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Restoring the River Corridor

While workers at the K West Basin continue the multi-year task of removing, drying and transporting spent fuel to safe storage in central Hanford, other Project workers will now design the water treatment and sludge removal systems for the K East Basin and begin constructing equipment to start removing fuel from that Basin two years from now.

The River Corridor Project will complete the shipment of about 235 metric tons of excess uranium billets to a DOE facility in Portsmouth, Ohio. Another 140 metric tons of uranium fuel and scrap at Hanford will be disposed in low-level waste burial grounds on Site and the remaining excess uranium (825 metric tons) will be stored, pending a decision on final disposition.

Meanwhile, in other efforts to restore Hanford's Columbia River corridor, Advanced Reactor Program workers will get cleanout and stabilization of the fuel transfer pit at the former Plutonium Recycle Test Reactor in the 300 Area under way. The work is scheduled for completion in April.

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Transforming the Central Plateau

Modifications to a storage vault at the Plutonium Finishing Plant begin this month to install criticality-safe and seismically qualified racks for storing stabilized plutonium materials. The changes are needed because of the increased capacity of containers that meet new, stringent standards for 50-year storage, which will be used in the outer can welding system, an over-packing operation scheduled to start up in April.

Some transuranic waste ash from DOE's Rocky Flats (CO) Site, which has been stored for years at the Plutonium Finishing Plant, is now being stabilized. The Waste Management Project will prepare the Central Waste Complex to receive the stabilized material and safely store it until it is shipped to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant in New Mexico for final disposal.

Energy Secretary Bill Richardson announced in December that DOE's preferred alternative for meeting civilian nuclear research and isotope production needs does not include restarting the Fast Flux Test Facility (FFTF) at Hanford. A final decision regarding FFTF was expected as this report was going to press.

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Preparing for the Future

To support economic diversification and growth in the Tri-Cities, Fluor Global Location Strategies will assist the Tri-City Industrial Development Council with a community economic development leadership summit.

In December, the Volpentest HAMMER Training & Education Center was selected as the DOE Center of Excellence for beryllium training. In upcoming workshops, training professionals will assess existing DOE beryllium programs and agree on appropriate and uniform training. The process is expected to serve as a model for addressing future broad-based DOE training issues.