

Kaiser expansion on track

Long-term DOE effort bears fruit

The future of the Hanford Site — the one envisioned in the *Hanford 2012 Plan*, in which private business operates side-by-side with federal operations — has become reality in what was called the 1167 Building, a Department of Energy facility until 1999. The facility is now occupied by Richland Specialty Extrusions, or RSE, a subsidiary of Kaiser Aluminum.

The story, however, begins back in 1984, when — in a pioneering effort to provide DOE assets for private business — the DOE Richland Operations Office offered Hanford metalworking equipment to the City of Richland. The equipment was no longer needed for the Hanford Site mission, and the city could use it to attract a new business such as Kaiser to the area.

The equipment included the 4,000-ton Sutton extrusion press in the 313 Building, and DOE-RL allowed Kaiser to lease the building for seven years to build its business while seeking a permanent facility in Richland.

The permanent home Kaiser sought turned out to be the former 1167 Building, which DOE transferred to the Port of Benton and the port offered to Kaiser. Kaiser agreed with the building's suitability and took advantage of the opportunity, thereby establishing RSE as a provider of premium aluminum products.

RSE still occupies the 313 Building today, but it's the company's new site at the 1167 Building that has Kaiser plant manager Ron Walls excited. "Our success in the 313 Building produced an ever-growing need to expand," he said, "but expanding meant that we would've most likely had to move out of the Tri-Cities. Only after the DOE and the Port of Benton offered the use of the 1167 Building were we able to permanently locate our manufacturing plant in the Tri-Cities. Now that we've moved into 1167, RSE can expand its operations and assure a long-term presence in the Tri-Cities."

Community partnership

Walls credits the innovative partnership DOE has with the community and private business as being one of the reasons for RSE's success. "We've definitely benefited from the ongoing support from the DOE, the city, the Port and Fluor," he said. "Looking back on our seven years of operating, I'd have to say that our partnering with the DOE, the city, Fluor and the Port of Benton (which now owns the former DOE 1167 facility) has been mutually beneficial and a good partnership."



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Installation is nearing completion on the 3,150-ton Sutton extrusion press in Kaiser's new plant in the 1100 Area. The new press was shipped from California and should be on-line in October.



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Kaiser Aluminum plans to move this 4,000-ton press, currently in the 313 Building on site, by next June.

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The latest phase of RSE's expansion is nearly complete. In addition to the 38,000 square feet of space in 1167, RSE hired local construction contractors George A. Grant and Whitney Construction to add a 12,000-square-foot high bay to the building.

The physical move into the building and the extension are complete, and RSE is now completing the installations of the 3,150-ton Sutton extrusion press that was moved here from Kaiser's Torrance, Calif., plant. By June, the company plans to relocate the 4,000-ton Sutton extrusion press from the 313 Building to the new 1167 plant. ♦



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Current employees of Kaiser Aluminum who have been operating the press in the 313 Building have been busy preparing for the move to the permanent plant in the old DOE 1167 Building. The new plant will employ more than 70 people.