way, way back, we seeded that, call it the office area up there in front or work lawn, restoration with them. Uh, we're continually providing you know, saw, straw or seed or minor things to some of the construction people as they're doing things over there. I think it's more of an afterthought you know, when they're, when they're doing things.

15:05:42

A:

And they we have been involved with the wetlands restoration, and the thing over on Paddys Run, and the screen out in front. So those were all projects that we bid, you know, to either provide goods or services or whatever.

Q:

That's what they call the aesthetic barrier, right? The trees out front? (Response - Um-hmm.) Tell us a little bit about your business here, just for folks who don't quite understand what Renck's Landscaping is.

15:06:11

A:

Okay. Well, this is landscaping and garden center, so there is a garden center up front where we sell a complete line of what you would typically expect to find at a garden center. Been doing this about twenty-eight years as a landscape company, about fifteen, eighteen years as a garden center. There's six acres here, a lot of land and plant material that is a big garden center.

15:06:38

A:

Uh, we have two landscape crews, uh, all of our people are Ohio certified landscape installers or garden center people. Uh, and there is about twenty people that work here.

Q:

Have you ever had to field questions from the public, or any of your employees had to field questions from the public about Fernald? Somebody that might just stop in and not know this area very well.

15:07:04

A:

I mean we're constantly getting people that're lost, trying to find this place, pulling in here with, where, where is it? What is it? More people lost. Uh, the employees back when the compensation forms were handed out, you know, we had to explain to them, you know, where, you know, help them with those. Uh, I think there is a concern when we work over there exactly what we're doing.

15:07:30

A:

Uh, but fortunately, most o' the time all we're doin' is drivin' over there and dropping stuff off. We're not digging or anything like that. So yeah, we've had some inter-reaction with, with people, explaining what's going on over there. And I'm sure you know, all my relatives and friends and anybody that knows that word, it's incredible when you're talkin' to people.

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15:07:52

A:

What was it, oh, I was talkin' to somebody in St. Martin's, making a vacation plan, and he asked me how it was going because he had lived in this area, and what. So it is, if you mention Fernald, people are gonna know what you're talking about.

Q:

Great, great. Um, let's see. How do you feel about the cleanup, how it's progressing?

15:08:22

A:

Uhh. I guess some o' the things that uh, seems incredible to me that it costs what it costs to do what they're doing, and I don't think they're explaining exactly what goes on very well to the public on why it costs millions of dollars to knock these buildings down.

15:08:50

A:

I mean, it looks to me like you just put a plastic greenhouse over it and run a bulldozer into it. And sure, there's some stuff in there, and it, you know, it looks like they got suits, that they could wear that they don't breath any air. And you know, I guess it's hard to imagine a million gazillion tons o' whatever they're talking about.

15:09:09

A:

And you know, they're constantly packing and re-packing, and packaging, packaging, packaging. Whatever they're doing you know, it just, I think it's overwhelming, I'm sure the work they're doing, and the, and the dollars, both of 'em, but there seems to be, a lot of I guess miscommunication on what's going on. On why, why, why're we doin' what we're doin'?

15:09:38

A:

There, there's gonna be lakes dug there to dig up, you know they're gonna be borrowing dirt from here and there and all this other, I mean you know the wetlands. I guess that poor guy that lives next door, if there's a bunch o' mosquitoes in there, does he just live with it?

15:09:56

A:

Um, you know, it just, it's overwhelming the project, and I don't think there's one spokesman for what's going on there. So it makes it hard to, to look at it. I mean the skyline gets smaller, but when I drive over here, it looks like we're still building new buildings. So, where do those fit? I thought we were tearin' 'em down.

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15:10:19

A:

We need space, for all these worker bearers, but there's, but there's offices empty over there, more trailers. So it's a pretty confused, confused mess and I'm sure it's for everybody over there. I think when we were seeding they were, they couldn't wait to get us done so that they could tear it up to do somethin'.

15:10:37

A:

You know, a lot of typical that you would expect with a large, but you know, no overall end game here I don't think. I mean, we really don't know what it's supposed to look like when it's done, so it's kinda hard to know if we're makin' any progress towards that. And I'm sure the people that're diggin' the holes wanna know what the contours are supposed to be when they get done, and nobody can tell 'em that.

Q:

What do you see in the future for the site?

A:

Well, there again, I hope it's a park. I hope it's something that's open. Uh, you know, I would, I think it would be great if we could get a Ducks Unlimited, or elks, or moose, or buffalo, or turkeys, or you know, some o' those folks to be involved. If this airplane people wanna be involved, if a horseback riding club wants to be involved.

15:11:29

A:

But I, you know I, I, if we're gonna be successful, the more use we can get out of it, I think the better it's going to be. Uh, as long as the, the townships, and I guess they're hurt quite a bit by the, the Whitewater Park and people fallin' off their horse or whatever.

15:11:45

A:

And then they gotta pay for the services, but I think as long as we can work, work that out, I wanna see more used, the more used the better of that place. And then the twenty-three acres, I'd like to see that become an asset to the, the townships.

15:12:01

Q:

Now Fernald, where it is, is sitting on a major aquifer. And have the water issues affected your business at all?

A:

Yeah. And that's a sore point. And I think the way I understood somewhere in one o' these nuclear laws that any impact that place has shouldn't affect anybody else. So when they stuck the waterline out here in front o' my place, they said I had to pay seventy-five hundred dollars to run it through there even though I didn't want it.

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15:12:31

A:

So, I didn't think that was right, and I did get an exemption for agriculture, so I didn't pay it. But I still think it was wrong that they tried to put that out there. I think it was wrong that the pipe was this big around (shows diameter with hands) because the waterworks people wanted to run it down to Miamitown. That didn't have anything to do with the Fernald project.

15:12:50

A:

But the rate was based on this pipe (shows diameter with hands) not, not this pipe (shows diameter with hands). So I don't, I think that was handled incredibly bad. I found it incredible that we moved that from one side of the road to the other because there were dead Indians on one side or the other.

15:13:04

A:

And I'm sure wherever they went, I mean that cost a lot o' money, and I don't have anything against a lot o' these folks, but it just I, some o' this stuff I think just gets carried too far. And I think it puts a taint on the good work that's goin' over there because o' some o' the other things that're a little bit frivolous.

15:13:25

Q:

You're not the only one that's told us that (laughs). That's for sure. Um, how was the CRO involved in uh, the Native American reburial?

A:

I, I'm not ex-, I guess it's just another place to come and ask, another forum that if you know, the more people you can get to support this, obviously the bet-, the better it is, and I think that's essentially, nobody, we were still defining our roles.

15:14:02

A:

And I think every organization goes through that where there's people that come and solicit, and it may be a legitimate request, or it may be something off the wall. Uh, but they do have you know, an archive type person over there. So I guess it's his type of job to promote those type of things, and he did come there and ask.

15:14:27

Q:

Let's talk a little bit about the class-action suit. Were you a part of that at all?

A:

Is this the property damage?

Q:

Yeah. Um-hmm. How did you get involved?

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A:

Yeah. Well, as far as, I mean, only in the, only from the fact that somebody represented me, and when it came time to collect, you know, everybody was there with their hand out, so yeah.

15:14:49

Q:

How did that all come about? Did you get paperwork in the mail, or what exactly happened?

A:

I'm sure we filled out something. And, it was, what was it? We had an option of being a personal property or being a business property, and I said, we're kind of both, so I filled 'em both out. Uh, I'm not sure if we put a, I don't think we put a figure down, but they did come, come back to us with a number.

15:15:19

A:

And we negotiated a settlement, and at that per-, point in time, the person said the business thing didn't appear to be quite as viable as the personal thing, so we agreed to the settlement.

15:15:34

Q:

For the most part for you and your neighbors, did you feel like the settlement was fair?

A:

The only th-, the only thing was the rumors, that this guy got x-gazillion, and that guy got nothin', and you know, this guy went wee, wee, wee, and that guy didn't, and all these other things, and, so you never knew if it was fair or not relative to what, and it was also based on, and I don't know what else they woulda based it on, the property value.

15:16:05

A:

And unfortunately, this place was very run down, and now it's you know, my pro-, it's like my property value was here on the tax thing (motions with hands) at the very, very lowest that it's ever been, when they did this. And now it's, every since then it's just skyrocketed because of all the improvements.

15:16:22

A:

Ah, so I guess if we just look at it, probably was fair. But you, you just hear, you know, there isn't a list of what everybody got as far as I know. And I guess, at some point in time, the freedom of information will allow that to come out, and people will really be upset, but there won't be anything they can do about it, so. I don't know if it was fair or not. It was like found money in a lot o' ways.

15:16:48

Q:

Are you part of the medical monitoring program? (Response - Um-hmm.) Can you tell us a little bit about that?

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A:

Most complete physical I've ever had. I mean they did you know, a very thorough job. And I guess it's, one part of it is it's great that they're monitoring you, but the other part of it is it doesn't appear that anybody is taking responsibility if something is found there, you know, and there, probably most of it is not related to Fernald.

15:17:19

A:

Uh, and we hear again of all these people again with all these studies and it's kinda like, "I don't know if I need all this crap." You know what I'm sayin'? It's somethin' else it's just out there, it would be nice if it would go away. I mean every year, every two years, you drag yourself over there and you're supposed to do that anyway.

15:17:41

A:

So I guess it's kind of nice that it happened. And they are you know, fairly thorough when they do that.

Q:

Has living so close to Fernald, or so close to Fernald, affected your family at all?

15:18:01

A:

Ah, I think when they did the emotional survey, that it, it kind of stirred some things up that maybe you'd kind of put to rest. But other than that, I don't think it's a major, major issue. Now, if this place would spewed stuff across the place here tomorrow, it could be a different, a different you know, scenario, but I, again, I think it's pretty well settled down.

15:18:30

Q:

Do you ever worry about health issues at all?

A:

Ah, you're gonna die anyway. (smiling) I mean, I mean, nah. I just, you know, if one o' my kids ended up with somethin' that could be, then I think there would be a lot o' problems with, you know, should I have done more, what could I have done, and guilt, and things like that, but fortunately, we've been you know, very healthy.

15:18:53

A:

So that, that's easy. We haven't had the problems that some o' these other people, and I can see where, they, they could look at that. And you know, again, everybody in society, wants to blame somebody. I don't know how you blame yourself for health. You know, it wasn't my, I guess it was my choice to live here, but I didn't know what was goin' on over there. And so, that, that's the conflict.

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15:19:23

Q:

Since you lived here all these years, and they weren't real open about Fernald for a large majority of those years, how do you feel about the government?

15:19:33

A:

Well, that didn't have anything to do with Fernald, it's just a piece of it, it's just, it's just a piece of it, Okay? "I'm here from the government and I'm here to help you." I mean we're just too involved in too many, many, many, many things. Uh, and every time it is involved, it is pretty much screwed up, is my attitude.

15:19:50

A:

And I think that's pretty much what goes on here at the CRO. I'm really wondering if we're going to accomplish an awful lot other than spending a lot of money. And, and thinking we've accomplished something, where I think it's gonna be the natural flow of the economy that's gonna take care of all these folks, where they're gonna ended up be dumped out anyway.

15:20:10

A:

I don't see where we can magically do things and if we are creating one government job for another government job, I'm not sure that we are accomplishing what, what the goal is, which is, I think to reduce this DOE burden because we don't need it any more.

15:20:28

Q:

And what are the possibilities for the area, I mean especially the area's economy, if that place does go out of business? And like you say, the CRO doesn't accomplish their goals, what kind of harm can that do to the, the economy of this area?

15:20:40

A:

Well, if they get that sucker shut down right it shouldn't impact. I mean Cincinnati is a very, very, strong economy and the way I understand it these folks are spread out over 30 counties or whatever it is, Northern Kentucky, Indiana, and I don't see where its going to have a major, major impact. I'm sure there's going to be people that are going to be hurt

15:21:08

A:

Um, locally here, but I think if we can, I think part of the problem is that a lot of people want this to stay rural and if it does I think it will have an impact on some of the restaurants and some of the people in, but if it continues to grow and development, I don't think it'll have any project. Especially if this is clean, there's no place else for this to go. But to grow out in this area.

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15:21:35

Q:

And what is your title in the CRO?

15:21:36

A:

Member. Yeah.

15:21:42

Q:

Do you have anything you'd like to add anything we didn't cover that you'd like to cover?

15:21:45

A:

I don't think so.

15:21:51

Great, we're going to do what we call natural sound now, if we can have all quiet on the set for about 30 seconds. This is nat sound.