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Hanford Waste Treatment Plant completes fifth concrete wall elevation for largest facility

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Richland, Wash. -- Last week, crews at the Hanford Waste Treatment Plant, also known as the “Vit Plant,” finished installing the Pretreatment Facility’s fifth elevation of concrete walls. The fifth elevation reaches 96 feet at the top.

To place the final walls, crews used a specialized concrete pumping truck with an extendable arm that reaches approximately 200 feet vertically or horizontally.

The Pretreatment Facility, the largest of the Vit Plant’s four major nuclear facilities, comprises six elevated concrete sections and more than 113,000 cubic yards of concrete. Work on the sixth and final elevation is already in progress, and only four small wall sections remain before all concrete walls in the Pretreatment Facility are complete.

When complete, the building’s walls will reach a total height of 109 feet. Steel columns and roof trusses will extend beyond the walls to an overall height of 120 feet.



(Photo 1 of 3)

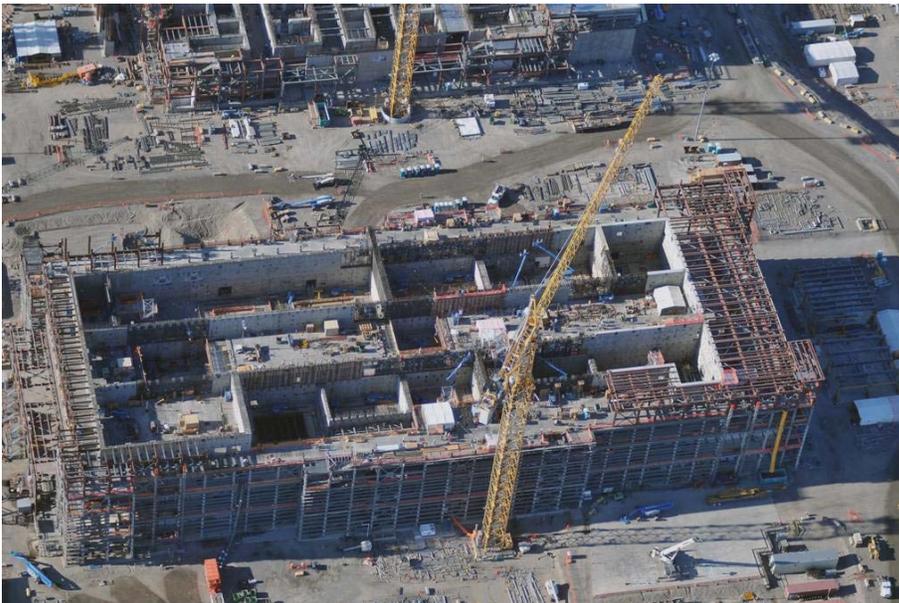
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(Photo 2 of 3)



(Photo 3 of 3)

Bechtel National, Inc. is designing and building the world's largest radioactive waste treatment plant for the U.S. Department of Energy at the Hanford Site in southeastern Washington state. The \$12.2 billion Waste Treatment and Immobilization Plant, also known as the "Vit Plant," will immobilize the radioactive liquid waste currently stored in 177 underground tanks using a process called "vitrification."

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Vitrification involves blending the waste with molten glass and heating it to high temperatures. The mixture is then poured into stainless steel canisters. In this glass form, the waste is stable and impervious to the environment, and its radioactivity will dissipate over hundreds to thousands of years.

The Vit Plant will cover 65 acres with four nuclear facilities -- Pretreatment, Low-Activity Waste Vitrification, High-Level Waste Vitrification and Analytical Laboratory -- as well as operations and maintenance buildings, utilities and office space.

Construction of the Vit Plant began in 2001 and is more than 60 percent complete. The project is scheduled to complete construction in 2016; will reach commissioning in 2019 and achieve full operations in 2022.

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