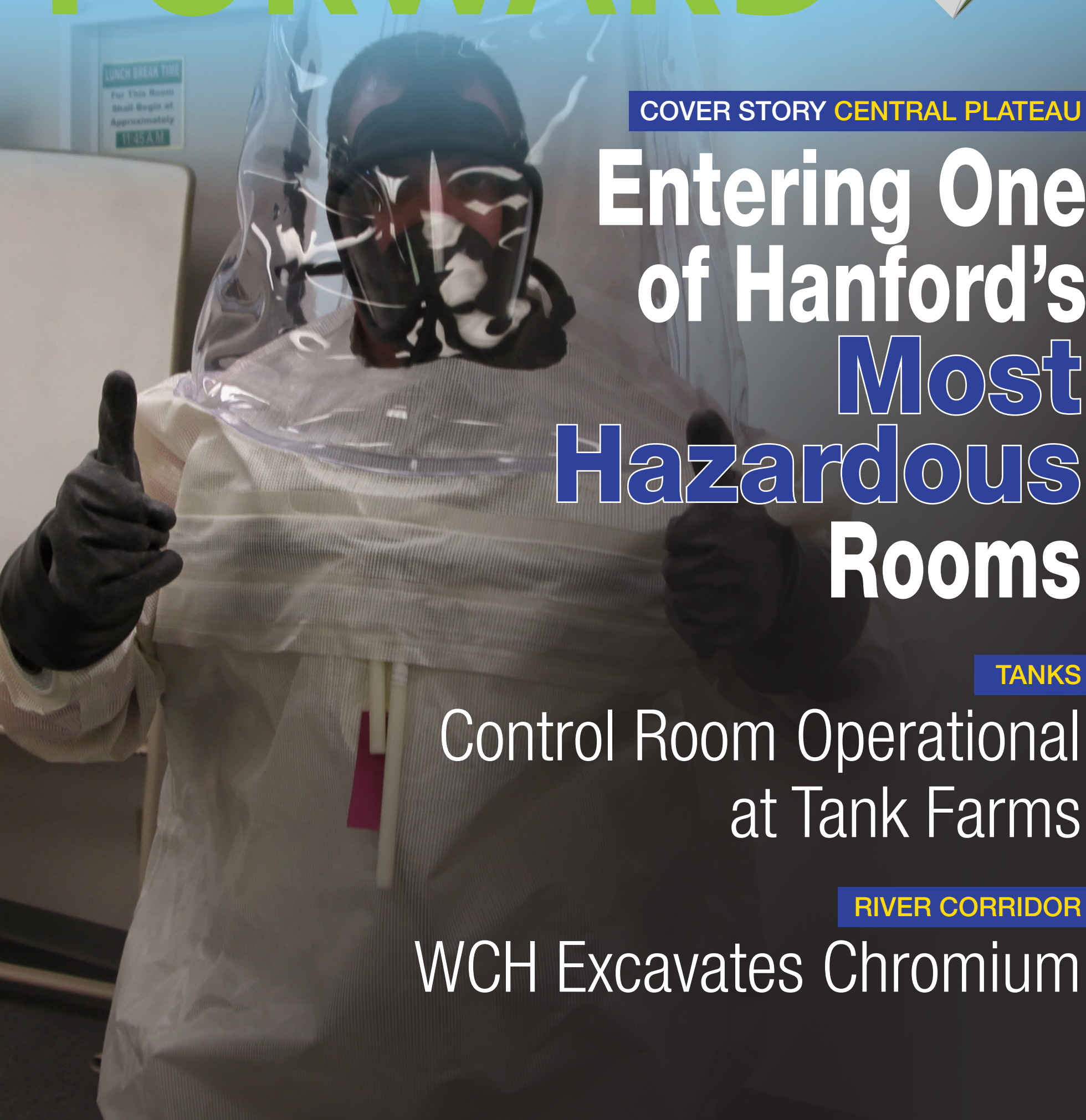
ISSUE 04 – SUMMER 2014 QUARTERLY PUBLICATION COVERING HANFORD CLEANUP NEWS

HANFORD FORWARD



COVER STORY CENTRAL PLATEAU

Entering One of Hanford's Most Hazardous Rooms

TANKS

Control Room Operational at Tank Farms

RIVER CORRIDOR

WCH Excavates Chromium

ABOUT HANFORD

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY | Richland Operations Office

The Richland Operations Office (RL) oversees cleanup along the Columbia River and in Hanford's Central Plateau, including groundwater and waste site cleanup, management of solid waste, spent nuclear fuel and sludge, facility cleanout, deactivation and demolition, environmental restoration, plutonium management, and all site support services.

CH2MHILL Plateau Remediation Company

CH2M HILL Plateau Remediation Company (CH2M HILL) is the prime contractor for the safe, environmental cleanup of the Central Plateau at the Hanford Site. This task includes decommissioning and demolishing the Plutonium Finishing Plant that once stored secret material for the nation's defense, cleaning up plumes of contaminated groundwater beneath the site, and removing highly radioactive "sludge" away from the Columbia River.

HPMC OCCUPATIONAL MEDICAL SERVICES

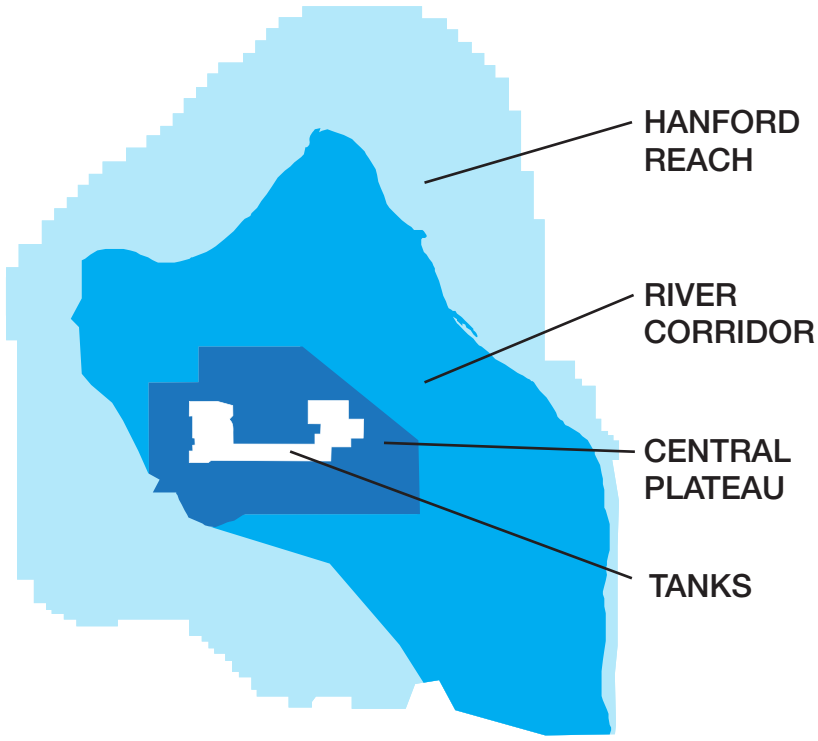
HPMC Occupational Medical Services (HPMC OMS) provides occupational medical services to the Department of Energy and Hanford prime contractors and subcontractors. HPMC OMS has clinics in Richland and in the 200 West area of the site and is responsible for the medical surveillance, medical qualification, health, and wellness needs of more than 7,500 Hanford workers.

MSA

A joint venture between Lockheed Martin, Jacobs Engineering and WSI, Mission Support Alliance (MSA) is responsible for safely and effectively managing and operating the infrastructure of the Hanford Site. MSA provides an array of services, including training, site security, roads and utilities, logistics and transportation, information resources, information technology and other services, enabling Hanford contractors to focus on their cleanup efforts.

WCH Washington Closure Hanford

Washington Closure Hanford (WCH) manages the 220-square-mile River Corridor Closure Project for the Department of Energy's Richland Operations Office at the Hanford Site. The project is the largest environmental cleanup closure project in the nation. Washington Closure, owned by URS, Bechtel and CH2M HILL, is responsible for demolishing 320 contaminated buildings, cleaning up an estimated 590 waste sites, placing two former plutonium production reactors and one nuclear facility in interim safe storage, and managing the Environmental Restoration Disposal Facility.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
OFFICE OF RIVER PROTECTION

The Office of River Protection (ORP) is responsible for the retrieval, treatment and disposal of Hanford's 56 million gallons of radioactive tank waste, currently stored in 177 underground tanks in the central part of the site. In support of this mission, ORP manages the Tank Operations Contract and the Waste Treatment & Immobilization Plant Project.

Advanced Technologies and Laboratories International, Inc.

Advanced Technologies and Laboratories (ATL) International, Inc. is an award-winning technology, engineering, scientific, and project management services provider to the U.S. Department of Energy. ATL operates the 222-S nuclear laboratory that is fully compliant with the most stringent business, safety, health, quality, and technical requirements in the country. In 2008, ATL was awarded DOE's Voluntary Protection Program (VPP) Star award for outstanding health and safety performance at the Hanford Site.

BECHTEL

Bechtel National Inc. is designing, building and commissioning the world's largest radioactive and chemical waste treatment plant. URS is BNI's principal subcontractor. The Waste Treatment and Immobilization Plant is being built for the U.S. Department of Energy at the Hanford Site in southeastern Washington state. When completed, it will be used to solidify the radioactive liquid waste stored in 177 aging underground tanks using a process called vitrification.

washington river protection solutions

Maintaining the underground waste storage tanks at Hanford falls under the jurisdiction of Washington River Protection Solutions (WRPS). This organization is responsible for storing and retrieving the approximately 56 million gallons of nuclear and chemical waste stored in these tanks at the Hanford Site. WRPS is owned by URS Corporation and Energy Solutions, with AREVA as the primary subcontractor.

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Hanford Solar Power: Cost Effective & Mobile

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Hanford Solar Power: **Cost Effective & Mobile (cont'd)**

The Department of Energy (DOE) tasked Mission Support Alliance (MSA), as part of its mission support contract, with finding new, innovative and efficient ways of improving sustainable energy usage on the Hanford Site. Solar power is one means of efficiency that is becoming increasingly popular.

Solar power reduces greenhouse gases and does not impact our environment. Currently at Hanford, there are several places on site where solar power is being put to use:

- Railroad Track Operations
- 9 Real-time Meteorological Data Towers
- Mobile Camera Monitoring System
- 5 Electronic Message Boards
- 43 Sirens

Evaluating Cost-Saving Methods

MSA is helping DOE create these efficiencies by evaluating and implementing effective, cost-saving methods like solar power in the workplace. DOE and cleanup contractors can consult MSA's sustainability team, which has two certified energy managers who are able to support requests for finding energy saving solutions. Sustainability team members assist in reviewing proposed projects to identify where energy efficiencies can be implemented, and identify opportunities to utilize energy rebates.

"The benefits of implementing a power source such as solar are numerous. The benefits expand far beyond the price of the equipment. If a contractor is going to replace something, they can ask us to help look into the options. Often, we are able to find cost savings and get them money back through rebates, if they are available."

Jennifer Ollero, Manager MSA Sustainability Program

Collaboration

DOE's River Corridor prime contractor, Washington Closure Hanford (WCH), consulted MSA for assistance in determining if solar power could be used in the 600 Area. Due to the infrastructure built to remediate the 618-11 Burial Ground, a new intersection was designed and lighting was necessary to illuminate the entrance and provide safety to the personnel traffic entering and exiting the site.

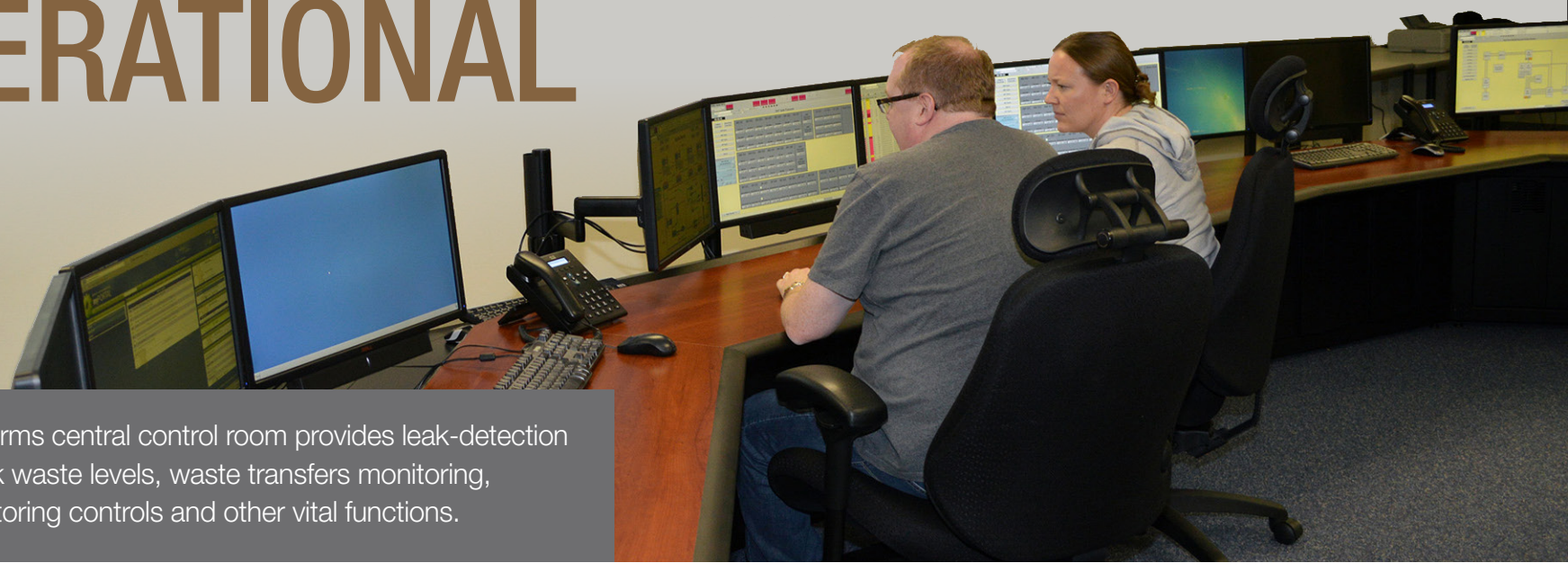
"We worked with MSA's traffic engineer to improve the lighting while working on putting in a road to the 618-11 Burial Ground. The three solar lighting fixtures have since been relocated to various other locations on the site."

Ken DeLong, WCH Electrical Engineer

DeLong noted that a nearby burial ground also uses a hybrid solar and a wind-powered air monitor station.

Requiring power lines the distance of 1.5 kilometers and 15-20 power poles, the job presented significant costs to the budget and schedule of the project. WCH and MSA investigated alternative technologies to eliminate the use of electricity at the intersection. WCH was able to implement pad mounted solar lighting to the plan. The solar lights are mobile, reusable and proven to provide adequate lighting. ■

Consolidated Control Room for Tank Farms is OPERATIONAL



The new tank farms central control room provides leak-detection monitoring, tank waste levels, waste transfers monitoring, exhauster monitoring controls and other vital functions.

A new central control room for Hanford's tank farms is now operational.

Washington River Protection Solutions (WRPS), after three years of work, has a new control room that is replacing six control rooms scattered throughout the tank farms.

The central control room has upgraded control systems that operate on a state-of-the-art software platform that allows process monitoring and control from a centralized location. It provides leak-detection monitoring, tank waste levels, waste transfers monitoring, exhauster monitoring controls and other vital functions.

WRPS is spending considerable time and resources upgrading tank farm equipment, buildings and facilities. WRPS' Process and Control System Engineering spearheaded a strategic plan to modernize the tank farms with the latest technology and industrial practices that provide enhanced user interface, wireless systems, fault tolerance, predictive maintenance and troubleshooting tools.

WRPS is developing process control computer systems and implementing process software applications to improve conduct of operations and modernize double-shell tank operations using the same control-system architecture adopted by the Waste Treatment and Immobilization Plant (WTP), ensuring that the tank farms are prepared to integrate with WTP operations. ■

"We are taking a 20-year leap in technology by replacing old systems that were monitored with clipboards and obsolete computers that are no longer supported by the manufacturer. As well as solving a major maintenance headache, we are seeing significant savings in training, preventive maintenance, spare parts and license fees as the result of adopting a highly reliable standard global platform company-wide."

Mirwaise Aurah, WRPS Manager of Process and Control System Engineering

Health & Productivity Symposium *SPARKS INTEREST* in Health Culture

HPMC Occupational Medical Services (HPMC OMS) is committed to helping Hanford contractors keep their employees safe and healthy.

Earlier this year, they hosted their third Hanford Health & Productivity Symposium. The goal of the symposium was to build a partnership between HPMC OMS and other Hanford contractors to nurture employee health and productivity. The focus this year was on the connection between health and safety, the cost of obesity, and resources available at HPMC OMS that can boost employee health and productivity from both the organizational and individual level.

Taking a look at the issue of employee health and wellness at the population level (as opposed to just individually) is appropriate for three main reasons.

First, the prevalence of obesity among Hanford employees has risen to over 56 percent in recent years. If this trend continues, the health and safety of the workforce—which is the greatest asset in any organization—will be at risk. Second, population level interventions hold promise in establishing lasting change to the culture of the workplace, where healthy choices are easier and considered normal. In such environments, employees are more likely to adopt and maintain healthy lifestyles. Third, establishing a structured approach to health and wellness across an organization allows for effective quality assurance and continuous improvement.

Participants learned how health affects safety and how obesity and related health conditions impact productivity and costs. A panel discussion at the end focused on a path forward and examples of great employee health initiatives that have already started. Feedback from participants was very good, with most attendees requesting more information and stating how much they learned.

HPMC OMS is excited to be working with each contractor on effective employee wellness initiatives and policies that result in lasting improvements to worksite health culture and individual employee health. ■

Worker Involvement INCREASES SAFETY at Hanford's Plutonium Finishing Plant

Employees at DOE's Hanford Site are working together to find new and innovative ways to stay safe at the Plutonium Finishing Plant, one of the site's most complex decommissioning projects.

Employees with CH2M HILL, the DOE contractor managing decommissioning and demolition of Hanford's Plutonium Finishing Plant, streamlined equipment storage and checkout processes used to manage important safety equipment, such as air, gas, noise and heat stress monitors. The equipment is vital to keeping workers safe as they prepare the Plutonium Finishing Plant for demolition to slab-on-grade by September 30, 2016. The facility was once used to manufacture plutonium for the nation's defense dating back to the 1940s.

"Worker involvement like this is a key component of our health and safety culture at Hanford and the overall DOE Environmental Management complex," said Mike Swartz, CH2M HILL's vice president for the Plutonium Finishing Plant Closure Project. "Employee-driven safety initiatives like this help ensure safe and compliant progress and ensure employees return home in the same condition they arrived at work."

The team implemented more precise tracking of how often the instruments were used, how often they were cycled in and out of service, how often they were calibrated and what repairs were needed. The changes allowed workers more time to better plan equipment needs and spend more time supporting decommissioning and demolition work teams.

To find out more about the workers' innovation, visit the Hanford Site YouTube channel at **http://youtu.be/gWQfJdHA9N4**. ■

Industrial hygiene employees at Hanford's Plutonium Finishing Plant streamlined and consolidated their operations, increasing safety and efficiency for employees on the project.

DOE's Contractors Create a **Safe and Productive** Work Environment at Hanford

All of DOE's Hanford contractors have earned VPP Star Status

Ensuring a safe and productive working environment at one of the largest cleanup sites in the nation does not happen overnight. Creating this kind of environment takes time, trust and involvement by both employees and management.

It has been 20 years since the Department of Energy (DOE) implemented its Voluntary Protection Program (VPP) as a tool for promoting excellence in safety through the direct involvement of workers and management leadership. Moreover, it is clearly paying off.

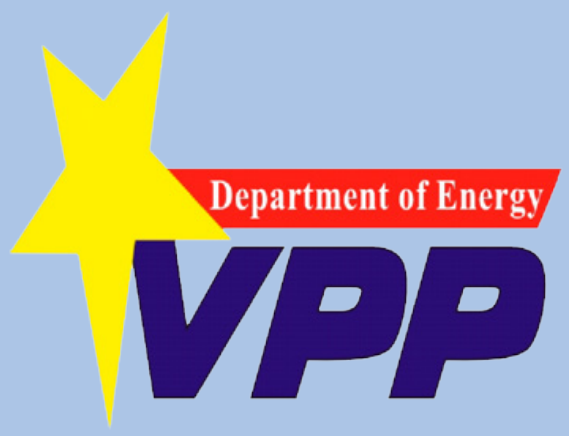
Currently, all DOE Hanford Site prime contractors have achieved VPP Star Status, the highest level of safety certification. Contractors include Advanced Technologies and Laboratories (ATL) International Inc.; Bechtel National, Inc. (BNI); CH2M HILL Plateau Remediation Company (CHPRC); Mission Support Alliance (MSA); Washington Closure Hanford (WCH); and Washington River Protection Solutions (WRPS).

DOE awards VPP Star Status to companies that illustrate outstanding cooperative efforts among employees, management and DOE in their safety and health programs.

Attaining Star Status is not easy and involves a rigorous assessment. Companies must submit a written application that addresses the major elements of the program such as management leadership, worker involvement, worksite analysis, hazard prevention and control, and safety and health training. DOE officials perform an onsite review to evaluate the workplace safety and health program and conducts interviews with site employees.

In addition to Star Status, some Hanford contractors have individually received a Safety and Health Outreach Award from the VPP Participants' Association. Hanford Site contractors and the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory received the same award in 2013 as a group for cooperative efforts across the site in promoting and supporting VPP standards.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) established its VPP in 1982. DOE adopted the program in partnership with OSHA in 1994, which is identical to OSHA's program and is open to contractors employed at DOE-owned facilities. ■



VPP has three levels of recognition:

1. **STAR** – recognizes sites that have distinguished themselves in the highest level of safety and health excellence;
2. **MERIT** – recognizes sites that have good safety and health programs, but must take additional steps to reach Star quality; and
3. **STAR DEMONSTRATION** – recognizes worksites that have Star quality safety and health programs, but that require demonstration and/or testing of experimental approaches that differ from current Star requirements.

CH2M HILL Employees Prepare to Enter One of Hanford's MOST HAZARDOUS Rooms

Employee-driven tools and training will help ensure safety inside the McCluskey Room

When workers enter the hazardous and historic McCluskey Room at the Hanford Site this summer, they will be safer due to their preparation and involvement in planning and training for the job.

The McCluskey Room is part of the site's Plutonium Finishing Plant and was used to recover americium during the Cold War. The room is named after Harold McCluskey, who was injured in 1976 when a vessel inside a glove box burst and showered him with plastic, glass and radioactive material. McCluskey, who was 64 at the time, lived for 11 more years and died from causes not related to the accident.

Since 2008, the Department of Energy (DOE) and contractor CH2M HILL have been preparing the Plutonium Finishing Plant for demolition by removing much of the equipment and infrastructure inside the building that was once used for plutonium processing.

"About two-thirds of the Plutonium Finishing Plant is deactivated – cleaned out and ready for demolition," said Jon Peschong, director of Central Plateau cleanup for DOE's Richland Operations Office. "The DOE and contractor CH2M HILL are working to deactivate the remaining third of the plant, which will include some of the toughest work, not only at the plant but at the whole Hanford Site. Cleaning out the McCluskey Room will be a major step forward in cleanup of the Plutonium Finishing Plant."

(CONT'D)

"Unlike other protective systems, this system places workers in their own self-contained, clean environment within a contaminated work environment. This is ideal for highly contaminated facilities like the McCluskey Room."

Jon Peschong, DOE Director of Central Plateau Cleanup

CH2M HILL Enter HAZARDOUS Room (cont'd)

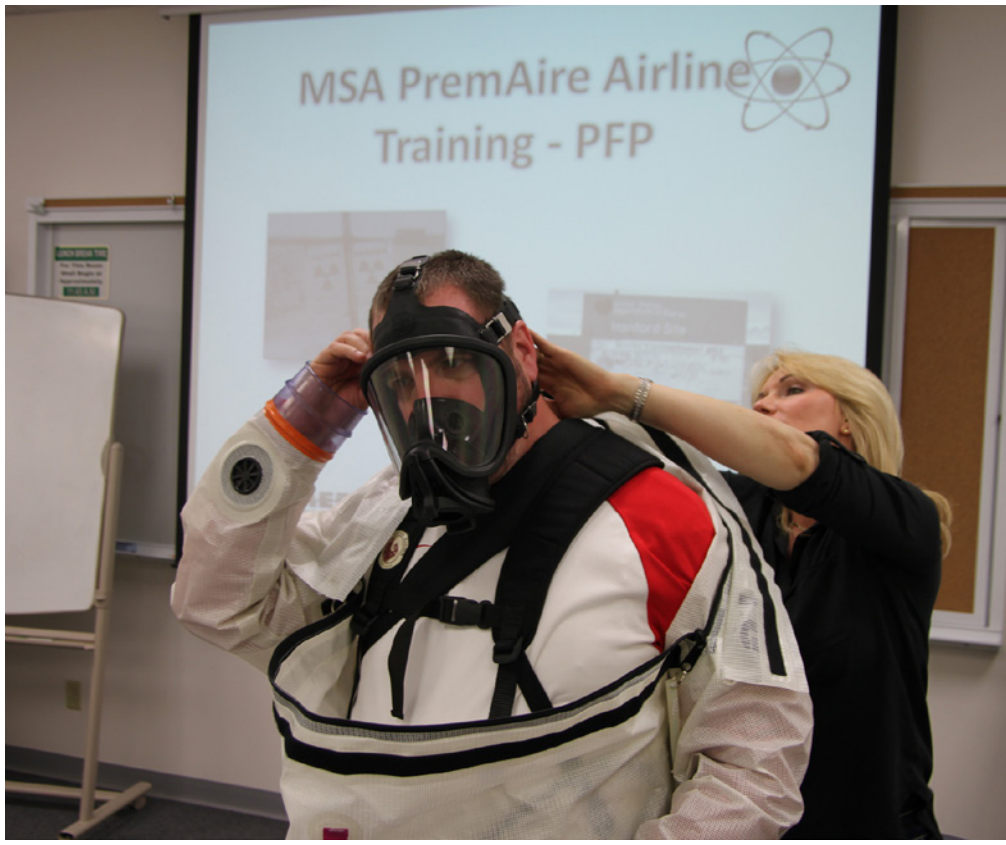
When employees enter the McCluskey Room this summer, they will encounter airborne radioactivity, surface contamination, confined spaces, and poor ventilation. Recognizing the poor facility ventilation, employees, with support from CH2M HILL management and the DOE, observed the use of an advanced supplied air system and protective suits at a similarly contaminated DOE site in Idaho and recommended their use at the Plutonium Finishing Plant. The system and equipment observed at the Idaho site has been in use for approximately nine years.

Hanford Site employees developed procedures and training tailored for using the equipment at the Plutonium Finishing Plant. The equipment includes an abrasion-resistant suit that protects workers from surface contamination including chemicals. Workers will also wear devices for communicating with each other and for monitoring air inside the suit. A dual-purpose air system will provide cool air for breathing and cool air throughout the suit for worker comfort, allowing them to work safely for an extended period of time. The suit is pressurized, which helps prevent workers from coming into contact with airborne contaminants.

"The employees involved in selecting the equipment and training on the equipment are some of the most experienced employees at CH2M HILL and at Hanford," said Mike Swartz, CH2M HILL's vice president for the Plutonium Finishing Plant Closure Project. "Their involvement in safety has been key as they prepare to enter the McCluskey Room."

Inside the McCluskey Room, CH2M HILL employees will improve ventilation, remove combustibles, control airborne contamination, and isolate and remove electrical and mechanical items. They will remove processing equipment, such as glove boxes and tanks, to prepare that portion of the Plutonium Finishing Plant for demolition. The DOE and CH2M HILL are working to meet a deadline of demolishing the entire Plutonium Finishing Plant to its foundation by late September in 2016.

Plutonium Finishing Plant employees Jason Rosenblum and Joyce Eckert demonstrate in a classroom setting how to put on the special suits that will be used inside the McCluskey Room.



Watch this video that explains the history of the McCluskey Room and demonstrates the new equipment employees will use when they enter that hazardous and historic area. ■

To see a video of the event, navigate to **http://youtu.be/K-6bTvzBVA4**

MOTHER LODE of Chromium Excavated

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and the team team at Washington Closure Hanford (WCH) removed what is believed to be the primary source of chromium contamination to the Columbia River at the 100-D Area. Excavation began in December 2012 when more than 2 million tons of material was excavated from waste sites near the D and DR Reactors.

Waste sites 100-D-104 and 100-D-30 merged together, equaling a little more than seven football fields in area at the surface and about a single football field in size at the bottom. Together, the remediation of the waste sites at 100-D have removed more than 900,000 bank cubic meters (BCMs) of material, of which nearly one third of the contaminated material was sent to Environmental Restoration Disposal Facility (ERDF) to be treated and disposed and the remaining two thirds becoming backfill.

"The completion of these large waste sites removes the mother lode of chromium contamination in the D Reactor area," said Mark French, federal project director for DOE's Richland Operations Office.

The contamination is the result of sodium dichromate leaks or spills during reactor operations from the 1940s to the 1960s. Sodium dichromate was added to the reactor cooling water to prevent corrosion of the piping system. Large quantities of the chemical were transported to the reactor areas by rail cars or truck tank cars and distributed by underground piping.

Excavation at 100-D-100 waste site was completed in December 2013. In March 2014, excavation of 100-D-104 and 100-D-30 was completed. The excavation reached groundwater at 85 feet deep. ERDF treated the heavily chrome contaminated soil by mixing it with cement and disposing it in the landfill.

There are a few cleanup activities remaining in the 100-D Reactor Area, such as the backfill campaign to start in October 2014 and the revegetation in 2016. "Not only is our team removing and cleaning up chromium contaminated soil, but we are also protecting the Columbia River while working safely," said Rob Cantwell, director of closure operations at WCH.

See video link: **http://tinyurl.com/jvvjbjg** ■

Chromium contaminated waste from 100-D is treated at ERDF.

618-10 Project Team *FOCUSES* on Vertical Pipe Unit *TESTING*

There are few historical records on most of Hanford's historic waste sites and burial grounds from 1954 through 1963. Washington Closure Hanford (WCH) needed to gain a better understanding of the 618-10 Burial Ground contents before workers could safely clean up the site. Since beginning cleanup at the 618-10 Burial Ground in April 2011, the project team began remediating 12 waste trenches containing low- to moderate-activity contamination, and 94 vertical pipe units (VPUs) containing moderate- to high-activity contamination, primarily from Hanford's 300 Area.

It was once thought that VPUs were all made of five bottomless 55-gallon drums welded together end to end and buried vertically. A recent review of historical records and photos indicates other types of VPUs may also exist, such as 14-inch corrugated pipes and 12-inch Schedule 40 steel pipe.

Generally, the process for VPU remediation will be to install a 48-inch over-casing around each VPU, auger the material to stabilize it, size reduce the contents and then retrieve the waste. Proof-of-concept testing is under way, and the project team is currently refining the process. The project team installed 10 VPUs with simulated waste. One VPU contained a tracer to evaluate the mixing during the augering process. Three types of VPUs (drum, corrugated pipe, and schedule 40 steel pipe) were installed to represent the different types of conditions they might encounter in the burial ground. At the end of the augering process, the material was taken out in 1-foot lifts. After initial testing, the material is being evaluated for a number of parameters, such as size reduction of the material buried, moisture content, and mixing of the debris.

The 618-10 project team will continue testing and evaluating data. Remediation of the 618-10 Burial Ground VPUs is scheduled to begin in fiscal year 2015. ■

Simulated VPUs were constructed and buried in preparation for the method testing.

Material in a simulated drum style VPU is augured during method testing.

The project team evaluating the simulated waste after being augured.

$8.9 BILLION in Hanford Subcontracts Secured by SMALL BUSINESSES

About 50% to Local Small Business

DOE contractors continue meeting and exceeding their small business goals at Hanford. Working under the purview of DOE's Richland Operations Office (RL) and Office of River Protection (ORP), Hanford contractors work diligently to support small business and strengthen small business partnerships.

"Our contractors routinely demonstrate their commitment to our community's small businesses while meeting the significant challenges of cleaning up and maintaining the Hanford Site," said RL procurement division director Andy Wirkkala.

From the beginning of each contract through the end of April 2014, Hanford contractors collectively have awarded a total of $8.9 billion in subcontracting work to small businesses, with almost 50 percent of that total going to local companies.

During fiscal year 2013, Hanford prime contractors awarded $669 million in subcontracting work, with $228 million awarded to local small businesses. When expanded to include all of Washington and Oregon, the total subcontracting work going to small businesses increases to $418 million.

Small businesses contribute greatly to the success of cleanup at Hanford and provide services, skills and materials that many Hanford contractors rely on to accomplish unique tasks. Small businesses provide a broad spectrum of talent and expertise that allows DOE to do work safely, efficiently and cost effectively.

Hanford contractors under the purview of the RL are:

- Central Plateau contractor CH2M HILL Plateau Remediation Company, whose contract began in 2008
- Mission Support contractor Mission Support Alliance, whose contract began in 2009
- River Corridor contractor Washington Hanford Closure, whose contract began in 2005

Hanford contractors under the purview of the ORP are:

- Waste Treatment and Immobilization Plant contractor Bechtel National, Inc., whose contract began in 2000
- Tank Operations contractor Washington River Protection Solutions, whose contract began in 2008

"Small businesses play a key role in Hanford's cleanup mission," said Marc McCusker, ORP contracts and property management division director. "Small businesses work in partnership with our Hanford prime contractors on a variety of projects to accomplish the work in a safe and cost-efficient way."

DOE and Hanford contractors remain committed to helping small businesses grow and positioning them for future success. ■

Tank Vapor Review Team Completes First Visit to Hanford

Retrieval activities progress at C Tank Farm.

The Hanford Tank Vapor Assessment Team led by the Savannah River National Laboratory (SRNL) recently completed its first fact-finding visit to Hanford. Recognized experts from industry, academia, and government agencies were assembled by SRNL to be part of an independent technical review team tasked to evaluate the tank farm contractor's chemical vapors program at the tank farms. The team also includes a Hanford Atomic Metal Trades Council member to ensure worker insight and feedback is incorporated into the final recommendations.

In late July, members of the Team visited Hanford for several days and talked to about 60 tank farm workers in the field, met with several focus groups on specific issues and collected approximately 5,000 documents to review. The visit also included tours, briefings, procedure reviews, observing field work and meeting the Chemical Vapors Solution Team.

"While improvements have been made over the years to decrease vapor exposure at the tank farms, we must continue to strive to better protect our workers given advancements in technology," said Office of River Protection Manager Kevin Smith. "The Department supports the efforts of Washington River Protection Solutions (WRPS) and SRNL to explore sustainable solutions to chemical vapors as operations in the tank farms increase to better meet current and future needs."

The team will assess the current situation with regard to chemical vapor exposure; review the current industrial hygiene program as it relates to chemical vapor exposure; and provide recommendations and identify further enhancements to the WRPS programs and practices to eliminate or minimize worker exposure. The team will conduct a full assessment of the response to two prior technical reviews conducted in 2008 and 2010.

The team is tentatively scheduled for a return visit later this month, providing employees with additional opportunities to meet with members. The team is expected to provide a draft report by the end of summer and complete its final report by December. ■