

# THE HANFORD SITE

**For Immediate Release:**

August 15, 2023

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## Hanford Demolition Paves Way for Cleanup Progress Near Columbia River

**RICHLAND, Wash.** – A [Hanford Site](#) building that was critical to [transferring radioactive sludge](#) away from the Columbia River is coming down. Demolition of the K West Reactor Annex is another key step toward completing cleanup at the former plutonium production [reactor](#).

The project includes draining and removing the reactor’s spent-fuel basin where the sludge was stored, then placing the reactor building in interim safe storage.

“The annex building accomplished its mission to support the safe packaging and transfer of sludge from the basin in 2019,” said Mark French, Department of Energy [Richland Operations Office](#) division director for Hanford’s Central Plateau Cleanup Project. “Now, removal of the facility allows us to continue the progress we’ve already made to reduce risk in Hanford’s K Area and along the river.”

Crews with contractor Central Plateau Cleanup Company (CPCCo) have been [moving and sorting radioactive debris](#) into underwater bins in the 1.2-million-gallon basin since last summer. Workers using underwater cameras and specialized tools place the contaminated material into steel tubes, which will be filled with grout, a concrete-like substance, and removed during basin demolition.

Workers recently finished installing a system to pump out and filter the contaminated water from the basin. They will transfer the water to Hanford’s Effluent Treatment Facility by tanker truck for disposal. Testing activities on the system are currently underway, with the draining of the basin expected to begin by the end of this year.

“While we still have plenty of work to do, it’s exciting to see how far we’ve come,” said Mike Kruzic, CPCCo 100 K Closure Projects manager. “I’m proud of our team and their continued focus on safety over speed.”

Following removal of the spent fuel basin, workers will construct a safe storage enclosure over the main K West Reactor building, a process known as “cocooning.” The enclosure will protect the building while the radioactivity in the deactivated reactor core decays over the next several decades, making it safer to complete disposition of the reactor in the future.

K West will be the eighth and final Hanford reactor to be cocooned following the [cocooning of the nearby K East Reactor](#) in October 2022.

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*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 10,000 personnel. Visit [www.hanford.gov](http://www.hanford.gov) for more information about the Hanford Site.*



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