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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

January 12, 2010

RETRIEVALS BEGIN ON ANOTHER HANFORD SINGLE-SHELL TANK

Washington River Protection Solutions (WRPS), a prime contractor for the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of River Protection, has started retrieving radioactive and chemical waste from another of Hanford's aging single-shell tanks, making it the 12th such tank to undergo waste retrieval.

ORP is responsible for reducing the risk to the environment posed by Hanford's 53 million gallons of radioactive and chemical waste stored in 177 underground tanks.

"Tank waste retrieval is a priority for the Department," said Stacy Charboneau, ORP Assistant Manager for the Tank Farms. "The Department has worked closely with WRPS to prepare for this retrieval effort, incorporating valuable lessons learned from previous retrieval work. We will continue to work together to retrieve these dangerous wastes and prepare for future waste treatment."

C-104 is a 530,000 gallon tank. It is one of 16 tanks located in an area known as C Farm near the center of the 586 square-mile Hanford Site. The farm was constructed between 1946 and 1953. C-104 holds nearly 260,000 gallons of contaminated sludge and other radioactive and chemical waste materials left over from decades of producing special nuclear materials for the nation's defense. Removal of the C-104 pumpable liquids was completed in 1989 as part of an overall single-shell tank interim stabilization effort.

"We have one of the safest and best trained workforces in the entire DOE complex doing this work and we are dedicated to completing our mission safely and efficiently," said Mark Lindholm, Single Shell Tank Retrieval and Closure Manager.

Waste from C-104 is being transferred through temporary, above-ground hose-in-hose transfer lines to nearby double-shell tank AN-101, a distance of approximately 1600 feet. The above ground lines, developed specifically for Hanford, meet all environmental regulations and avoid the time and expense of installing permanent infrastructure.

"We have been preparing for the start of waste retrieval from C-104 for several months. We have overcome some very difficult circumstances in preparing for this transfer, including very high radiation and contamination levels associated with some of the old equipment that had to be removed, but we were able to manage this work safely," Lindholm said.

Retrieval of the waste from Tank C-104 is being accomplished using a technique known as modified sluicing which uses high pressure nozzles to spray liquid onto the sludge and wash it to a central pump. Water is often used in such transfers but in this case crews are able to recycle liquid waste from double-shell tank AN-101 which avoids the generation of additional volumes of waste that would have to be treated.

"We are happy to see USDOE retrieving waste from another SST," said Jeff Lyon project manager of Tank Waste Storage for the Washington State Department of Ecology, the agency regulating the tank farm cleanup. "Ecology expects this retrieval to kick start the remaining tank retrievals in C farm leading to completing all tank waste retrievals in the near future."

The goal of the waste retrieval program is to remove at least 99 percent of the waste to meet the criteria established by the Tri-Party Agreement (TPA) that governs Hanford cleanup. Of seven tanks that have been emptied to date, six meet the TPA criteria and a seventh is under review. Waste from four other tanks has been partially removed but additional equipment will need to be deployed in those tanks to remove the hard heel before they will meet the TPA retrieval criteria

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ORP 10-005