River Corridor project focuses on deactivations, cont.

Northwest National Laboratory. Both labs can use the materials in research programs, avoiding disposal costs for Hanford.

Another successful project for the 300 Area was the accelerated "skyline reduction" initiative that included the demolition of two water towers in the 300 Area. Another part of the project was the demolition of the 303-K Building, a former radioactive and mixed-waste storage facility.

The first of four "tall well" railcars was shipped from Hanford to Memphis, Tenn. The 150,000-pound specialty cars were once used to transport fuel from the reactors near the Columbia River to the processing plants in the 200 Area. Instead of burying them as mixed waste, the cars are being recycled, which leaves no mixed waste, saving taxpayers at least $100,000 per car. ✦

ERC team continues 'cocooning' surplus reactors

Some of the most visible progress in the Columbia River corridor is the Environmental Restoration Contractor team's work on "cocooning" Hanford's retired reactors. Cocooning involves demolishing all parts of the reactor building except for the 5-foot concrete shield walls surrounding the core. Then all the exterior openings are sealed and a 75-year roof is placed over the building.

Eight of Hanford's nine surplus plutonium production reactors will be placed into interim safe storage for up to 75 years. With the exception of the 100 K, N and C areas, all that essentially remain are reactor buildings containing highly radioactive cores. C Reactor is already cocooned.

Bechtel Hanford, Inc., the Department of Energy Richland Operations Office's Environmental Restoration Contractor, and its pre-selected subcontractors CH2M HILL Hanford, Inc. and Eberline Services Hanford, Inc. are at work to place the retired reactors in interim safe storage.

This is the status of interim safe storage for four reactors:

H Reactor – 19 percent complete. Pre-demolition work was completed including hazardous material removal, asbestos abatement, liquid pipe checks and equipment removal along with the backfill of the valve pit/supply fan area. Cocooning is scheduled to be complete in fiscal year 2005.

D Reactor – 47 percent complete. Demolition of major building complex portions was completed including the fan and valve pit areas. Cocooning is scheduled to be complete in FY 2003.

DR Reactor – 90 percent complete. All openings in the shield wall were sealed, the final stage before installing the roof. A subcontract to design and install the roof was awarded with most of the design completed. Cocooning is scheduled to be complete in FY 2002.

F Reactor – 77 percent complete. Unlike other reactors, the fuel storage basin was filled with sand before it was cleaned out and drained during deactivation. Visible progress included removing 17 feet of clean fill from the basin and planning to remove the remaining 3 feet that is known to contain radioactive sludge and other debris, including spent fuel elements and fragments. The ERC team improved safety plans and began fill removal using a specialized remotely controlled Brokk excavator that was custom-built in Sweden. Cocooning is scheduled to be complete in FY 2003. ✦