

LES project manager just tries harder

"I have a high level of confidence he'll be able to build the project No. 1, from a quality perspective, and No. 2, from a schedule and budget perspective."

*Jim Ferland
LES president*



Mike Lynch, project manager for Louisiana Energy Services' proposed \$1.4 billion uranium enrichment plant, stands in front of the company's Hobbs office on North Turner.

TYLER FLETCHER/NEWS-SUN

RICHARD TROUT NEWS-SUN

Englishman Mike Lynch, project manager of Louisiana Energy Services' proposed uranium enrichment plant, has always had an aptitude for math and science, but this is not the reason he's been a high achiever.

According to Lynch, growing up in a large, poor working-class family is what's caused him to excel in his engineering and project management career.

"I'm the eldest of six children," he said. "The advice I got from my parents was to 'not to go down in the coal mine, but to become an electrician.'"

As for why being poor might have helped his character, Lynch said it gave him the drive and ambition to rely on his own talents.

"I guess if I've got one attribute, it's 'I just try harder,'" he said.

A native of northwest England, Lynch said his siblings haven't done too badly either. A sister and a brother are police sergeants and his oldest sister has been successful in the education field.

Lynch owns a home in Hobbs. He stays in the area for two-three days every two-three weeks. As LES approaches the groundbreaking of the plant, scheduled for August, Lynch will be spending more time in Lea County.

His wife, Anne, will visit Hobbs soon and might move here. The couple have two grown children. Lynch and his wife are living in Ewloe Deeside in the county of Flintshire.

For 19 years Lynch was with ETC, the owner of

Urenco's centrifuge technology. Urenco is the majority owner of LES.

For the past six years Lynch has been the project manager for the uranium enrichment facility SP5 in Almelo, Netherlands, which is the model for the \$1.4 billion National Enrichment Facility five miles east of Eunice. Lynch is a control and instrumentation engineer by profession and, prior to taking up project management, practiced in this field for 25 years.

Lynch received a bachelor's degree in applied physics from Liverpool Polytechnic, U.K., and a master's degree in engineering project management from Lancaster University, U.K.

As the project manager, Lynch is responsible for managing the enrichment plant's construction, which is expected to involve between 400-1,200 construction workers and suppliers from August to December 2013. The plant's first cascade hall to enrich uranium is expected to be complete by December 2008.

LES president Jim Ferland said the consortium is lucky to have someone like Lynch.

"Beyond the personal characteristics, the experience he brings from SP5 in Almelo is invaluable in the states," Ferland said. "As much as can possibly be, he's been there and done that, and now he can take his experience in the Netherlands and bring it to the states, so we can have a project that runs even smoother than the project they had in Almelo."

On the personal side, Ferland said Lynch has integrity and is a driven, detail-oriented individual.

"I have a high level of confidence he'll be able to build the project No. 1, from a quality perspective, and

No. 2, from a schedule and budget perspective," Ferland said, adding Lynch is focused on safety as well.

The project manager said he decided to assume his most recent position because it was time for a new challenge.

"I had already been doing it for six years, and we had already brought 18 or 20 cascades on line," Lynch said. "All we had to do was to bring in some more cascades on line. We'd done everything by then. So I didn't want to spend the next two years doing the same thing."

Regarding why the LES plant is a challenge, Lynch said it will be the biggest project Urenco has ever undertaken.

Until recently, when he ruptured his Achilles tendon playing tennis, Lynch had been an active jogger who completed the London Marathon two years ago. He also enjoys tennis and squash.

In the marathon, Lynch had aimed to finish at or under four hours. Because of the crowded field, it took him 45 minutes to get to the start line.

"My time was four hours, 45 minutes," Lynch said. "And I hit the infamous wall at 21 miles. I had been doing nine minute miles until then. At the 21st mile, it took me the best part of two quarters of an hour, and I went back on a regular schedule after that."



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