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**Vit Plant employees work 12 million hours without a day-away-from-work injury
*Workers also surpass two years without a day-away injury***

RICHLAND, Wash.— Employees working on the Hanford Waste Treatment and Immobilization Plant – better known as the Vit Plant – have worked more than 12 million hours without a day away from work due to an injury. July 16 marked two years since the last injury involving a day away from work.

“Construction is one of the most dangerous industries. For our nearly 3,000 employees to maintain the discipline and focus needed to work two years without a days-away-from-work injury case speaks to their dedication and commitment to safety,” said Project Director Frank Russo. Russo works for Bechtel National Inc., which is designing and building the Vit Plant for the U.S. Department of Energy.

“Safety is a core value for us. Management sets expectations and provides support, but safety leadership comes from all levels of the organization. Workers lead many of our safety programs. We believe their engagement is a key ingredient in our success – whether it be industrial or nuclear safety,” said Russo.

Vit Plant employees are performing heavy construction, which includes operating large cranes and equipment, transporting materials and working at heights. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports the days-away-from-work injury rate for the nonresidential building construction industry was 0.8 injuries per 100 workers in 2010, the last year the Vit Plant had a lost-day injury. Since 2011, the days-away-from-work injury rate for the Vit Plant’s 3,000 employees has been zero.

In addition, the total recordable injury case rate for Vit Plant employees averaged 59 percent less than the nonresidential building construction industry as a whole from 2006 through 2010, the last year for which BLS numbers are available.

About the Waste Treatment Plant:

Bechtel National Inc. is designing and building the world’s largest radioactive waste treatment plant for the U.S. Department of Energy at the Hanford Site in southeastern Washington state. The Waste Treatment and Immobilization Plant, also known as the Vit Plant, will immobilize the radioactive liquid waste stored in 177 underground tanks using a process called vitrification.

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Vitrification involves blending the waste with molten glass and heating it to high temperatures. The mixture is then poured into stainless steel canisters. In this glass form, the waste is stable and impervious to the environment, and its radioactivity will dissipate over hundreds to thousands of years.

The Vit Plant will cover 65 acres with four nuclear facilities – Pretreatment, Low-Activity Waste Vitrification, High-Level Waste Vitrification and Analytical Laboratory – as well as operations and maintenance buildings, utilities and office space. Construction of the Vit Plant began in 2001 and is more than 65 percent complete.

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