



DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY HANFORD

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**RICHLAND
OPERATIONS OFFICE**
United States Department of Energy



Workers Successfully Bring Down Historic "McCluskey Room" at Hanford

Achievement Marks Completion of First Phase of Plutonium Finishing Demolition

RICHLAND, Wash. – Workers have successfully demolished a facility at the U.S. Department of Energy's Hanford site that was nicknamed after Harold McCluskey, the man who received the highest dose of radiation from americium ever recorded at the site. Cleanup contractor CH2M HILL Plateau Remediation Company (CH2M) recently completed demolition of the "McCluskey Room," which is the first of four main buildings that make up the Plutonium Finishing Plant complex to be demolished.

"Completing demolition on this building was years in the making and is both historic and a significant risk reduction," said Tom Teynor, project director for PFP demolition at the DOE Richland Operations Office. "It closes the chapter on one important piece of Hanford history."

The Americium Recovery Facility became known as the “McCluskey Room” following a 1976 chemical reaction and explosion that severely hurt Harold McCluskey, who was working inside at the time. He received a dose of radioactive americium that was 500 times the amount deemed safe. McCluskey died 11 years later of unrelated causes. During plutonium production at the plant, the Americium Recovery Facility separated radioactive americium for other uses. Following the 1976 incident, the facility never operated again.

“A lot of employees made final demolition of the Americium Recovery Facility possible,” said Tom Bratvold, vice president of the PFP closure project at CH2M. “Whether they led the effort to find the right safety equipment to prepare the building for demolition, used that safety equipment to complete demolition preparations, or demolished the building itself, I am proud of the teamwork and safe progress the team has made.”

“We have a lot of challenging work in front of us, but that’s what makes this satisfying,” said Jeremy Hulquist, field work supervisor for PFP demolition at CH2M. “We’re committed to performing the work safely as we work through the rest of the PFP complex, piece-by-piece and building-by-building.”

CH2M crews are making significant progress demolishing the adjacent Plutonium Reclamation Facility, which should be complete in June. Demolition is expected to begin on the main PFP processing facility and the facility’s ventilation building and stack in May. Demolition of the entire PFP complex is expected to be complete by September 2017.

[Video footage](#) of Americium Recovery Facility demolition

[Photo library](#) of Americium Recovery Facility demolition

[Video footage](#) of crews preparing to enter the “McCluskey Room”

[Video overview](#) of the Plutonium Finishing Plant (part of The Hanford Story series)

The Department of Energy’s Richland Operations Office (DOE-RL) manages the Hanford Site near Richland, Washington. Along with the DOE Office of River Protection (ORP), DOE-RL is responsible for the federal government’s cleanup of the legacy of more than 40 years of plutonium production at Hanford for the nation’s defense. Except for the tank waste mission managed by ORP, DOE-RL is responsible for cleanup of all remaining Hanford waste streams and is currently focused on cleaning out and demolishing the high-hazard Plutonium Finishing Plant, excavating and disposing of contaminated soil and solid waste, treating contaminated groundwater, moving radioactive sludge out of the K West Basin and away from the Columbia River, and configuring Hanford Site infrastructure for the future. The office oversees Hanford Site work that is conducted by a federal and contractor workforce of approximately 4,200 personnel. Visit www.hanford.gov.

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