



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
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**Richland Operations
Office**

DOE News Release

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Hanford Workers Resume Cleanup of 200 North Area of the Hanford Site

RICHLAND, WASH. –Workers are tackling a \$12.5 million American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Recovery Act) project at the [Hanford Site](#) in Washington State that should reduce the government site’s cleanup footprint by some four square miles.

[U.S. Department of Energy](#) (DOE) contractor [CH2M HILL Hanford Group](#) (CH2M HILL) is demolishing three buildings (212-N, 212-P and 212-R) that stored spent nuclear fuel from Hanford’s plutonium production reactors during part of the Cold War. The former nuclear facilities are north of the center of the Hanford Site (the 200 North Area). The project also includes remediating waste sites near the buildings and disposing of 15 contaminated railcars that once transported reactor fuel rods.

“Demolishing these buildings and taking care of these waste sites supports our goals of putting people to work using Recovery Act funding and completing cleanup on the Hanford Site,” said Dave Brockman, Manager of DOE’s Richland Operations Office. “We’re working toward reducing our footprint of cleanup activities to less than 10 square miles in the center of the 586-square-mile site.”

Prior to 2009, Hanford workers had removed contaminated materials from the three buildings, and they completed remediation of 3 waste sites near the buildings. After Recovery Act funding was provided by the DOE in April, 40 new workers were hired and trained to help existing staff work on the project.

Prior to demolition activities, workers took soil samples from nine remaining waste sites near the buildings - a necessary step in characterizing contamination. Work has been completed on six of the nine sites. Using excavators with special demolition attachments, crews began tearing down sections of the buildings. Air monitors were placed around the perimeter of the demolition site to ensure air quality, and misters and water-cannon machines were used to control dust.

“The workers are to be commended for their safety efforts to make sure their co-workers and the environment are protected during the demolition of these facilities and the characterization of the waste sites,” said Bob Wilkinson, CH2M HILL Director of Balance of Site.

In the early 1950s, the buildings were used as underwater storage facilities for irradiated fuel rods prior to chemical processing. The fuel rods were transported by railcar from Hanford’s nuclear reactors along the

Columbia River and placed underwater in 20-foot-deep basins in the 200 North Area until they could be transferred to chemical reprocessing facilities in the center of the Site (200 North Area). In later years, two of the buildings were used to store equipment and waste, including electrical transformers contaminated with PCBs, as well as contaminated railcars.

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