



# HANFORD FORWARD



COVER STORY CENTRAL PLATEAU

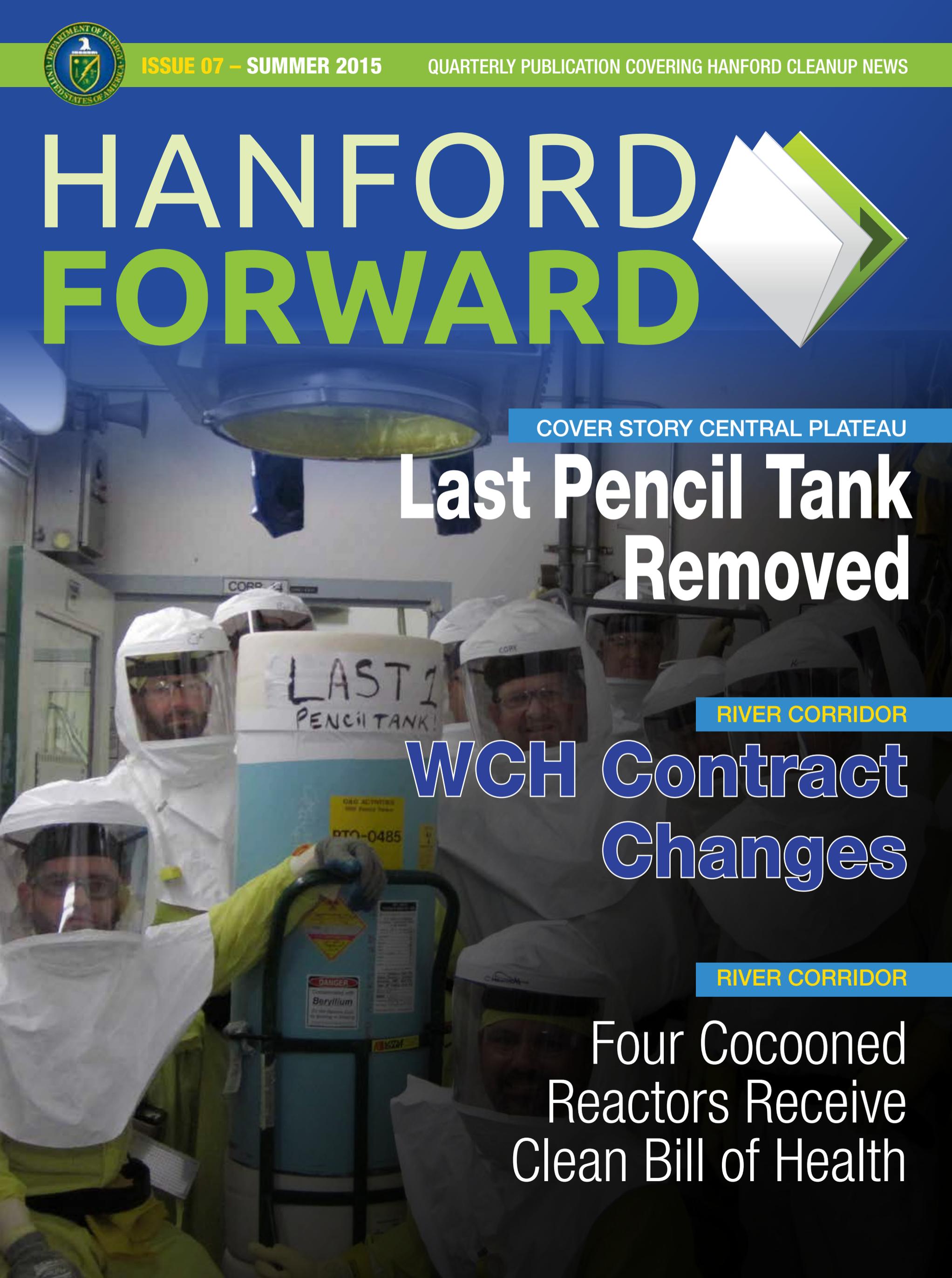
## Last Pencil Tank Removed

RIVER CORRIDOR

## WCH Contract Changes

RIVER CORRIDOR

## Four Cocooned Reactors Receive Clean Bill of Health



# ABOUT HANFORD



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.



CH2M HILL Plateau Remediation Company (CHPRC) 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.



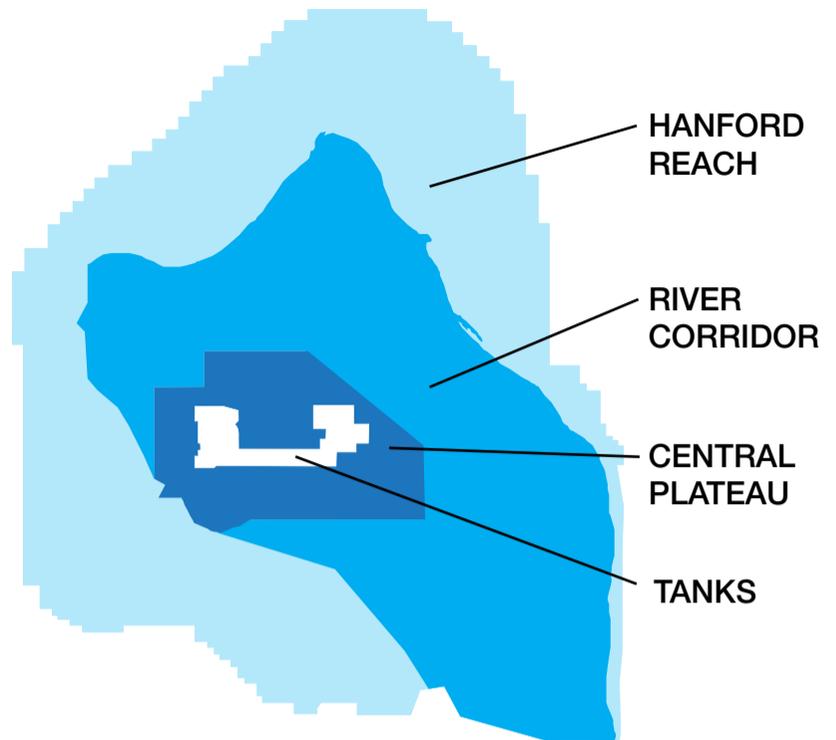
HPMC Occupational Medical Services (HPMC OMS) provides occupational medical services to the Department of Energy and Hanford prime contractors and subcontractors. HPMC OMS has clinics in Richland and in the 200 West area of the site and is responsible for the medical surveillance, medical qualification,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



A joint venture between Lockheed Martin, Jacobs Engineering and Centerra Group, 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.



Washington Closure Hanford 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 AECOM, Bechtel and CH2M, 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.



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 (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 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.



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 AECOM and Energy Solutions, with AREVA as the primary subcontractor.



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# Workers Remove **Last Pencil Tank** From Key Area of Hanford's Plutonium Finishing Plant

More than 50 pencil tank assemblies – some two stories tall – contaminated with chemical and radiological hazards are now gone from Hanford's Plutonium Finishing Plant (PFP). The tanks, called "pencil tanks" due to their long and narrow shape, are reclaimed plutonium from scrap metal during Hanford's production days. Removing those tanks is a critical step toward demolition of the PFP.

"The safe removal of the pencil tanks is important progress in cleaning out and demolishing the PFP, which reduces risk on the Hanford Site," said Tom Teynor, federal project director for the PFP. "We have a deadline of cleaning out and demolishing all of the buildings at PFP by the end of September 2016."

Department of Energy (DOE) contractor CH2M Hill Plateau Remediation Company (CHPRC) began removing the pencil tank assemblies in 2008. The slender tanks range in size from 3 feet to 22 feet long and are pointed at the end to prevent the buildup of plutonium and a criticality from occurring when the plant was producing plutonium during the Cold War.

The tanks were arranged vertically on walls inside a concrete canyon located in the Plutonium Reclamation Facility, adjacent to PFP. To move the pencil tanks inside the highly contaminated canyon, crews used a remotely operated crane which eliminated the risk of exposing workers to high levels of radiation and minimized the need for manned entries in the canyon.

Workers used the crane to move a pencil tank from its operational position along the interior wall of the canyon to a glove box in a maintenance cell of the facility where workers in protective equipment manually cut the tank up into sections and prepared it for disposal. Size-reduced pencil tank components were then transferred through a specially-designed port in the canyon into sealed waste containers for transportation and disposal at an approved treatment and disposal facility. There were 52 total pencil tank assemblies, comprised of 196 pencil tank sections.

"The talented crews worked safely and compliantly removing these pencil tanks," said Mike Swartz, vice president of the PFP Closure Project. "Completing this task allows us to move into other areas of the facility that we need to prepare for demolition."

With pencil tanks now gone from the Plutonium Reclamation Facility, workers will shift focus to cleaning out the Plutonium Reclamation Facility canyon and removing sections of contaminated ventilation ducting and piping to prepare PFP for demolition. ■

Watch video showing PFP employees using a crane to remove pencil tanks from the facility: <https://youtu.be/aavPR0jMZG0>



The crew celebrates removing the last pencil tank from the Plutonium Reclamation Facility.

# VIPs Visit Hanford



Mark Whitney, DOE Acting Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management discusses Hanford's Waste Encapsulation and Storage Facility with Jan Pennock, Engineering and Technical Support Manager of CHPRC (left). Also pictured are Stacy Charboneau, DOE-Richland Operations Office (RL) manager (center) and John Ciucci, president and chief executive officer of CHPRC (right). Whitney also visited the 618-10 Burial Ground, the 300 Area, the tank farms and the HAMMER Federal Training Facility.



Mark Lindholm (far left), Chief Operating Officer for Washington River Protection Solutions (WRPS), discusses upgrades to the ventilation system at the Hanford's AP tank farm with Whitney (far right). Also pictured are (from left) Jim Geary, WRPS Tank Farm project management manager; Rob Gregory, WRPS Tank Farm projects manager; Jason Chudy, Office of River Protection (ORP) Public Affairs; and Kevin Smith, ORP manager. Whitney visited the Hanford Site in May.



Whitney, center, visits the 618-10 Burial Ground at Hanford. Whitney is accompanied by Washington Closure president Scott Sax, right, and Charboneau, center-left.



Congressman Newhouse visited the site this spring to get a firsthand look at Hanford's Fire Protection Services. The congressman also toured the HAMMER Federal Training Center where he met with subject matter experts and worker-trainers, who gave him an overview of Hanford's Sitewide Safety Standards and showed him HAMMER'S hands-on training props.

# Innovative Repair of Effluent Treatment Facility **Saves Estimated \$1 Million**

Washington River Protection Solutions (WRPS) used an innovative approach this spring to remove a worn-out heat exchanger from the Effluent Treatment Facility (ETF) in a move that is estimated to cost \$1 million less than the previous estimate.

ETF has been in operation for 20 years, treating effluent from the 242-A Evaporator and water contaminated with low levels of radioactive and chemical waste, primarily from groundwater treatment systems, waste disposal operations and Hanford's K Basins.

The 12,000-pound, 17-foot long heat exchanger provided heat to evaporate excess water during the effluent treatment process. The concentrated effluent was then run through a thin-film dryer where solid contaminants were removed from the liquid.

According to project manager Ryan Stoner, the original plan was to cut a 30-foot square hole in the roof of the ETF and use a crane to remove and replace the heat exchanger. Afterward, the hole would be fitted with a hatch to facilitate future heat exchanger replacements.

“After consulting with our subcontractors, we decided it made more sense to use a gantry and turntable to remove the heat exchanger through an existing roll-up door,” Stoner said. “We had critics who said it wouldn't work, but we succeeded in removing the heat exchanger with less than 2 inches of clearance on each side of the opening.”

Removing and installing the heat exchanger through the existing door led to the significant cost savings.

Work on the heat exchanger began April 29 and crews worked seven days a week for two weeks to complete



A new heat exchanger is staged for installation in the Effluent Treatment Facility after a failed unit was removed.

its removal. The job posed a radiological challenge as workers bagged 15 flange openings and a 22-inch diameter pipe opening to contain the fixed contamination inside the heat exchanger.

The new heat exchanger was installed and bolted in. The failed heat exchanger was placed in a burial box and will be sent to the Environmental Restoration Disposal Facility for grouting and disposal.

WRPS assumed operation of ETF, the Liquid Effluent Retention Facility (LERF), the Treated Effluent Disposal Facility (TEDF) and the State-Approved Land Disposal Site DOE-Richland Operations (SALDS) in March from CH2M. Associated ETF miscellaneous support buildings and structures, equipment, underground transfer lines, pump stations, and ancillary systems were included in the transition of these facilities. In addition, 45 employees were transitioned from CH2M to WRPS.

(CONT'D)

## Innovation (Cont'd)

“The ETF is critical to the operation of the 242-A Evaporator, which in turn is critical to our waste-retrieval mission,” said Kent Smith, WRPS production operations manager. “I welcome the ETF personnel to the tank farms team. I look forward to working with them to return the ETF to operation and upgrade the facilities to prepare for the future processing of effluent from the Low-Activity Waste Pretreatment System and the Waste Treatment Plant.”

ETF receives waste water from LERF and treats it to remove radioactive and hazardous contaminants. Once the waste water has been treated, it is stored until tests confirm the liquid is acceptable for discharge at the SALDS. ETF can treat up to 28 million gallons of waste water each year.

LERF has three storage basins for waste waters from a number of Hanford sources, including 242-A Evaporator operations and solid waste disposal facilities. LERF is designed to hold about 23 million gallons of waste water.

TEDF accepts treated non-radioactive, non-hazardous effluent collected via pump stations located in the 200 East and West Areas. Treated effluent received at TEDF is discharged to two state-approved infiltration basins.

SALDS is located in Hanford's Central Plateau. The site receives treated effluent from ETF through an underground transfer pipe. It is then discharged via infiltration through the soil to the groundwater under a Washington State Waste-approved Water Discharge Permit. ■



The failed heat exchanger in the Effluent Treatment Facility was removed using a gantry and turntable, rather than using a crane to lift it through the roof.

# Four More Reactors Receive *Clean Bill of Health* after Inspection

Workers from Mission Support Alliance (MSA) took a step back in time last April as they removed welds from the doors and entered four of Hanford's cocooned reactors for required inspections. Each reactor, C, D, H and N, passed its checkup, with workers finding nothing amiss after inspecting what remains of each reactor.

"These inspections give us an opportunity to conduct structural and radiological surveys, identify needed repairs and remove any hazardous substances," said Rick Moren, MSA director of Long-Term Stewardship (LTS). "During the inspection, workers found the reactor to be in good shape and almost identical to the last time they were inspected."

As part of the Tri-Party Agreement, the DOE and the LTS program complete surveillance and maintenance activities of cocooned reactors periodically to evaluate the structural integrity of the safe storage enclosure and to ensure confinement of any remaining hazardous materials.

"Thanks to an aggressive schedule, we completed the work a day and a half ahead of the planned completion date," said Moren. "A big thank you goes to the inspection team as their planning, dedication and willingness to get the job done allowed us to safely complete this important work."



A safety team enters H Reactor for its initial safety evaluation and to verify conditions.



A Radiation Control Technician surveys the radiation levels in the basement of the F Reactor.

"I believe that MSA's strategic approach to combine reactor entries gained considerable efficiencies and will help DOE manage the long term requirements for these structures," said Randy Krekel, DOE/RL Land Management team lead.

MSA's LTS program has now inspected five reactors this Fiscal Year. In October of 2014, workers inspected the F Reactor and had similar findings. The last cocooned reactor, the DR Reactor, was already inspected in 2013. The plan is to leave the reactors in a state of temporary storage, or cocooned, for 75 years to allow radioactivity to decay to more manageable levels before final disposition.

"I would like to recognize the LTS team for their hard work and diligence which will assure the safety of the cocooned reactors now and in the future," said Bill Johnson, president of MSA.

With the inspections complete, the reactor doors have been resealed until the next entry period. ■

*"The entry to complete surveillance and maintenance activities of four cocooned reactors was very successful," said Boyd Hathaway, DOE's Director for the Site Stewardship Division. "The whole team did an outstanding job."*

# PHOENIX Launches Tank Farms Application



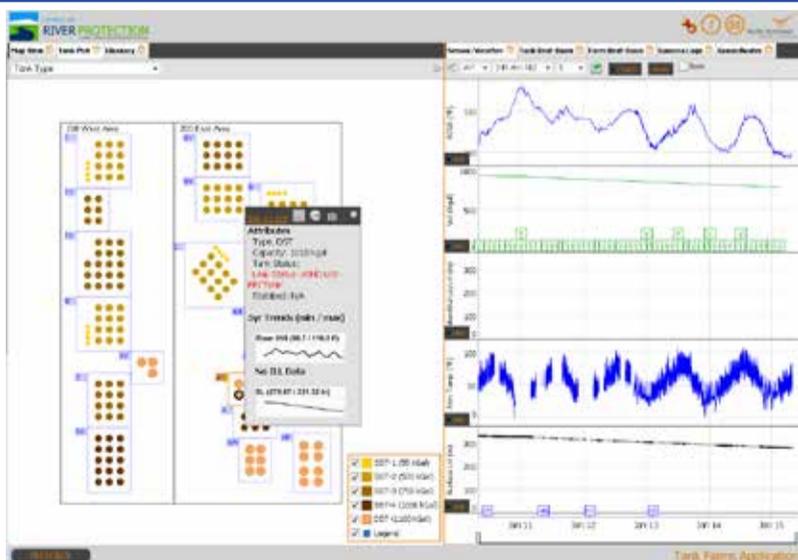
Whether you're a worker, stakeholder or just somebody who wants to learn more about Hanford's tank farms, there's a new informational tool for you. And it's right at your fingertips.

The PHOENIX Tank Farms application is a web-based tool for accessing current and historical data associated with Hanford's tank waste.

PHOENIX stands for PNNL-Hanford Online Environmental Information Exchange. The Tank Farms application is a combined effort between the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of River Protection and Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (PNNL).

The Hanford Site has a massive amount of data. PHOENIX, which does not require any specific software, streamlines the information gathering process by tapping into multiple databases in an intuitive user-friendly manner.

"The PHOENIX Tank Farms application is an excellent resource that allows both WRPS employees and the general public to easily obtain information regarding the tank farms," said Jason Gunter, WRPS Tank and Pipeline Integrity organization. "Having this information available in a simple and easy-to-use tool ensures that both those who use it as a supplementary tool for their job or who just have general curiosity can quickly find the information they seek."



A screenshot showing some of the information someone would be able to see when using the PHOENIX Application.

## The Tank Farms application provides access to:

- Basic information about single-shell tanks and double-shelled tanks, including leak status
- Historical and current in-tank sensor data: surface level, interstitial liquid level, temperature readings
- Atmospheric temperature and barometric pressure
- Tank/farm waste volume by phase (sludge, supernate, saltcake) and source
- Tank-specific inventory of key risk-driving constituents
- Tank volume and waste transfer history
- Trends in key groundwater contaminants (Central Plateau only)
- Multiple Hanford Site GIS layers: facilities, waste sites, wells, etc.

Tank Farms is the third and latest PHOENIX application with more in development. Previously, PNNL and the DOE Richland Operations Office worked together on two groundwater applications. All PHOENIX applications promote transparency and clarity in the Hanford cleanup mission.

The Tank Farms application was rolled out in April at the Hanford Advisory Board's (HAB) Tank Waste committee meeting, and ORP gave a demonstration of the application at a full board meeting in June.

"Developing PHOENIX using modern web technologies not only improves access to the data by requiring only an up-to-date web browser but also allows us to quickly visualize tank data in new ways and integrate it with other relevant data sets," said DJ Watson, PNNL Risk and Decision Sciences organization. ■

# Tremendous Cleanup Progress Made Along the Columbia River

**More than 1,100 acres have been restored on Hanford's River Corridor**



Native straw mulch can be seen in restored areas where revegetation was completed at the 100-N Reactor Area at Hanford.

One of the main cleanup missions of the River Corridor Contract is to restore the land along the Columbia River to its natural state. The Washington Closure Hanford backfill and revegetation team is doing just that.

During backfill, Washington Closure and subcontractor Wildlands Inc. contoured the land to provide microclimates that are essential for the success of vegetation and key to wildlife habitat. James Bernhard, Washington Closure Natural Resources lead, says there are two basic types of habitat on the Hanford Site, upland where sagebrush and bunchgrasses grows and wetland, or riparian areas, which is vegetation growing near water.

Since fiscal year 2012, over 1,100 acres have been revegetated. Of that, more than 30 acres of wetland and riparian areas on the Hanford Site have been restored with 3,900 trees. Over 575,000 shrubs and more than 28,000 pounds of seed have been planted, and over 2,200 tons of native grass straw have been mulched and spread over the revegetated lands.

This season a record 375 acres were revegetated, which included planting over 155,000 shrubs and 11,000 pounds of seed. This was a major challenge as there is only a short revegetation window each winter. This was

the most acreage the revegetation team has captured in a single revegetation window. A significant portion of this season's acreage was at located near N Reactor and is also referred to as the 100-N Area.

Completing the revegetation process, specifically at the N Reactor area, is something Bernhard is most proud of. "It was really important to me to finish 100-N since my grandfather helped design the reactor," said Bernhard. Being a part of Hanford history and finishing what his grandfather started is something Bernhard will cherish forever.

Two challenges encountered during revegetation were the weather and the wildlife. Freezing conditions, snow, and wind made it difficult for planting. Coyotes and beavers sometimes made it sometimes difficult to get work done. The coyotes liked to use the bales of straw as their resting spots, and the beavers were known to indulge in the freshly planted trees along the Columbia River.

Overall, the revegetation by the Washington Closure team has been very successful. Slowly but surely the River Corridor team is returning the 220-square-mile section of the Hanford Site along the Columbia River to a more natural state. ■

# Washington River Protection Solutions *Honored* for **Hiring Veterans**

Washington River Protection Solutions (WRPS) was one of seven employers recognized this spring by the Washington State Employment Security Department for hiring veterans.

WRPS employs more than 200 veterans who make up about 12 percent of its workforce. The award recipients were announced in conjunction with National Military Appreciation Month and the Memorial Day holiday.

“The men and women who serve in our military bring valuable skills and experience to civilian jobs after they’ve completed their active duty,” Department Commissioner Dale Peinecke said in a statement. “These seven employers have demonstrated their commitment to providing jobs for veterans in our state again and again.”

Nick Erickson, a local veterans’ employment representative for WorkSource Columbia Basin, nominated WRPS for the honor. “WRPS has been a model employer for hiring veterans and supporting training services,” he said. “Their human resources team regularly participated in mock interviews and resume-writing workshops and spoke to veterans on multiple occasions.”

WRPS representatives also attended several local and regional job fairs for veterans. In addition, they attended Service Academy Career Conference (SACC) events in San Diego and San Antonio. SACC is a national job fair for service academy alumni. To date, 17 veterans who interviewed at the SACC events accepted jobs with WRPS.

Robert Plemmons, who served 12 years in the Marines, joined WRPS last year as an accountant and is now a safety professional with the Single-Shell Tank Retrieval organization. Plemmons said the military provides excellent training and skills that transfer to the civilian working world. “We have a large number of experienced veterans who have helped WRPS grow and move forward with its mission,” he said.

Lisa Bunch, WRPS Compliance Programs lead, said hiring veterans remains a priority. WRPS is continuing to work closely with veterans’ representatives by making them aware of job opportunities, supporting training services and attending job fairs. WRPS also is planning to attend future SACC events.

“Veterans are professional, accountable, hard-working and motivated,” Bunch said. “And they have a proven ability to learn new skills, which allows for a smooth transition to our project.”

Katie Sterling, an Army veteran, joined WRPS in 2008. She has been deployed four times, twice as a reservist while employed at WRPS. She currently works as a relief shift manager for the Central Shift Office and has represented WRPS at several SACC events.

Sterling said she would not hesitate to recommend WRPS to any veteran. She did so to her brother, Doug Kennedy. Kennedy, also an Army veteran, is now an engineer with the Tank Farm Projects organization.

“I’m definitely a big fan of WRPS,” said Sterling, a graduate of the United States Military Academy. “The company has gone above and beyond to support me during my deployments and has provided me with many opportunities to advance my career. WRPS makes veterans feel like they are a part of a family.” ■



From left to right, Greg Lichtenberg (Air Force), Robert Plemmons (Marines), Katie Sterling (Army), Mark Haag (Navy), Hector Ubinas (Navy), Jeff McClellan (Air Force) and Andy Waterworth (Air Force) are among more than 200 veterans employed by WRPS.

# Bechtel Donates **\$100,000** to Friends of **Badger Mountain**

Bechtel National, Inc. provided a \$100,000 gift to the Friends of Badger Mountain to help create a preserve on Candy Mountain in Richland, Wash.

Friends of Badger Mountain (FOBM) is a group of area residents dedicated to preserving and maintaining the ridges and natural habitat in the Mid-Columbia region for the benefit of the general public and the environment. The Bechtel donation, which will be paid out over three years, will support FOBM's campaign to raise \$1.5 million to purchase land and construct a trail to the summit of Candy Mountain. Bechtel also will provide a granite marker at the new trailhead.

"Bechtel's very generous donation to the Friends of Badger Mountain is a major contribution to our community's economic growth and quality of life that will last for generations," said Sharon Grant, FOBM co-founder. "By this giant step, FOBM will be able to preserve and provide access to Candy Mountain and make a major addition to our intent to establish a system of trails that will connect across our four local ridges."

A global leader in the engineering and construction industry, Bechtel has a corporate commitment to enhancing the communities in which it works through charitable contributions and personal stewardship.

"Preserving the land at Candy Mountain is an exciting addition to our legacy stewardship projects that will provide lasting benefits to the Tri-Cities," said Peggy McCullough, project director for Bechtel's Waste Treatment Plant Project. "The trail is a natural extension of our work at Hanford to protect the Columbia River. We want everyone to enjoy the beautiful view of the river from the Candy Mountain summit for years to come."

Other Bechtel legacy projects in the Tri-Cities include the Hanford REACH Interpretive Center, the Bechtel Planetarium at Columbia Basin College, the Family Fishing Pond, and the Playground of Dreams. ■

For more information about the event, visit: [www.friends of badger.org](http://www.friends of badger.org).



Bechtel employees celebrate a \$100,000 gift to Friends of Badger Mountain at Trailhead Park in Richland, Wash.

# Additional Year Added to WCH Contract

DOE has added an additional year to the current River Corridor Closure contract held by Washington Closure.

The additional year of the contract, valued at \$148 million, will run from Sept. 30, 2015, to Sept. 30, 2016. Work will focus primarily on completing the trench work at the 618-10 Burial Ground and placing the Chemical Materials Engineering Laboratory (Building 324) in a maintenance status for future demolition. Operations of the Environmental Restoration Disposal Facility, Hanford's on-site landfill, will also continue.

Stacy Charboneau, manager of DOE-RL said, "Washington Closure's progress to date in safely cleaning up Hanford's 220-square-mile River Corridor made the decision to add a year to their contract an easy one."

Washington Closure's progress includes safely cleaning up more than 534 waste sites, demolishing over 323 buildings, and placing two plutonium-production reactors in interim safe storage along the Columbia River.

"This additional year on our contract will enable Washington Closure's experienced workforce to complete additional work along Hanford's River Corridor while protecting the Columbia River," said Scott Sax, president of Washington Closure. ■



As of June 2015, Washington Closure has demolished 173 of 181 buildings and has cleaned up 93 of 118 waste sites in the 300 Area.

## Safety Expo 2015

More than 28,000 people attended and individuals from various Hanford Contractors and safety organizations staffed 176 booths during the 21st annual Hanford Health and Safety Expo on May 12 and 13.

One of the larger components of the expo was the Vehicle Accident Demonstration. The demonstration simulates what happens following an accident where one or both of the drivers was either distracted or intoxicated. The Washington State Patrol and Benton and Franklin County Sheriff's Departments participated in the demonstration, as well as the Hanford Fire Department, Franklin County Coroner, MSA Electrical Utilities, and Pasco Auto Wrecking.

During the demonstration, the Washington State Patrol put a driver through a field sobriety test, Hanford Fire used the "jaws of life" to save passengers from being trapped inside a vehicle, and MSA Electrical Utilities took



A Hanford employee demonstrates the proper use of protective gear and discusses how safety equipment plays a vital role in the protection of workers and the environment.

care of a downed power line caused by the collision.

The purpose of the expo is to help educate the community and Hanford employees on health and safety topics for work and home. ■