

Having trouble viewing this email? [View it as a Web page.](#)

THE HANFORD SITE

For Immediate Release:

October 29, 2020

Media Contacts:

Geoff Tyree, DOE, (509) 376-4171, Geoffrey.Tyree@rl.doe.gov

Bruce Drake, DOE, (509) 376-0159, Bruce.Drake@rl.doe.gov

EM Chief Gets Firsthand Look at Hanford Site Progress

RICHLAND, Wash. – William “Ike” White, Senior Advisor to the Under Secretary for Science overseeing the Department of Energy’s Office of Environmental Management, visited the Hanford Site today and on Wednesday to view progress on the environmental cleanup mission.

“Despite unprecedented challenges caused by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the Hanford team has demonstrated an ability to adjust, adapt and move the cleanup mission forward,” said White. “They are progressing the Direct-Feed Low-Activity Waste system that puts tank waste treatment on the horizon at Hanford and addressing risks from the site’s plutonium production legacy.”

White got a firsthand look at advancements on several projects critical to the Direct-Feed Low-Activity-Waste system that will transform the Hanford site by enabling a shift to tank waste treatment operations. The approach is a system of interdependent projects and infrastructure improvements that will operate together to send pretreated waste from Hanford’s tank farms directly to the Low-Activity Waste Facility at the Waste Treatment and Immobilization Plant.

White began his visit at the AP Tank Farm, where the recent delivery of a pretreatment system for tank waste marked the last of the pieces of the physical Direct-Feed Low-Activity-Waste system to be put in place at Hanford. At the Waste Treatment and Immobilization Plant, White saw specially fabricated containers that were delivered to the site last week that will hold vitrified waste after it is treated so that it can be safely disposed of. White also visited the plant’s Analytical Laboratory, which recently became the first nuclear facility at the plant to finish startup testing, and he visited the plant’s Effluent Management Facility. White rounded out his first day at Hanford with a look at improvements to the disposal facility where tens of thousands of containers of vitrified low-activity waste will be placed.

In addition to progress on Hanford’s tank waste mission, White visited a number of projects where workers are reducing significant risks and remediating contamination from Hanford’s national security mission. At the Waste Encapsulation Storage Facility, White got a look at the latest preparations for transferring capsules of highly radioactive cesium and strontium from underwater storage to dry storage casks. At a visit to a mock-up used for practice and training, updates were provided on work to excavate highly radioactive soil from below Hanford’s 324 building. While at the 200 West Pump and Treat Facility, White congratulated workers on reaching the goal of treating approximately 2 billion gallons of groundwater this year. White was also briefed on work getting

underway this week to stabilize three aging underground waste disposal structures located in the footprint of the Plutonium Finishing Plant demolition area.

“With the risk reduction work and the transformative progress on the tank waste mission, 2020 represents an inflection point for Hanford,” said White. “The work being accomplished puts the site on a clear path to tank waste treatment and additional risk reduction in the years ahead.”



During a visit to the Hanford Site on Wednesday, EM chief Ike White (left) got a look inside enclosures for a vital pretreatment system that will prepare waste from Hanford’s large underground tanks to be fed directly to a nearby facility and stabilized for disposal using vitrification (immobilization in glass) technology. Also pictured on the right is Washington River Protection Solutions President and Chief Executive Officer John Eschenberg.



EM chief Ike White (right) stopped by the Waste Treatment and Immobilization Plant during a Wednesday visit to the Hanford Site and saw the first 20 containers that will hold vitrified

(immobilized in glass) waste simulant and tank waste. Also pictured is Nuclear Facility Manager Mike Huyck, Waste Treatment Completion Company.



On Wednesday, EM chief Ike White (right) stopped by the Waste Treatment and Immobilization Plant's Analytical Laboratory, the first nuclear facility in the plant to move from startup testing (after construction) to commissioning. The laboratory will analyze approximately 3,000 samples a year to ensure low-activity tank waste immobilized in glass meets disposal requirements. Also pictured is Chemist Andrew Killgore, Waste Treatment Completion Company.



EM chief Ike White (right) ended his visit to the Hanford Site today with a stop at a mock-up of a former plutonium processing laboratory located near the city of Richland, Washington, and the Columbia River, where workers are preparing to excavate highly radioactive soil from below the 324 Building. Also pictured is Ben Vannah, DOE Richland Operations Office.

The Department of Energy (DOE) is engaged in one of the great public works of this century at the Hanford Site near Richland, Washington. Responsible for the federal government's cleanup of the legacy of more than 40 years of producing plutonium through the 1980s, DOE is transforming the site back into a 24/7 operations mode to treat tank waste from the production era. The DOE Office of River Protection (ORP) is responsible for the safe and efficient retrieval, treatment and disposal of the 56 million gallons of chemical and radioactive waste stored in Hanford's 177 underground tanks. The mission includes building and commissioning the world's largest radioactive waste treatment plant, which will immobilize the legacy tank waste through vitrification. The DOE Richland Operations Office is responsible for all remaining Hanford cleanup and is currently focused on stabilizing and demolishing former plutonium production structures, excavating and disposing of contaminated soil and waste, treating contaminated groundwater, and configuring Hanford Site infrastructure for the future, with an emphasis on supporting the tank waste mission. Hanford Site work is conducted by a federal and contractor workforce of approximately 9,400 personnel. Visit www.hanford.gov for more information about the Hanford Site.



STAY CONNECTED:

