

First Hanford Tank Farm Cleaned up -- New Standard Set

RICHLAND, Wash., March 13, 1996 -- Cleanup around the U.S. Department of Energy's single-shell high-level waste storage tanks on the Hanford Site has set the stage for a new standard known as Controlled, Clean and Stable. The first grouping of tanks to meet the new criteria is known as the TY Tank Farms.

"The new cleanup standard reduces exposure hazards to our workers and makes our people more productive," said John Wagoner, Richland Operations Manager, U.S. Department of Energy.

"Our highest priority is to safely store this waste until it can be prepared for disposal and this new standard takes us a long way toward that goal," said Roger Bacon, Vice-President and Manager of Tank Waste Remediation System for Westinghouse Hanford Company (Westinghouse).

Westinghouse is the management and operations contractor on the 560-square-mile Hanford Site north of Richland, Washington, and is responsible for the safe storage of the waste.

The criteria for Controlled, Clean and Stable includes removal of all pumpable liquids from single-shell tanks to prevent leakage; installation of remote monitoring equipment so the tanks can be continuously monitored by computer from a central location; removal of surplus, contaminated equipment from around the tanks; decontamination of above-ground equipment surfaces; and covering the tank farm with clean gravel to shield against contaminated soil.

"It's important that we be responsible stewards of the environment but DOE and Westinghouse must also be responsible stewards of taxpayer dollars and do everything we can to reduce the mortgage on these old facilities. When we achieve this cleanup standard in all of our tank farms, it will save approximately \$50 million a year," said Dr. LaMar Trego, President of Westinghouse Hanford Company.

The TY Tank Farm located near the center of the Hanford Site contains six single-shell tanks built between 1951 and 1952. Five of the six tanks are known or suspected to have leaked waste to the surrounding soil in years past. Liquids from all of the tanks have since been transferred to safer, double-shell storage tanks, eliminating the potential for additional liquids to escape.

Even though liquids have been removed from the six tanks, they still hold approximately 85,000 cubic feet of salts and sludges which will eventually be removed under terms of the Tri-Party Agreement, which is the blueprint for cleanup of the Hanford Site.

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RL 96-022