



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

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Major Recovery Act Project Completed at Hanford

*Two New Super Cells Go Into Service To Accept Contaminated Soil and Debris
Months Ahead of Schedule and Millions Under Budget*

RICHLAND, WASH. – Two new super cells are going into service to expand disposal capacity for contaminated soil and debris at the Environmental Restoration Disposal Facility (ERDF), at the Department of Energy’s (DOE) Hanford Site in southeastern Washington State.

The super cell expansion, initially set to be completed on September 30, 2011, was finished seven months ahead of schedule and nearly \$16.4 million under budget. The super cell expansion is part of a \$100 million upgrade to facilities at ERDF supported by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

The DOE’s River Corridor contractor, Washington Closure Hanford and subcontractor TradeWind Services and DeHur Industries, used lessons learned from previous cell construction to devise the design for super cells 9 and 10. A super cell is equivalent to an existing pair of cells – 1,000 feet long, 500 feet wide and 70 feet deep – and is more cost-efficient because it simplifies the leachate collection system. The super cell design eliminates 12 inches of drainage gravel and requires fewer pumps, motors, crest pads, valves, and other pieces of equipment. The result was a cost reduction of \$1.5 million per super cell.

“The addition of super cells 9 and 10 expands ERDF’s capacity by 5.6 million tons to a total of 16.4 million tons,” said Matt McCormick, Manager of the DOE Richland Operations Office. “Last year our contractors set a number of disposal records at ERDF – with an average of more than 500 containers disposed of per day and more than twice the amount of soil and debris disposed of in 2010 than in 2009. This expansion paves the way for future cleanup.”

The ERDF is a low-level radioactive and mixed waste disposal facility located in the center of the 586-square-mile Hanford Site and is regulated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The facility was built in 1996 to accept contaminated soil and debris generated during Hanford cleanup operations.

The facility, which covers about the same area as 52 football fields, already contains nearly 11 million tons of waste. Super cell 9 began accepting waste in mid-February, and super cell 10 is scheduled for service in March.

“The tremendous amount of work being accomplished at the Hanford Site has increased the waste volume significantly at ERDF,” said Bruce Covert, Director of Waste Operations for Washington Closure. “This upgrade will allow ERDF personnel to safely handle increased waste volumes generated by Washington Closure and other Hanford contractors.”

Although ERDF does not accept liquid waste, water is introduced to the facility through rain, snow and water used for dust suppression. The construction of super cell 10 included upgrades to the leachate, or liquid, transmission pipe and construction of two new leachate storage tanks.

This is the fourth and largest expansion of ERDF since the facility came online. Designed to be expanded as needed, the facility previously was expanded in 1999, 2003 and 2007.

ERDF’s first eight cells, or disposal areas, were built two at a time. The super cells are similar in that they were constructed with bottom and side liners consisting of multiple layers of natural and man-made materials that form an impermeable barrier, along with a system to catch liquids as they drain through the waste materials.

“Teamwork was the key to constructing the super cells in a safe and efficient manner,” Covert said. “The construction team led by TradeWind and DelHur demonstrated a strong commitment to safety and achieved Washington Closure’s project goal of zero injuries.”

TradeWind is a Washington Closure Mentor-Protégé. DOE established the Mentor-Protégé program to encourage subcontracting opportunities for small and disadvantaged businesses by pairing them with DOE prime contractors. As part of the Mentor-Protégé program, TradeWind received guidance regarding business development, safety, quality and operations from Washington Closure.

Washington Closure operates ERDF as part of the 220-square-mile River Corridor Closure Project, the DOE’s largest environmental cleanup closure project. Washington Closure manages the \$2.4 billion project for the DOE’s Richland Operations Office and is on track to complete the project by 2015.

The company is responsible for protecting the Columbia River by demolishing hundreds of facilities, hundreds of waste sites, placing several plutonium production reactors into interim safe storage, and managing ERDF. Washington Closure is a limited liability company owned by URS, Bechtel National and CH2M HILL.

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