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OFFICE OF RIVER PROTECTION REPLACES PUMP

With the replacement of a large pump in a million-gallon radioactive waste storage tank at the Hanford Site, the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of River Protection (ORP) and its contractor, CH2M HILL Hanford Group, have demonstrated that existing tanks can be upgraded to feed waste to a treatment facility.

Crews on Friday replaced a broken transfer pump in Tank AW-104, one of several tanks that will serve as staging points for millions of gallons of radioactive and hazardous waste on its way to be mixed with glass in a treatment plant.

"Success on this job is more evidence of our readiness for the activities needed to get on with waste retrieval and treatment," said Harry Boston, ORP Acting Manager. "Removal and replacement of large failed equipment will be part of the routine activities needed to retrieve and treat tank waste," said Boston.

Officials said replacing the 50-foot pump was probably the most challenging work on a Hanford tank in 10 years because of the complexity of the work and the levels of contamination involved.

"Most importantly we did this safely," said tank farms contractor CH2M HILL Hanford Group Project Director Rick Raymond. "And our success on this project further demonstrates we can get these tanks ready to feed waste to a vitrification facility under any operating circumstances."

"It was a difficult job, and the people doing the work are to be commended for their continued safe and reliable performance," said Boston.

The pump installation in Tank AW-104 is part of over $1.4 billion of initial upgrades to prepare Hanford tanks to supply waste to a vitrification plant. The installation was also the final "first" in terms of demonstrating that existing double-shell tanks and associated waste transfer lines can be upgraded to support tank cleanup activities.

The Department of Energy had previously demonstrated waste could be moved across the site in a specially designed pipeline. Last spring, CH2M HILL demonstrated it could mix up waste that has settled into layers in the million gallon tanks. Crews are currently installing thousands of feet of piping to supply the staging tanks and the vitrification plant with waste.

In the coming months, the new pump installed in Tank AW-104 will be used to free up space in the double-shell tank. Waste in the tank will be sent to an evaporation facility nearby on the Hanford Site to reduce the waste volume.

"Replacing the old pump in this tank will allow us to free up precious space in the tank storage area," said CH2M HILL Double Shell Tank and Waste Feed Delivery Project Manager Dale Allen. "That space is needed to support ongoing and future efforts to permanently solve the tank waste problem by removing waste from all of Hanford's tanks."

CH2M HILL Hanford Group Inc. is ORP's prime contractor with responsibility for storing, characterizing and retrieving for treatment approximately 53 million gallons of highly radioactive and hazardous waste stored in 177 underground tanks.

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Note: *Congress created The Office of River Protection in 1998 to manage the nation's largest and most complex environmental cleanup project –retrieval and treatment of tank waste at the Hanford Site. More background information on the Office of River Protection can be found on the office's Web site at: http://www.hanford.gov/orp.*

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