

News from Around the Complex

April 1 – April 30, 2010

Available on-line at www.fftfcleanup.org

April 29, 2010

Updates will double waste processed at SRS facility, *Augusta Chronicle*

Pending upgrades to the U.S. Energy Department's Defense Waste Processing Facility will almost double the volume of nuclear material processed each year, beginning in 2012. The plant at Savannah River Site uses a process called vitrification to convert liquid radioactive wastes into a solid glass form suitable for long-term storage and permanent disposal. The glass is then encased in steel canisters. During the facility's 10-year history, annual production has averaged 215 canisters. By 2012, the goal will be to increase annual production to 400 canisters per year to meet a goal of closing 22 of the site's remaining 49 liquid waste tanks within eight years.

<http://chronicle.augusta.com/news/metro/2010-04-29/updates-will-double-volume-waste-processed-srs-facility?v=1272590134>

April 28, 2010

Colo. Legislature passes bill requiring uranium mills to clean up radioactive waste, *Minneapolis Star-Tribune*

DENVER - Colorado lawmakers have passed a bill that requires uranium mills to clean up radioactive waste before accepting more radioactive material. The Senate voted 24-9 in favor of the bill Wednesday. Later the House agreed with changes made in the Senate and readopted the bill by a vote of 60-3. It now goes to Gov. Bill Ritter. Mills are now allowed to postpone cleanup until they finish production and decommission their facilities. Lawmakers are concerned that a national focus on nuclear energy will allow mines to postpone cleanup while they ramp up production. Plans to revive a uranium mill in Canon City — a Superfund site since 1984 — and open a mill in Montrose County led environmentalists and activists to push for a change this year.

<http://www.startribune.com/business/92338949.html?elr=KArks:DCiU1OiP:DiiUiacyKUUr>

April 28, 2010

Yucca deadline now June 30, *Las Vegas Review-Journal*

WASHINGTON -- Administrative judges weighing a Yucca Mountain shutdown gave themselves another month to make a decision on Tuesday. The Atomic Safety and Licensing Board said it would rule by June 30 on whether to allow the Department of Energy to withdraw an application pending at the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to build a nuclear waste repository at the Nevada site. The safety and licensing board is an arm of the NRC. Last week, commission leaders ordered the judges to settle the Yucca license matter by June 1.

<http://www.lvrj.com/news/yucca-deadline-now-june-30-92292849.html>

April 27, 2010

Cleaning house at Alpha-5, *Knoxville News-Sentinel Blog*

A milestone in the Recovery Act-funded cleanup of Alpha-5, a World War II-era facility at the Y-12 nuclear weapons plant, was achieved a week ahead of schedule, the Dept. of Energy announced this week. The milestone was the removal of all legacy materials (everything that wasn't bolted down, much of it hazardous and/or radioactive) from the big building's fourth floor. That amounted to 5,430 containers, all of which were sent to the Nevada Test Site for disposal. According to DOE, the cleanup of Alpha-5 is the largest of the Recovery Act projects under way at Y-12 and is expected to cost about \$100 million. The 613,000-square-foot building to be completely emptied by Sept. 30, 2011, the federal agency said.

http://blogs.knoxnews.com/munger/2010/04/cleaning_house_at_alpha-5.html#more

April 27, 2010

Hanford burial grounds work finished 2 years early, *Tri-City Herald*

HANFORD — Hanford workers have dug up debris ranging from radioactively contaminated forklifts to drums of potentially flammable material while completing cleanup of 11 waste sites just north of Richland. The work, started in 2002, was completed this month nearly two years ahead of a legally binding Tri-Party Agreement deadline. "The river corridor people have just been cranking away on this work," said Larry Gadbois, a scientist for the Environmental Protection Agency, which regulates the Department of Energy

work. "It's been pedal to the metal on waste sites." Contractor Washington Closure Hanford is 8 percent ahead of schedule and has saved \$170 million in costs for work to clean up Hanford along the Columbia River, said Washington Closure spokesman Todd Nelson. It's used those savings to accelerate work to finish the 11 waste sites.

<http://www.tri-cityherald.com/2010/04/27/992164/work-at-hanford-burial-grounds.html#ixzz0mPaZ8a9u>
DOE press release available at: <http://www.hanford.gov/news.cfm/DOE/Press%20--%20300%20Area%20Milestone.pdf>

April 23, 2010

Report: Audit of Moab Mill Tailings Cleanup Project, DOE IG

[Excerpt from transmittal letter] Generally, we found that the Moab Project was proceeding as planned and within budget. As of January 2010, the project was slightly ahead of schedule and six percent under cost.***We also found that the contractor's reporting of 200 jobs created/retained as of December 31, 2009, was properly documented and appeared to be reasonable. Our audit testing did, however, reveal several opportunities to improve the management of the project's performance baseline. These issues relate specifically to the baseline change control process and increased the risk that the contractor's performance rating may be inflated.

Report available at: <http://www.ig.energy.gov/images/OAS-RA-L-10-03.pdf>

April 22, 2010

SRS takes step to closing old reactor facility, Aiken Standard

Stimulus funding has moved the Department of Energy one step closer to closing the book on the Cold War-era P-Reactor facility at the Savannah River Site. With the installation, testing and startup of six evaporator units, SRS can begin removing about 4.6 million gallons of water from the 105-P Reactor Disassembly Basin - a phase of in-situ decommissioning. "The safe startup of the disassembly basin evaporators marks another milestone for this history-making Recovery Act project," said Ray Hannah, DOE federal project director of the P-Reactor Project. "Removing the water from the disassembly basin and readying it to be filled with grout are important steps in decommissioning this Cold-War relic."

<http://www.aikenstandard.com/Local/0423-P-Reactor>

April 22, 2010

Senate plan leaves Yucca project off the budget: 2011 funding proposal does not include any money for the nuclear waste repository, Las Vegas Review-Journal

WASHINGTON -- The Senate took an initial step Thursday to end funding for the Yucca Mountain Project when its budget committee approved a 2011 blueprint that senators said contains no room for the nuclear waste repository plan. The budget plan put together by Chairman Sen. Kent Conrad, D-N.D., "supports the president's request to close the Yucca Mountain nuclear repository and establish a blue ribbon commission to investigate alternatives," according to a Senate Budget Committee document. The budget resolution is an early but not surprising sign that senior senators under the direction of Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., do not want to continue spending for the Yucca Mountain Project. President Barack Obama has declared he wants to end the underground waste storage program, and a blue ribbon study panel began work last month on searching for other strategies.

<http://www.lvrj.com/news/senate-budget-plan-excludes-yucca-mountain-91862499.html>

April 22, 2010

New deadlines proposed for Hanford radioactive waste, Tri-City Herald

The Department of Energy and its regulators have agreed to new legally binding environmental cleanup deadlines for radioactive waste that has been temporarily buried at central Hanford since 1970. The proposed new package of deadlines would allow more time for some work but also add new deadlines DOE must meet. They include the first-ever deadlines for when some of the waste must be shipped to a national repository in New Mexico and a final cleanup deadline for some of the most difficult-to-handle solid waste, which Hanford now lacks the capabilities to prepare for disposal. "We've come up with a change package that satisfies the interest of DOE, Ecology and the public," said Deborah Singleton, project manager for the Washington State Department of Ecology. The state and the Environmental Protection Agency are Hanford regulators.

<http://www.tri-cityherald.com/2010/04/22/986216/new-deadlines-proposed-for-cleanup.html#ixzz0lwhmtxDy>

April 19, 2010

WIPP Trucks Surpass 10 Million Loaded Miles, DOE Press Release

CARLSBAD, N.M., April 19, 2010 – The U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Carlsbad Field Office said drivers, who haul defense-related transuranic (TRU) waste to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant, surpassed 10 million safe, loaded miles. The first of more than 8,400 shipments to WIPP arrived 11 years ago from Los Alamos National Laboratory in northern New Mexico. "There's no doubt, some of the best drivers in the transportation industry work for WIPP," said Dr. Dave Moody, Carlsbad Field Office manager. Loaded miles, he explained, are the number of miles traveled hauling a waste payload. The milestone shipment contained contact-handled TRU waste that originated from the Hanford Site in Washington State.
http://www.em.doe.gov/pdfs/10_Million_Loaded_Miles.pdf

April 18, 2010

Groundwater cleanup begins at Paducah plant, Louisville Courier-Journal

PADUCAH, Ky. — A Department of Energy contractor will spend the next 18 months cleaning up after 40 years of groundwater pollution at the Paducah Gaseous Diffusion Plant. At a ribbon cutting April 12 as the cleanup project began, Energy Department official Bill Murphie told The Paducah Sun it marked a major turning point in cleansing the groundwater at the site. About 50,000 gallons of contaminated water from beneath a building at the government site is being processed to remove the degreaser trichloroethylene. A second phase of the project is expected to start later this year. The plant system marks what probably is the largest groundwater cleanup effort in Kentucky history, said Tony Hatton, director of the state Division of Hazardous Waste.

<http://www.courier-journal.com/article/20100418/NEWS01/4180332/Groundwater+cleanup+begins+at+Paducah+plant>

April 17, 2010

Critics say N-wastes cleanup plan for West Valley fails to meet need, The Buffalo News

A two-phase federal plan to clean up the former nuclear reprocessing plant near West Valley drew disappointment Friday from critics. The U. S. Energy Department issued a "record of decision" late Thursday for the West Valley Demonstration Project in Ashford that will result in a gradual return to normal for the closed facility. On Friday, Diane D'Arrigo, a member of the watchdog West Valley Action Network, said the plan falls short of what is needed. "There is widespread disappointment in the federal government's decision to pursue only a partial cleanup of the site," D'Arrigo said. "We have a big mess at West Valley, and we've been pushing for a full cleanup of [the site] for decades." The Energy Department examined three alternatives for the cleanup and chose a two-phase decision-making process. The first phase involves removing the main plant process building and cleaning up two waste burial grounds, as well as four in-ground tanks, including two with radioactive sludge left over from reprocessing operations.

<http://www.buffalonews.com/2010/04/17/1022144/critics-say-n-wastes-cleanup-plan.html>

Record of Decision available at: <http://www.westvalleyeis.com/ROD.pdf>

April 17, 2010

CH2M Hill loses \$1.6M in pay, Tri-City Herald

The Department of Energy plans to cut the pay for CH2M Hill Plateau Remediation Co. for the current fiscal year by \$1.6 million because it failed to meet safety performance requirements, the contractor was notified Friday. DOE could have reduced the annual pay by up to 10 percent because of the issue, but settled on a reduction of about 5 percent. CH2M Hill, the Hanford contractor for central Hanford environmental and ground water cleanup, can earn some of that fee back by making improvements. It has 60 days to provide more information to DOE, including actions it plans to take to correct problems. The safety performance problem was not related to a specific incident, although DOE listed several examples that it said demonstrated program weaknesses in a letter to the contractor. DOE is more concerned about the level and rigor of implementation of the safety management program, said Dave Brockman, manager of the DOE Hanford Richland Operations Office.

<http://www.tri-cityherald.com/2010/04/17/979516/ch2m-hill-loses-16m-in-pay.html#ixzz0lwhZATFK>

April 14, 2010

Plutonium level in waste to triple, Augusta Chronicle

The amount of plutonium in high-level waste converted to glass at Savannah River Site will nearly triple this year as a consequence of the U.S. Energy Department's decision to abandon its Yucca Mountain waste repository. *** In 2008, as the department prepared its application to license the Yucca Mountain site in Nevada -- where vitrified waste was to be buried -- SRS lowered plutonium levels in vitrified waste from

2,500 grams per cubic meter to 897 grams per cubic meter. The reduction would allow SRS waste to meet Yucca Mountain's acceptance criteria -- but would have increased the number of canisters needed to hold the remaining vitrified waste from 4,000 to 9,000, according to a 2008 memo. Once the Energy Department made the decision to stop work on Yucca Mountain, the plutonium levels were restored to the higher concentrations in hopes of reducing the need for so many canisters, according to site officials.

<http://chronicle.augusta.com/news/metro/2010-04-14/plutonium-level-waste-triple>

April 14, 2010

Boeing scientists use organic remedies to remove toxins at Santa Susana Field Laboratory site, *Los Angeles Daily News*

On land that launched the testing of nuclear reactors and rocket engines, scientists use molasses and soybean extract to draw chemical waste from soil and stone. The methods may seem homemade and low tech, but the scientists who work for Boeing Co., say the "biomediation" experiments could lead to greener ways to clean and preserve the 2,900 acres at the top of the Simi Hills where the Santa Susana Field Laboratory once sat. *** Extracting perchlorate from the soil has proven easy. Removing complex radioactive waste from dirt, sandstone, groundwater and rain runoff isn't. *** Next month, Boeing is expected to argue in a Sacramento courtroom that the state's standards for cleaning up the Santa Susana Field Lab site are too strict and would require destroying the area's topography.

http://www.dailynews.com/news/ci_14885791

April 14, 2010

Ohio EPA approves additional Piketon cleanup, *Chillicothe Gazette* (Ohio)

PIKETON -- The Ohio Environmental Protection Agency has approved a new component to clean-up efforts at the U.S. Department of Energy's former Gaseous Diffusion Plant. On Tuesday, the state EPA said it has approved plans from the U.S. Department of Energy that will allow proper cleanup and, in some cases, tearing down of buildings that were used to produce enriched uranium until 2001. *** The Energy department committed \$303 million in cleanup funds for 2010, and an additional \$118 million was awarded from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown's office said \$500 million is set aside for cleanup efforts in the 2011 Energy department budget. Erin Strouse, a spokeswoman for the Ohio EPA, said the building clean-up process might take between 10 and 15 years. The work is time-consuming and expensive because all contaminated materials must be properly disposed. She estimated the total project cost to be around \$6 billion.

<http://www.chillicothe Gazette.com/article/20100414/NEWS01/4140306>

April 14, 2010

DC's oversight of Hanford construction increases, *Seattle Times*

Federal officials in Washington, D.C., are assuming a larger role overseeing construction of a massive plant to treat radioactive waste in south-central Washington. The \$12 billion vitrification plant at the Hanford nuclear reservation is among the largest industrial construction projects nationally, both in cost and sheer size. The plant is being built to convert highly radioactive waste into a safe form for permanent disposal. The Energy Department has largely overseen plant construction from its Office of River Protection at Hanford. According to an internal Energy Department memo, dated March 31 and obtained by The Associated Press, a full-time staffer in Washington D.C. will oversee the project, thus ensuring someone in the nation's capitol is intricately involved with the high-profile project. The move allows the project director at Hanford greater access to resources in the nation's capital, Energy Department spokeswoman Carrie Meyer said.

http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/localnews/2011608259_apwahanfordwasteplant2ndldwritethru.html

[April 13, 2010](#)

Energy auditors suggest keeping uranium at SRS: Cost analysis of disposal options being conducted, *Augusta Chronicle*

A plan to temporarily store two trainloads of Savannah River Site's depleted uranium in Texas after it was rejected by Utah's governor might be unnecessary and could waste taxpayers' money, according to the U.S. Energy Department's Inspector General. "The only apparent driver in this case was a Recovery Act-related goal established by the Department to accelerate the general disposition of the SRS material," said

the report, released Tuesday as a "management alert" based on information received from a "reliable and credible" department source.

<http://chronicle.augusta.com/news/metro/2010-04-13/auditors-suggest-keeping-uranium?v=1271209476>
IG Report: <http://www.ig.energy.gov/documents/OAS-RA-10-07.pdf>

April 13, 2010

State board imposes new regulations on depleted uranium: EnergySolutions' spokesman says he's unsure what the company will do, *Salt Lake Tribune*

EnergySolutions can take no more depleted uranium until it shows its radioactive landfill can contain the radioactive waste for thousands of years. After talking about DU for a year, the Radiation Control Board pushed forward Tuesday with new requirements despite the nuclear waste company's past threats of legal action. Meanwhile, board members opted against trying to regulate blending, the nuclear industry's practice of mixing Class A low-level radioactive waste with more hazardous Class B and Class C material so that reactors can dispose of waste that now has nowhere else to go.

http://www.sltrib.com/ci_14877808?IADID=Search-www.sltrib.com-www.sltrib.com
Utah Radiation Control Board: <http://www.radiationcontrol.utah.gov/Board/index.htm>

April 13, 2010

Groundwater cleanup begins at Paducah plant, *Louisville Courier-Journal*

PADUCAH, Ky. — A Department of Energy contractor will spend the next 18 months cleaning up after 40 years of groundwater pollution at the Paducah Gaseous Diffusion Plant. The Paducah Sun reported DOE official Bill Murphie said Monday at a ribbon cutting as the cleanup project began that it marked a major turning point in cleansing the groundwater at the site.

<http://www.courier-journal.com/article/20100413/GREEN/4130328/Groundwater+cleanup+begins+at+Paducah+plant>

April 9, 2010

Nuclear waste welcomed to state, for now: Foreign waste from reactor now at SRS, *Myrtle Beach Sun News*

As news comes of the Obama administration's plans to receive foreign nuclear materials as part of its nonproliferation strategy, leaders in South Carolina said Thursday they are OK with the state being a clearinghouse for the nukes - but only as long as the waste is recycled or isn't here permanently. "We could lead the world in nuclear repurposing at the Savannah River Site," S.C. Attorney General Henry McMaster said. "We have all the assets for enormous prosperity and jobs in South Carolina, and this is one of them." McMaster was reacting to an Associated Press report that highly-enriched uranium, or HEU, from Chile has been secretly shipped to the federal facility in South Carolina, as well as the Y-12 National Security Complex in Oak Ridge, Tenn.

<http://www.thesunnews.com/2010/04/09/1412062/nukes-temporarily-welcome.html>

April 9, 2010

Huge hot cells at Hanford to be removed, *Tri-City Herald*

Work has begun to stabilize and remove highly contaminated hot cells that stand up to three stories high at Hanford. It is the most difficult, complex and hazardous work that Washington Closure Hanford expects to face in demolishing old nuclear facilities at Hanford along the Columbia River, said Tom Kisenwether of Washington Closure. The five hot cells being cleaned up are in the 324 Building in Hanford's 300 Area just north of Richland. They were built to allow Hanford employees to work with highly radioactive materials without being exposed to radiation. Workers would stand outside the hot cells and use controls to operate manipulators inside the cells, watching what they were doing through leaded-glass windows. The tallest of the cells is narrow and stands three stories tall. But the largest has dimensions of 24-by-30-by-16 feet. All have concrete walls 4 to 6 feet thick and lined with stainless steel.

<http://www.hanfordnews.com/2010/04/09/15094/huge-hot-cells-at-hanford-to-be.html>

April 7, 2010

Hanford Advisory Board wants more from draft study, *Tri-City Herald*

HANFORD — The Hanford Advisory Board is asking the Department of Energy to release a revised draft for public comment of a study that will guide some of Hanford's most critical cleanup decisions. The second draft is needed because of the breadth and depth of comments being submitted on the initial draft of the

study and the document's potential impact on environmental cleanup decisions long into the future, the board said.

<http://www.tri-cityherald.com/2010/04/07/966867/hanford-advisory-board-wants-more.html#ixzz0kcr4YbmP>

April 7, 2010

Department of Energy Releases Open Government Plan, US DOE Press Release

Washington, D.C. – The U.S. Department of Energy today released its Open Government Plan highlighting DOE initiatives to maintain and increase transparency, increase participation between the Department, its program offices, sites and the American public, and increase collaborative efforts between the Department and its stakeholders.

<http://www.energy.gov/news/8829.htm>

Plan: http://www.energy.gov/news/documents/DOE_OGI_Plan_07Apr2010.pdf

April 6, 2010

Bill to ban 'blending' nuclear waste fails, Knoxville News-Sentinel

NASHVILLE — A bill that would prohibit 'blending' of nuclear waste in Tennessee, a process that is being tested at an Oak Ridge facility, failed on a 3-3 tie vote Tuesday in a House subcommittee after a Roane County legislator said it would jeopardize East Tennessee jobs.

<http://www.knoxnews.com/news/2010/apr/06/bill-ban-blending-nuclear-waste-fails/>

April 5, 2010

Low-level radioactive waste could be imported to Texas, News 8 Austin

Monday, the Texas Low Level Radioactive Waste Disposal Compact Commission heard feedback on a proposed rule that would allow the importation of radioactive waste from around the country into Texas. The commission proposed a rule that would allow the state to export waste for management and processing. After the product is prepared, it would be imported back into the state for disposal. The rule would also allow waste from "Non-Compact Generators" to be imported into the state for treatment. Texas Low level Radioactive Waste Disposal Compact was signed into law in 1993 by former Gov. Ann Richards. The compact is held between Texas and Vermont. Between these states, Texas was named a "host state," meaning the state houses the facility that accepts low-level radioactive waste for treatment.

<http://news8austin.com/content/headlines/270010/low-level-radioactive-waste-could-be-imported-to-texas>

April 5, 2010

Tests show DOE waste meets state standards: Additional work was done at governor's request, Salt Lake Tribune

Samples of the depleted uranium waste from a government cleanup in South Carolina show that it meets a key safety limit, said the Utah Department of Environmental Quality. State regulators heard about the test results Monday from a Tennessee laboratory, which sampled 171 of the 5,400 drums sent most recently to Utah from the Savannah River Project cleanup for technetium-99, a waste product of reprocessing. Gov. Gary Herbert requested the tests after the Healthy Environment Alliance of Utah and a scientist at the Institute for Energy and Environmental Research challenged whether the Savannah River DU has too much technetium-99 for EnergySolutions Inc.'s low-level radioactive waste landfill in Tooele County.

http://www.sltrib.com/news/ci_14824274

April 5, 2010

Obama panel examines nation's nuclear waste issues: Utah's role -Observers wonder how state facilities might figure into a national solution, Salt Lake Tribune

Two recent announcements from the Obama administration have energized nuclear power advocates. The first is his plan to offer \$18.5 billion in loan guarantees for new nuclear plants; the other, a task force to look at the dangerously radioactive waste often blamed for delaying what some anticipate will be a nuclear renaissance. More than a few Utahns are keeping an eye on the new Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future. Tooele County includes the nation's largest low-level radioactive waste disposal site, the mile-square EnergySolutions landfill, and the nation's only high-level nuclear site licensed in the past three decades, the derailed Private Fuel Storage facility on the Goshute reservation in Skull Valley. Both sites have generated controversy in Utah for decades. Now, they could become part of a national nuclear strategy. That's what Utah leaders and advocates on both sides of the nuclear debate plan to

watch in the two years the commission takes to develop its final report. Dianne Nielson, Gov. Gary Herbert's energy adviser, is monitoring the panel's work to ensure "state perspectives and considerations" are respected.

http://www.sltrib.com/news/ci_14815495

April 5, 2010

Utilities Sue U.S. to Halt Nuclear Waste Fees, *The New York Times*

WASHINGTON — Sixteen utilities and a trade association sued the Energy Department on Monday to halt the government's collection of nuclear waste disposal fees, arguing that the country no longer had a disposal plan after ruling out Yucca Mountain, Nev., as a repository. The utilities, which filed the lawsuit in the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia, jointly pay about \$750 million a year — amounting to a tenth of a cent per kilowatt hour — into the fund. It now stands at about \$24 billion and earns about \$1 billion annually in interest. The money was supposed to pay for the development of the Yucca Mountain repository, about 90 miles northwest of Las Vegas, but the Energy Department said last month that it was formally seeking to withdraw its application with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to operate the site.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/06/business/energy-environment/06nuke.html>

April 1, 2010

DOE may face new central Hanford cleanup deadlines, *Tri-City Herald*

The Department of Energy and its regulators have tentatively agreed to changes in legal deadlines for cleanup of central Hanford and on a general framework to prepare for environmental cleanup work there. The revised deadlines under the legally binding Tri-Party Agreement won't be adopted until the public has a chance to comment. Under the proposed deadlines, DOE would face a tight schedule for coming up with a plan to clean up contaminated ground water in central Hanford. But DOE would have more time to come up with a plan to clean up contaminated soil deep underground. "It became apparent to us we needed more time for the deep vadose zone," said Dennis Faulk, Hanford program manager for the Environmental Protection Agency. DOE plans an increased focus on developing ways to attack that contamination. The vadose zone includes contamination that can be too deep to just dig up at 250 or 300 feet below the surface of the ground.

<http://www.tri-cityherald.com/2010/04/01/960133/doe-may-face-new-central-hanford.html#ixzz0kcp66vdn>