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## **DOE Announces Two National Pollution Prevention Awards**

### **Announcement Kicks Off Earth Week**

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) today recognized two CH2M HILL Hanford Group (CHG) projects for exemplary pollution prevention performance, reducing risk, protecting natural resources, and enhancing Hanford site operations. The announcement provides a fitting start to Earth Day activities throughout the area.

DOE recognized a CH2M HILL project to develop reusable metal containers for packaging low-level radioactive and mixed waste as one of five "Best-In-Class" awards in the DOE complex. Another CH2M HILL project to recycle radioactive lead received a "High Achievement" award, one of only two given in the DOE complex. Both projects were forwarded to DOE's Office of Health, Safety and Security for competition for a DOE "Star" award and the White House "Closing-the-Circle" awards.

"These two projects protect the environment by reducing the volume of generated waste," said Office of River Protection Manager Shirley Olinger. "The waste minimization and recycling aspects of these projects prevent pollution, while supporting our mission to cleanup Hanford."

"The pollution-prevention projects that are being recognized by the Department of Energy clearly demonstrate our employees' commitment to the cleanup of Hanford and to sustaining the quality of life in our community," said CH2M HILL President and CEO John Fulton.

### **Reusable metal waste container project wins "Best-in-Class" award**

A CH2M HILL Waste Services team led by Yousef Shehadeh, Jim McGrogen, Cindy Stratman, along with Catherine Louie of the DOE Office of River Protection, received a DOE "Best in Class" award for developing reusable metal boxes for packaging and transferring low-level radioactive and low-level mixed waste offsite for volume reduction and/or treatment prior to disposal.

CH2M HILL maintains and operates the Hanford tank farms, including managing and packaging generated waste in a safe and regulatory compliant manner. CH2M HILL has used plywood

boxes for waste packaging for several years. This practice was recently expanded to include metal boxes. The metal boxes have several benefits. They last longer than the plywood boxes, which minimizes waste and reduces radiation dose to workers, and saved the Department of Energy about \$200,000 a year in waste package disposal and procurement.

Workers made recommendations that were incorporated into a metal waste box that was customized for ergonomic efficiency. Ergonomic injuries, such as muscle strains, joint sprains and back problems, are the most common injuries among CH2M HILL's workforce. The new metal boxes are better balanced and easier to lift, resulting in an immediate reduction in worker injuries. The cost and safety advantages of the metal waste packages led CH2M HILL to phase out the use of plywood waste boxes entirely.

### **Lead recycling wins "High Achievement" award**

A Waste Services Team led by Grady Willingham and the Office of River Protection's Catherine Louie received a "High Achievement" award for recycling lead used in the tank farms and at Hanford's 222S Laboratory.

Lead is routinely used in Tank Farm and Laboratory activities for many reasons, including shielding workers from radiation and isolating laboratory activities from atmospheric radiation. Lead has potential adverse health effects and it is important to limit worker exposure by removing unused lead from work areas.

The team looked at options to disposing of the lead as a radioactive and hazardous waste, including recycling the metal. It was determined that shipping the lead off-site for recycling was the lowest cost alternative.

About 5,000 pounds of lead was consolidated, packaged and shipped to an off-site recycler in August 2007. The cost to recycle the lead was \$46,500, compared to about \$71,000 for treatment and disposal, producing a cost savings of approximately \$24,500.

CH2M HILL Hanford Group is the contractor responsible for managing Hanford's 177 underground storage tanks holding 53 million gallons of high-level radioactive waste. Working under the DOE Office of River Protection, CH2M HILL is safely managing the waste, retrieving waste from older single-shell tanks and transferring it to safer double-shell tanks, and preparing the tank farms to deliver waste to the Hanford Waste Treatment Plant for vitrification.

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