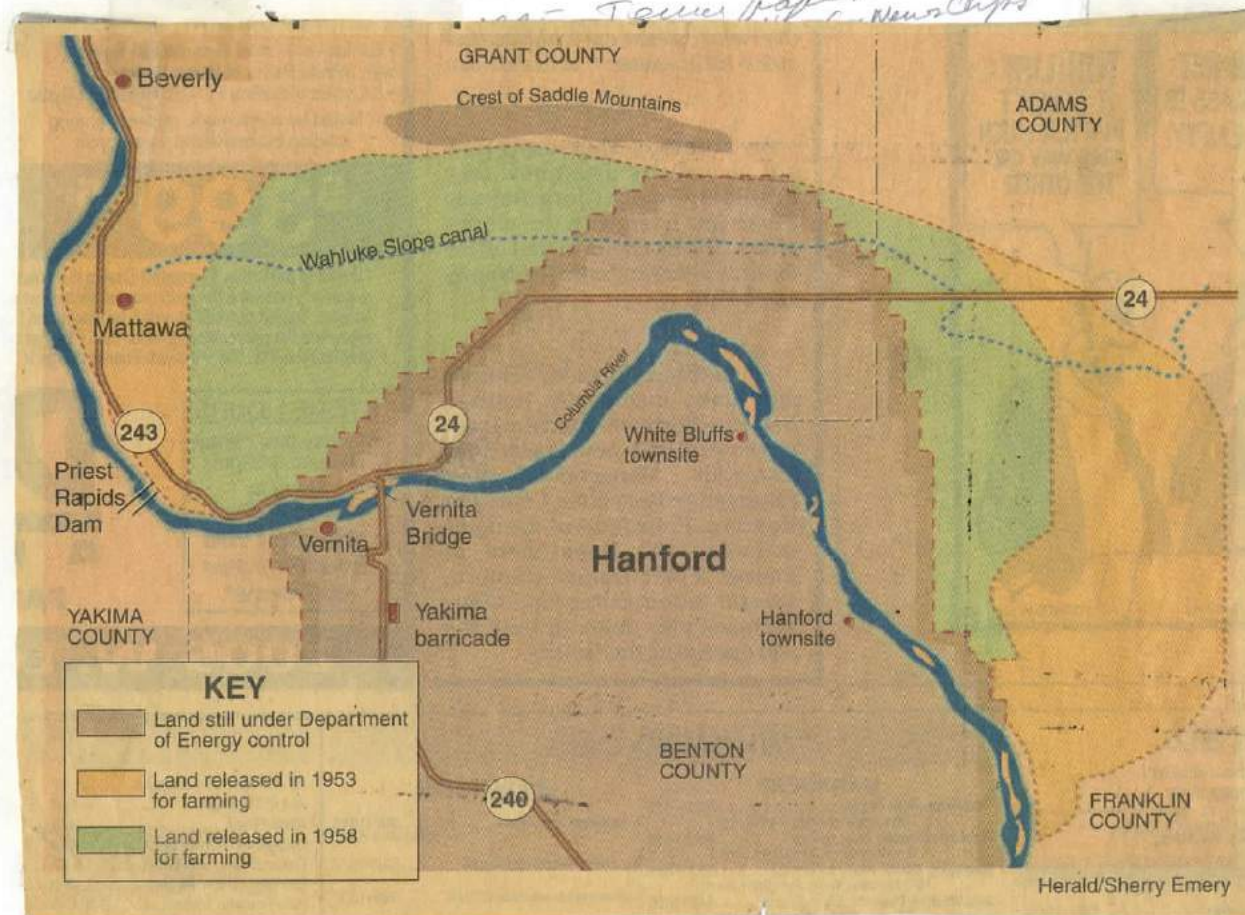


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12/94



Hanford advisers question barrier plan

By JOHN STANG
Herald staff writer

PORTLAND — The Hanford Advisory Board was "manipulated" into supporting a plan to construct a barrier to stall the flow of contaminated ground water from N Springs to the Columbia River, Tri-City board members claim.

However, Hanford regulators contend the plan had already gone through public scrutiny and had to be approved this year to meet a Tri-Party Agreement ruling.

The advisory board's Tri-City caucus gave a letter to board Chairwoman Sue Gould Thursday outlining the accusation. The matter is expected to be discussed today.

The 33-member board is holding its monthly meeting in Portland. The board represents the entire Hanford political spectrum, from Tri-City governments to activist groups. Its purpose is to advise the U. S. Department of Energy and its two main regulators, the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency and the

Washington Department of Ecology.

A \$6.8 million contract to build the barrier was awarded several days ago. Construction is expected to begin in February, with the underground barrier to be in place by the summer of 1995.

N Springs are cribs containing radioactive strontium 90 near N Reactor and the Columbia River. The ground water has picked up the strontium 90 and is slowly oozing toward the river.

The Tri-City caucus letter contends evidence hasn't been presented that the N Springs barrier is effective for the price.

The Hanford Advisory Board was briefed on the plan a few months ago.

The Tri-City caucus letter delivered Thursday stated: "We are increasingly concerned that the Hanford Advisory Board itself may have been manipulated to achieve a predetermined result desired by the regulators."

The letter also stated: "The board seems to have been placed in the very awkward position of either having to accept the recommendations of the regulators or shouldering

the burden of additional expense associated with the delay while the decision was more thoroughly considered. That circumstance is untenable and severely tests the fiber of the Hanford Advisory Board."

The Tri-City caucus wants to re-open discussion of the N Springs plan.

Pasco City Councilman Charles Kilbury, the Tri-City caucus chairman, said: "We felt (the regulators) had already made their decision and got our approval to go along with it."

While the Tri-City members felt pressured, they have not yet examined tapes of past meetings to back that assertion, Kilbury said.

The caucus plans to do so.

Doug Sherwood and Roger Stanley, who represent the EPA and Ecology on Tri-Party Agreement matters, said the N Springs plan went through public hearings and a public comment period last spring. That was when the advisory board was still being formed. The regulators delayed action until the board was organized enough to be briefed on

N Springs and the barrier plan, they said.

A time crunch was also involved. The EPA had penalized DOE for missing a Tri-Party Agreement deadline to build a laboratory in 1992. That penalty called for DOE to have an N Springs plan in motion in 1994, Sherwood said.

Sherwood and Stanley disagreed with the positions of the Tri-City caucus and a recent Tri-City Herald editorial that the barrier plan is an expensive measure tackling a small amount of radioactive strontium 90 in the ground water.

They said no one has a good estimate of the amount of strontium 90 flowing from N Springs into the river. But they said the contamination appears serious enough to require plants be sprayed and removed to prevent them from absorbing the contaminated ground water.

Deer were exposed to the contamination in the early 1980s, they said. They also said the wall would keep the contaminated ground water concentrated in a limited area so a

smaller and cheaper facility would be required to pump out and treat the water.

Also Thursday, the board:

■ Appeared ready to approve today a letter to DOE to request that Hanford show enough progress on removing 2,100 tons of irradiated fuel rods from the leak-prone K Basins to justify getting extra money next year to continue the project. This is considered one of the top-priority problems at Hanford.

DOE's budget shows \$73.9 million appropriated for the K Basins project in 1995, with another \$13.9 million possibly being added in the middle of the year.

But the board was told the extra \$13.9 million appeared to be doubtful, with Congress and DOE being in budget-trimming moods.

Hanford has been trying to speed up the Tri-Party Agreement deadline of removing and stabilizing the rods by 2002. The accelerated deadline is December 2000.

Losing the extra \$13.9 million would push that accelerated deadline back by at least several months, Hanford officials said.

Kaiser drops limited contractor bid policy

By WANDA BRIGGS
Herald staff writer

A confrontation between contractors and ICF Kaiser Hanford Co. was averted Thursday because Kaiser blinked.

Businessmen Peter McMillin and Ron Grant were prepared to declare war on a new policy they believed would bar them and other contractors from bidding on an estimated \$200 million worth of work to be done by Kaiser at Hanford next year.



fire protection, heating, ventilation and air conditioning, electrical, fire alarms, instrumentation, telecommunications and some design.

That kind of work amounted to \$20 million in 1991. Next year, there is \$148 million worth of known work to be done and probably another \$50 million on top of that, said Kaiser Manager Don Rittenhouse.

Originally, Kaiser said contractors could qualify in three of those areas only.

But on Thursday, they said contractors would be eligible to qualify in all 12 categories.

Also, Kaiser originally said it would select four contractors from the pool and invite only them to bid on a job, and then rotate that list.

But Thursday, after numerous complaints from contractors, Ben Evans, Kaiser's newly hired manager of construction management, said: "That has now been fixed. All eligible contractors can now bid."

"That's what we wanted to hear," said Jim Worthington, nuclear hazards specialist for Sheetmetal Workers International. "If they do what they say they'll do, this will work. It's up to this community to make sure they follow through."

Dick Marberg, business agent for Sheetmetal Workers Local 66, agreed.

"In the past, contractors were selected behind closed doors. This is a new way of doing business and it ought to work better."

In August, ICF Kaiser established a new way of doing business — a first-ever contractors pool for use in bidding small construction projects throughout the Hanford site.



Herald/Virginia Sliman

At Thursday's meeting between ICF Kaiser Hanford Co. and contractors are, from left, Rick Berglund, assistant business manager for Plumbers and Steamfitters Local 598; Jim Worthington, nuclear hazards specialist for Sheetmetal Workers International; and Dick Marberg, business agent for Sheetmetal Workers Local 66.

Instead, they left the Federal Building convinced of equal opportunities to bid on construction work at Hanford and persuaded Kaiser is headed in the right direction to help get Hanford cleanup done faster and cheaper.

"I'm satisfied with the changes Kaiser made," said McMillin, president of Zygotech Inc. of Richland.

"Instead of selecting contractors from the contractors pool and inviting only them to bid, they have opened it up to all of us. This will give the government the best bang for its buck," McMillin said.

"If I can't outbid the out-of-town boys, then I don't deserve to get the job," he said.

Here's the situation before Thursday's meeting began: Expected work at Hanford will include roofing, lighting, excavation, paving, painting, plumbing and piping,

The goal was to hire more private businesses to do work at Hanford traditionally done by Kaiser's own staff, said Evans.

To do that, Kaiser must ensure its general contractors and subcontractors are fully qualified. For example, a representative from each company must take a week-long safety class.

Previously, the safety class was three days and only representatives of general contractors had to attend the course.

"We're under scrutiny to clean up Hanford and we can't be out there doing dumb things," Evans said. At the end of each project, contractors will be rated — something not previously done.

"If you are given an unsatisfactory rating, you won't do work at Hanford," he told the attentive audience. "We will put you on notice early on, and the ball is then in your court to fix it."

In the past, a company with a good safety record at Hanford, but a poor safety record companywide, has been allowed to work at Hanford. No more, Evans said.

"Some contractors don't recognize what is safe and unsafe," he said. "If they aren't good contractors, they should be weeded out."

Kaiser now will consider the safety performance of an entire company it hires, not just a division working at Hanford.

Evans, Kaiser Subcontract Manager Danny LaPlante and Rittenhouse described procurement changes during the 90-minute meeting.

Jobless rate falls

The U.S. jobless rate hits a 4-year low, the government says. **B8**

Moose hunting

The Americans topple the Moose Jaw Warriors in the coliseum. — **Sports/B1**



Seahawk paralyzed

A car crash leaves Seattle Seahawks player Mike Frier paralyzed. **B1**

SATURDAY

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Up to 1,000 to lose Hanford jobs

By **WANDA BRIGGS**

Herald staff writer

Department of Energy contractors at Hanford expect to lay off between 500 and 1,000 workers early in 1995.

That's in addition to the retirement buyout program now under way to reduce the current work force of 18,700 by 1,000 by Dec. 31. The deadline to apply for that program is Tuesday. So far, 700 workers have applied for the early out.

The majority of the 1995 layoffs would be spread among Westinghouse Hanford Co. and its partners, ICF Kaiser Hanford Co. and



Trego

Boeing Computer Services Richland.

Between 90 and 160 of the total job cuts will come from Battelle-Northwest and Bechtel Hanford Co., DOE's environmental cleanup contractor.

"We have to get lean and mean if we're going to survive the budget squeeze," LaMar Trego,

president of Westinghouse Hanford Co., said Friday.

News of the possibility of 2,000 job losses at

INSIDE:

■ **IT'S YOUR CALL:** Can Hanford cut 2,000 jobs without hurting the cleanup effort? **Page A2.**

Hanford was contained in the final work force restructuring plan DOE's Richland Office submitted to headquarters in Washington, D.C. The total is 500 more than estimated when a draft plan was released in July.

The cuts are part of a nationwide DOE strategy to cut costs. Since the 1993 fiscal year, DOE says it has cut about 7,100 jobs at

its current and former nuclear weapons production sites.

During 1995, about 7,650 more jobs are expected to be cut, with the targeted cut at Mound, Ohio, not yet determined.

The final Hanford plan will be reviewed by top DOE officials and Congress before adoption in late January or early February.

Before the plan is final, Westinghouse and its partners are likely to offer a voluntary resignation program, which is expected to attract 300 to 350 employees.

Workers who willingly quit are entitled to separation pay based on one week's pay per year of service, up to 26 weeks. Cost per employee is estimated at \$19,210.

The early retirement and voluntary resignation programs together fall about 1,000 workers short of meeting DOE's new staffing guidelines.

That's why layoffs are expected, Trego explained.

The original DOE restructuring plan aimed to reduce Hanford's work force voluntarily by 1,000 in 1994 and by another 500 by September 1995, for a total of 1,500.

If that goal is reached, layoffs next year will be about 500. If not, that number could climb to 1,000.

Please see **HANFORD**, Page **A2** ▶

Hanford

Continued from Page A1

The budget squeeze is driving the reductions, Trego said.

Westinghouse anticipated \$1.4 billion from DOE for cleanup work in fiscal 1995 at Hanford.

After the budget process was complete, DOE told Trego that Westinghouse and its partners must cut costs by \$128 million. That's why the early buyout program was initiated.

Then Trego learned another \$100 million was being sliced from his now \$1.2 billion budget.

Trego has been belt-tightening several months — imposing a hiring freeze at Westinghouse, ordering managers to justify budgets and has limited overtime, off-site professional courses, business travel and computer hardware. He has restricted use of cellular phones, frozen student employment, reduced next summer's internship programs and told buyers to evaluate all purchases.

But that won't be enough to make up the other \$100 million cut, he said.

Westinghouse cannot lay off workers until after the work force restructuring plan is adopted because it contains provisions to educate and train laid-off workers. That's expected in late January or early February.

"We don't know the precise number of layoffs. We have to re-evaluate our manpower to make sure we have the right jobs skills mix," he said.

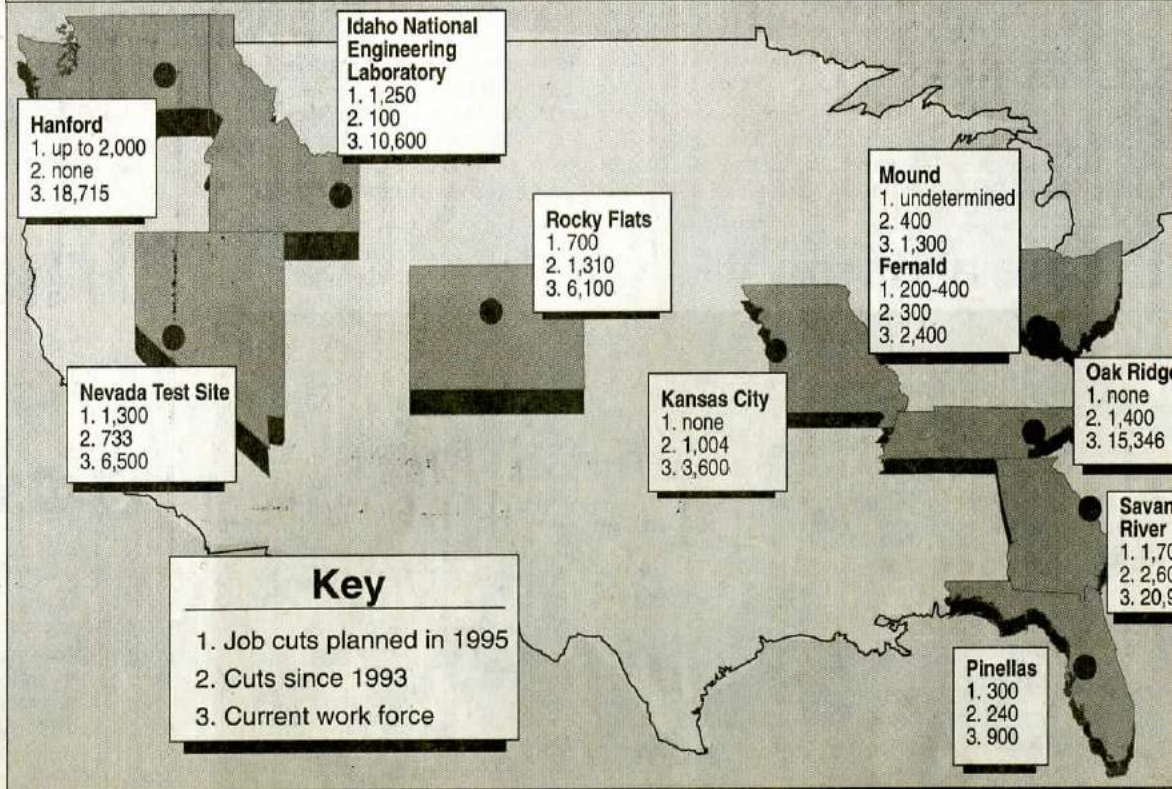
The early retirement program was offered to anyone of an eligible age and time of service. The voluntary separation program will be available only to workers whose skills are considered noncritical.

"Without question, we are talking about layoffs beyond the 300 to 350 we expect to take voluntary separation," Trego said. "Those layoffs could be between 500 and 1,000 early in 1995."

It's tough to announce layoffs right before Christmas, and it's tough to do them all at once, he said.

"But the advantage of this one-time hit is we get this behind us and move on," he said. "Even with the loss of another 1,000 workers, Hanford's employment will still be about 12,500."

DOE work force restructuring



SOURCE: DOE

who's been watching the trends."

"TRIDEC supports Westinghouse's attempt to be cost effective. ... However, as a community, we must find ways to offset the economic impact."

That impact likely will be felt not long after the first pink slips go out. Site workers living in Benton and Franklin counties account for at least half of the total earned income.

Because much of the rest of these two counties' economy has grown to support Hanford and its work force, the fate of two non-Hanford jobs is tied to each Hanford job.

Thus if 500 are laid off, the ripple effect throughout the community could be 1,500, and if layoffs climb to 1,000, it could be 3,000.

Pending layoffs also could bring a drop in Tri-City home prices.

For every 1,000 nonfarm jobs lost, the average price of a new home could fall by \$2,051, said the

ing a TRIDEC board retreat, Ferguson said.

Trego said the move to reduce the work force is vital because of existing budget constraints and because of anticipated budget reductions in fiscal 1996.

Trego said he's agonizing over the job cuts. "This is one of the most painful and disruptive tasks I've ever had to do. We are driven solely by the budget ... that's reality. We live in this community, this is where we've raised our family. There is nothing fun or pleasant about this," he said.

A rule of thumb for a business like Westinghouse is 10 employees cost the company \$1 million in salary and total benefits.

"We've got to find another \$100 million, so that could equate to 1,000 people. We hope it's not that many, but I have to tell you, it could be.

Rep. Norm Dicks, D-Wash.

Dicks said Hanford's cleanup budget looms as a large target for cuts by the Republican-dominated Congress.

Dom SanSotta, who has led DOE work force restructuring efforts in Richland, said it is hoped voluntary resignations and attrition will make up some of the reduction.

"If we get at this early in 1995, it will be the bulk," he said. "There may be a few situations throughout the year when we have pockets of untidy programs, like if a facility closes. But this one time should be it."

Although DOE is asking its contractors to cut staff, it is not.

DOE will have hired 158 new employees by the end of 1995.

"Throughout the DOE site, we have

Hanford board leader resigns

By JOHN STANG

Herald staff writer

PORTLAND — The chairwoman of the Hanford Advisory Board is resigning, saying many board members lack confidence in her.

Sue Gould, a former state senator, notified the board Friday morning she intends to quit. Gould sent a handwritten note to the board's meeting at a Portland hotel.

The note arrived as the board was scheduled to discuss an survey of its members on how well the board is functioning.

Seventeen of the 33 board members turned in evaluation forms in the survey.

Eleven of the forms criticized Gould and four praised her.

The critical forms contended Gould was not an active leader in meetings, did not have a good grasp of Hanford issues and did not represent the board's position well to government agencies and others.

Four forms complimented Gould on nurturing working relationships among the board members.

The 33-member Hanford Advisory Board has representatives from all over the Hanford political spectrum, ranging from Tri-City governments to activist groups.

Its purpose is to advise the U.S. Department of Energy and its two chief regulators — the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Washington state Department of Ecology — on Hanford issues.

In her resignation note, Gould wrote: "For any board to be effective, the chair must have the full support and confidence of the board. ... Clearly a large group of members feel that I don't fit the needs of the board. I feel it is in the best interest of the board that I leave this position."

Gould wrote she will soon submit her resignation to DOE, EPA and

Ecology. She plans to represent the board next week at a legislative hearing in Olympia.

The board approved a resolution thanking Gould for her work.

The board also appointed a committee to determine how to elect a new board chair from within the board.

When the board was created in early 1994, a neutral outsider was sought to lead it because of the many different political constituencies on the board.

Several members said the board has a good enough internal working relationship to be led by one of its members.

Tri-City labor representative Jim Watts disagreed, noting that the board chair would have to limit his or her own political position to lead and speak for the entire board.

The board appointed Marilyn Reeves, the public-at-large representative for Oregon, to sign board letters to the federal and state governments until a new chair is picked.

The search committee to pick a new leader consists of Watts; agriculture representative alternate Paula Mansfield; Kennewick representative Bob Noland; Gerald Pollet of Heart of America-Northwest, and Dick Belsey of Physicians for Social Responsibility.

Belsey noted the board dealt with the resignation and began hunting for a new leader in less than two hours, saying it could not have cooperated as well last March.

"That's tangible evidence that the board is learning to work together," Belsey said.

The internal survey forms also expressed a general theme that board discussions ramble and bog down, with focus being lost.

Some members said a new board chair needs to address those problems.

State official defends N Springs barrier plan

By JOHN STANG

Herald staff writer

PORTLAND — A plan to build a barrier between N Springs and the Columbia River went through plenty of public scrutiny and debate, a state official told the Hanford Advisory Board Friday.

However, Dan Silver, who supervises oversight of the Hanford cleanup for the Washington Department of Ecology, said a letter criticizing that proposal irritated him.

Silver said he welcomes public debate on the N Springs barrier plan.

But the tone of the letter disturbed him. This is what he said to Charles Kilbury, chairman of the Tri-City caucus on the Hanford Advisory Board: "I think your letter is all wet."

The letter, from the Tri-City-area members on the board, contended the regulators "manipulated" presentations on N Springs to guide the board toward a predetermined solution — the barrier.

"It is not fair to say the regulators manipulated anyone. That is simply factually not true," Silver said.

Meanwhile, Kilbury replied the Tri-City members "came to the conclusion the regulators already came to a conclusion (on N Springs during briefings to the board), and we were

brought along for the ride."

"We are concerned that a considerable amount of money is going into the barrier that may not be needed," Kilbury said.

The 33-member board represents groups and governments from all over the Hanford political spectrum. Its purpose is to advise Ecology, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy on cleanup issues.

N Springs are some cribs containing radioactive material near N Reactor and the Columbia River.

Ground water containing radioactive strontium 90 is oozing from the cribs to the river.

Silver said the regulators were originally leery about the barrier concept, until some independent scientists convinced them it would likely work.

Silver said the concept was debated and discussed publicly among the agencies and among groups represented on the advisory board.

"I think debate on N Springs is good. We welcome that," he said.

Eventually, the plan is for Hanford

to pump out the ground water and treat it.

The barrier is to stall the ground water flow until the pump-and-treat operation is set up.

But various factors indicate speedy action is necessary to stop the ground water flow, Silver said.

He noted the Hanford Advisory Board and previous Hanford advisory committees stressed "getting on with cleanup" and protecting the Columbia River as Hanford's top priorities.

He said the contamination is signif-

icant enough to warrant quick action at N Springs.

While the amount of contamination is not definitely nailed down, one reputable Hanford study estimated 10.2 to 12.6 curies of radioactive contamination was found in the ground water near the river in the past decade, Silver said.

That is about 1,000 times greater than government drinking water standards, he said.

A \$6.8 million contract to build the barrier was awarded several days ago.

Some non-Tri-City board members criticized the Tri-City group's letter, saying the Tri-Citians implied they represented a formal body of the board rather than an informal caucus.

Board member Thomas Engel, a University of Washington chemistry professor, said the letter led to "an us-against-them mentality."

Board member Mike Gainey of the Oregon Department of Energy said: "This letter undermines the cohesiveness of the board. I'm worried about that."

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Herald staff writer

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Westinghouse rating stays even

By **WANDA BRIGGS**

Herald staff writer

The Westinghouse Hanford Co. has earned an award fee of \$1.25 million and an overall rating of satisfactory from the Department of Energy.

The rating for the six months ending Sept. 30 was an overall grade of 82, which matches the firm's previous six-month evaluation and award fee.

That bonus is only 10 percent of the \$12.5 million Westinghouse could have earned with an unblemished record. The latest award is in addition to the company's annual fixed fee of \$6.25 million.

"We have demonstrated we can maintain a satisfactory level of performance," LaMar Trego, Westinghouse Hanford president, said Monday. "But satisfactory isn't good enough. We must continue striving for excellence in all that we do."

"We must be relentless. And we must be

willing to let go of every activity and task that does not directly contribute to our cleanup mission or enhance our safety performance," he added.

Trego was notified Monday of the rating by DOE Richland Manager John Wagoner, some two weeks ahead of schedule.

Westinghouse's 82 points out of 100 barely qualified for a bonus. Under a DOE formula, a rating of 80, while satisfactory, earns no award fee.

DOE's rating scale has five categories —

outstanding, good, satisfactory, marginal and unsatisfactory. If a contractor's numerical rating falls to 75 or below, the firm has to repay some of its basic fee.

Westinghouse has made substantial progress, especially in safety issues, during the last six months, but needs to pay additional attention to several areas, Wagoner wrote Trego.

"The most significant achievements were improved performance in executing work in accordance with programmatic baselines,

coupled with continued improvement in performance in the area of worker injury and illness frequency and severity rates," Wagoner said.

"The improving trends, if continued, should result in a higher award fee score in the next period," he added.

The score is a composite of ratings in four major categories. The evaluation focuses on

Please see **RATING**, Page A2 ►

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ur baking. — *Food/C1*



Chiefs chopped

Tri-Cities continues its dominance of Spokane this WHL season. **B1**

Herald

FRIGID

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Report pans DOE sites

By **WANDA BRIGGS**
Herald staff writer

Highly radioactive plutonium is being stored in conditions at Hanford and throughout the Department of Energy complex in ways that could endanger workers and potentially harm the public, according to an internal DOE report.

The report says nowhere is there a greater risk of plutonium exposure to workers and the public than at DOE's Rocky Flats site, 15 miles northwest of Denver.

But the report ranks Hanford's Plutonium Finishing Plant (PFP), which contains the majority of the site's stockpiled plutonium, as DOE's fifth most hazardous problem.

■ **IT'S YOUR CALL:** Do Hanford's plutonium storage problems scare you? **Page A2.**

■ **LEGACY:** The Cold War leaves a lingering chill in Russia's Arctic. **Page C11.**

A3

Thursday, Dec. 8, 1994 *Tri-City Herald*

Hanford hopes to help in Ukraine

By **WANDA BRIGGS**

Herald staff writer

Tri-City talent and technology may be part of a solution to clean up radioactive dust, debris and water at the Chernobyl nuclear plant in Ukraine.

Eight years after the world's worst nuclear plant accident, Chernobyl's soil remains fouled, its reactor core is entombed in a temporary and uncertain concrete coffin, and a nearby forest and river are tainted.

Work to decontaminate and dismantle the devastated reactor has never begun in earnest, a casualty of Ukraine's economic crisis and the international controversy over nuclear safety in the former Soviet Union.

After the No. 4 reactor at Chernobyl exploded in 1986, some 110,000 people were evacuated, about 55,000 of them from Pripyat, the closest village.

The challenge continues to be containment of pollution in the 30-kilometer zone around the reactors. Immediate problems include rehabilitation of the 1,300 square miles of mostly dead forests surrounding Chernobyl that are a fire threat, protecting the Pripjat River and its tributaries, which supply water to about 30 million people, isolating burial sites and putting radioactive wastes into permanent storage.

Ukrainians need technical help to finish the job, which continues to drain Ukraine's economic resources. About 14 percent of the country's national budget is for costs directly related to Chernobyl.

That's where Tri-Citians hope to help.

An eight-member team from Westinghouse Hanford Co., which has the lead role in overseeing the 40-year, \$60 billion to \$100 billion cleanup of Hanford, plans to help.

Hanford lab tests 1st waste water sample

By JOHN STANG

Herald staff writer

The first sample to go through a new Hanford lab was some water from the 300 Area.

That sample will be the baseline for numerous tests on waste water samples headed for the new Waste Sampling and Characterization Facility.

About 100 people attended the ribbon-cutting ceremony Thursday for the \$33 million, 36,000-square-foot lab located in the 200 Area.

The lab's purpose is to quickly analyze waste water samples to make sure pollutants are not being discharged; double-check the work outside labs are doing on the bulk of Hanford's

“Literally every possible technical and administrative problem you could imagine befell this project.”

—LaMar Trego,
Westinghouse Hanford Co. president

test samples; and house the nuclear spectroscopy lab, which checks air samples.

Much of the new laboratory's functions used to be conducted in the 222S laboratory 3 miles away.

But Hanford and its regulators wanted to

move low-level radioactive materials testing, nonradioactive sample testing and the air filter work away from the 222S building, where tests on high-level radioactive samples also are conducted.

The high-level radioactive samples posed contamination threats to the other samples.

“It was a milestone (in the Tri-Party Agreement) that was very difficult to achieve,” said Westinghouse Hanford Co. President LaMar Trego. Four different government teams reviewed the construction as it was in progress.

“Literally every possible technical and administrative problem you could imagine befell this project,” he said.

Trego praised the teamwork of the DOE,

Westinghouse and other contractors in successfully coping with the problems.

“It was an example of victory going to the persistent,” he said.

The lab's construction trouble included the heating and air conditioning vendor declaring bankruptcy during the project. Air conditioning is vital to the lab, which includes air locks and air flow controls.

Another headache occurred when a truck carrying one of 28 lab modules—essentially a lab room—went under a too-low bridge, hitting it.

The lab's original completion target was April. The project was actually finished on Nov. 30.

About 40 people are employed at the lab.



Basketball warm-up

Who's tops in the Big 9? Find out in our prep preview. B1

Chinook wins

The Tri-City Chinook topples the Shreveport Crawdads. — Sports/C1



Permanent reminders

Body branding is a hot, new and permanent way to make a statement. C8

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Clinton plan would drop DOE

By The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Clinton administration, hastily reworking its budget to account for Republican control of Congress, is considering trimming the Cabinet and ordering drastic cuts in hundreds of programs.

Already the proposals are prompting outcries from bureaucrats struggling to protect their agencies. The head of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms complained in a memo that proposed cuts would prevent

the apprehension of 5,000 violent criminals a year.

Three Cabinet agencies being considered for possible dismantling are the departments of Housing and Urban Development, Energy and Transportation, administration officials said Friday.

These officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said if the administration ends up putting only one agency on the block, it is likely to be HUD. Its functions would be eliminated or spun off to other agencies.

Officials stressed President Clinton, who kicked off the intensive review with a command to be bold, has not signed off on the proposals being developed and another White House meeting was scheduled for Monday.

If Clinton goes along with the package being developed, it would be the most dramatic signal yet he is moving to the center in response to the election losses Democrats suffered in November.

Facing Republican control of the House

and Senate next year, Clinton's Office of Management and Budget has been searching for ways to make the president's annual budget a vehicle to regain the initiative on cutting the costs of government and making it function better.

With Republicans already promising to slash government spending, the country is facing the unusual prospect both parties could attempt to outbid each other for the mantle of champion budget cutter.

Carol Cox Waite, president of the biparti-

san Committee for a Responsible Budget, which has urged deficit reduction for years, said she was encouraged politicians may have finally gotten the message from the voters.

“If politicians don't respond correctly, then I think the voters will be ready to change the folks who are making the decisions once again,” she said.

However, each Cabinet agency has its own

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Kaiser's rating fee falls \$225,000

By WANDA BRIGGS

Herald staff writer

ICF Kaiser Hanford Company's twice-yearly award fee was \$225,000 less than that for the previous six months because a continuing rash of safety incidents reduced the firm's work performance overall by 1.2 percent.

Kaiser earned \$656,250 for six months of work ending Sept. 30 and a grade of 83.5 points out of 100. That is 1.2 points less than the period ending March 31, when its award fee was \$881,250.

The latest appraisal was packed with praise, but sprinkled with shortcomings that W. C. Moffitt, executive vice president of Westinghouse Hanford Co., said caused the reduced grade.

"The most recent period is characterized by several significant and notable achievements as well as a number of significant and notable deficiencies," Moffitt wrote in a cover letter that went with the evaluation delivered late Monday to Kaiser executives.

"In the area of environmental, safety, and health, ICF (Kaiser's) performance improved but at a slower rate than desired. Westinghouse Hanford Company, however, is concerned about ICF Kaiser's rate of improvement toward achieving above-average safety performance. These concerns, together with recurring conduct-of-operations issues, have resulted in a one-point overall reduction in the summary score which would otherwise have been earned," Moffitt said.

The newest appraisal doesn't startle Robert Tiller, Kaiser's acting general manager since October.

"I'm not surprised by the deficiencies cited," Tiller said. ICF Kaiser's 3,000 Hanford employ-

ees "will work hard to improve."

Tiller will discuss the evaluation during an all-employee meeting Thursday in Kennewick.

During the six months of the assessment, Kaiser did "satisfactory" work for Westinghouse, with whom it has been a subcontractor since Jan. 1.

That 83.5 rating earned ICF Kaiser 17.5 percent of its possible \$3.7 million award fee.

On the plus side, the evaluation said, "ICF Kaiser's safety progress was dramatic. The total number of lost workdays dropped from 1,256 days in the first half of fiscal year 1994 to only 278 days in the second half of the year. This significant achievement demonstrates improved case management, supervision of subcontractors and managerial effort to improve safety awareness."

"Disappointedly, not all aspects of safety management enjoyed such impressive improvement," the report continued. Kaiser "fell far short of its goal for the lost workday incident rate and actually worsened its performance in the operations and engineering categories."

Kaiser's lost-workday rate continues to be more than double the DOE national average, the report said. "Construction workers, however, deserve recognition for improving their (lost workday incident) rate by 20 percent compared with the prior period and by improving their lost workday severity rate by 62 percent, indicating that excellent safety performance progress is achievable within (Kaiser)."

In addition, Westinghouse's evaluation continued, "Even though subcontractor safety is still far worse than DOE averages, (Kaiser's) subcontractor managers do deserve recogni-

tion by achieving a 44 percent improvement. ..."

However, Tiller was told, "of greatest concern is a continuing rash of safety incidents which suggest problems in considering the safety implications of work planning and supervision."

"While ICF management's post-event efforts were deemed to have been good and the company demonstrated a commendable eagerness to learn from these events, more effort is needed to prevent such potentially dangerous events."

Other items in the report were:

■ In the area of engineering and construction, Kaiser's performance continues to be "within striking distance of achieving a 'good' score, as opposed to satisfactory. Significant savings were noted in several projects, including waste receiving and processing, basin maintenance upgrades, radioactive mixed and waste land disposal facility."

■ "One project represents a significant problem." Kaiser's failure to maintain schedule on the 242A Evaporator/PUREX condensate treatment "will result in one major and two interim (Tri-Party Agreement) milestones to be missed. Kaiser's 'good efforts ... to mitigate the schedule slippage demonstrated the advantage of integrating the two companies.'"

■ In the area of operations, Kaiser's performance rated a score of 89, a grade within the "good" category. There were significant achievements that brought programs in ahead of schedule and below cost.

■ Kaiser scored another "good" with 86 points in the area of management and other support. Again, Kaiser's cost-cutting efforts resulted in dollar savings.

12-13-94

Leak in bag halts work on radioactive sludge

By The Herald staff

Work now under way to stabilize radioactive sludge at Hanford's Plutonium Finishing Plant halted temporarily Wednesday after two workers were exposed when a plastic bag containing plutonium scraps leaked.

The Department of Energy is investigating that accident.

The two nuclear operators in the Plutonium Finishing Plant were cleaning out glove boxes at the defunct PFP plant when a ruptured bag containing plutonium released some particles, said DOE spokesman Keith Taylor.

The two employees who had handled the plutonium had positive nasal smears, indicating exposure to radiation. The Hanford Environmental Health Foundation gave the two workers shots of DTPA, which flushes radioactive material from the body through the urine and feces, Taylor said.

Three other employees in the

room at the time of the accident received clean bills of health, Taylor said.

All five employees were wearing protective clothing.

Cleanup at the finishing plant has been temporarily suspended, said project director Eric Vogt.

The incident posed no danger to the public, Vogt said.

PFP houses a large inventory of leftover radioactive and chemical materials.

The sludge stabilization process, which began in November, takes place inside two small furnaces in a PFP glovebox.

Moist, chemically reactive plutonium scrap is heated to 1,000 degrees Celsius, converting it into a stable powder form.

The material can then be packaged for long-term safe storage in PFP's shielded vault.

The accident happened when workers were removing the plutonium scraps from one glovebox to another for the heat treatment.

DOE

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constituency that is certain to bring heavy pressure on Congress.

Transportation officials protested their agency covers too many vital regulatory functions, especially dealing with air safety, to be eliminated. Energy officials say their biggest function, managing the government's nuclear weapons program, would have to be continued and there has been longstanding reluctance to give that job to the Pentagon.

Officials said HUD Secretary Henry Cisneros this week offered the White House a set of counterproposals that would include steep cuts in certain housing programs but would save HUD as a separate Cabinet agency.

They said HUD housing subsidies for 5.5 million Americans probably would not be affected by the administration's program but nearly a

dozen other HUD programs had been targeted.

These programs include emergency shelter programs, loans for low-income citizens and support for construction of new housing for the elderly and disabled.

If HUD is eliminated, the White House is considering making the Federal Housing Administration, which guarantees mortgages, a quasi-independent agency and setting up a Public Housing Corporation to sell off some public housing to private industry.

The White House, which has pushed a program to "reinvent government" that has reduced the federal bureaucracy by 270,000 jobs, believes those efforts have gone virtually unnoticed by voters and something bolder must be done.

"The American people clearly remain unhappy with how the federal government works. We want to build on our initial successes in reinventing government and strike out in bolder ways," said Lawrence J. Haas, OMB associate director for communications.

O'Leary plans cuts to save DOE

By LES BLUMENTHAL

Herald Washington, D.C., bureau

WASHINGTON — The Clinton administration apparently has backed away from suggestions to eliminate the Department of Energy, but Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary is preparing to announce a massive restructuring.

As the threat from the administration eased, however, incoming House Speaker Newt Gingrich listed the Energy Department and Housing and Urban Development as most vulnerable to Republican efforts to streamline government and cut the deficit.

CUTS: President Clinton pressed agency heads Tuesday to carve up their budgets or eliminate programs to pay for his planned middle-class tax cut. **Page C13.**

DOE officials have been waiting anxiously for President Clinton's speech Thursday before they would be willing to confirm the department has been spared. But White House sources said while there definitely were plans to reorganize and restructure the federal government, no departments would be dismantled.

"DOE will not be eliminated," one White House source said. "There was never any



Clinton

serious plan to eliminate DOE, HUD or Transportation."

Others, however, said some in the White House were calling for a broad restructuring and budget cutting plan to counter the Republicans.

In his Oval Office address Thursday, Clinton is expected to outline his plans for the next two years, including a possible middle-class tax break.

To pay for such a tax credit, Clinton has

been reviewing \$50 billion in spending cuts, including reductions in Medicare and the possible dismantling of federal agencies and programs.

While the president asked his staff for "bold suggestions" that could dramatically change federal departments and agencies, Lawrence J. Haas, associate director for communications at the Office of Management and the Budget, said the key was to provide better service.

Over the weekend, Clinton, Vice President Gore, senior presidential adviser George Stephanopoulos, White House Chief of Staff Leon Panetta and White House budget office

director Alice Rivlin met to discuss spending cuts, sources said.

Stephanopoulos reportedly backed elimination of the Energy Department, while Gore and Panetta lined up against it.

O'Leary, meanwhile, launched her counteroffensive and "orchestrated a lobbying campaign" designed to pressure the White House to spare the department. Among those enlisted were representatives of the oil and gas industries and other traditional DOE interest groups.

"They were at their battle stations all weekend," one source close to the

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Plane crash kills 15 in N.C.

By The Associated Press

MORRISVILLE, N.C. — An American Eagle commuter plane carrying 20 people crashed and split in two Tuesday about four miles from Raleigh-Durham International Airport. Fifteen people were killed.

Flight 3379 was en route from Greensboro to Raleigh-Durham, a flight of 70 miles, when it went down in a rugged, wooded area about 6:40 p.m. It was foggy and a steady drizzle was falling at the time.

Seven people were taken to hospitals, but two died a short time later. Of the five survivors, at least two were suffering extensive trauma, a hospital official said.

It was the second crash of an American Eagle plane in less than two months, but it did not involve one of the ATR planes the airline recently grounded amid concerns over the planes' safety in icy conditions.



Hanford faces more cuts

By WANDA BRIGGS
Herald staff writer

Hanford faces additional budget cuts in the range of \$150 million to \$300 million for the 1996 fiscal year that begins Oct. 1, 1995.

Those cuts would be on top of \$300 million in cuts already anticipated.

The further cuts could mean the loss of another 1,500 to 3,000 jobs at Hanford beginning next fall. That would come on top of 1,000 jobs lost this year through an early

retirement program and 1,000 more reductions scheduled by early spring from voluntary resignations and layoffs.

Under this scenario, Hanford's current cleanup budget of \$1.6 billion could drop to about \$1 billion next year. And Hanford's current work force of 18,700 could go as low as 13,700.

More precise numbers aren't available because the lengthy federal budget process is just beginning.

However, here's what's believed to be driving the Hanford budget:

INSIDE:

■ **KAISER:** ICF Kaiser Hanford's 3,000 employees get a pep talk tinged with caution about the year ahead. **Page A3.**

This fiscal year, Hanford has a budget of \$2 billion. Of that, \$1.6 billion — or 25 percent of the Department of Energy's entire cleanup pot — will be spent at Hanford.

DOE in Washington, D.C., reportedly has

asked for \$8.2 billion in total cleanup funds for fiscal 1996, including \$1.62 billion for Hanford. That request was reviewed by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and "passed back" last week slashed by 20 percent. For Hanford, that means \$1.32 billion, said one source who has seen the documents but asked not to be identified.

Driving the additional \$150 million to \$300 million in cuts is the scramble by DOE to survive as President Clinton looks at ways to cut the federal deficit by \$700 billion. One of the considerations has been abolishing

DOE or, short of that, cutting billions of dollars from the agency.

To save her agency, Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary suggested \$22 billion in cuts over five years, with a 25 percent reduction in cleanup funding for former weapons production sites, including Hanford.

John Wagoner, DOE's Hanford manager, said Hanford faces additional cuts, but said that final number probably won't be known until February.

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Clinton lays out tax-cut plans, contract

By JOHN STANG
and WANDA BRIGGS
Herald staff writers

The agreement governing Hanford's cleanup will have to be renegotiated if the Department of Energy and Congress take too big a bite out of the 1996 federal budget.

DOE needs at least \$1.6 billion a year until the next century to meet its Hanford cleanup obligations, DOE Hanford Manager John Wagoner said Thursday.

That probably won't happen.

To keep DOE intact, Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary has suggested cutting \$22 billion from her department over five years, including a 25 percent reduction in money for cleaning former nuclear weapons production sites like Hanford.

If that happens, DOE's pact with Washington's Department of Ecology and the federal Environmental Protection Agency — the Tri-Party

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Associated Press

adjusts the volume on a television set in Alpharette, Ga., as President Clinton speaks to the nation Thursday.

with incomes up to \$60,000 a year.

Families earning between \$60,000 and \$75,000 a year could claim a reduced child credit. Those earning over \$75,000 would not get any credit.

The president's plan also would

allow middle-income parents to deduct up to \$10,000 a year in tuition for college or other post-high school education. The deduction would begin to phase out at incomes of \$100,000 a year and would be eliminated at incomes of \$120,000.

And it would allow individuals with household incomes under \$100,000 to take tax deductions of up to \$2,000 apiece for money put into individual retirement account funds. The law would be changed to allow

Please see **CLINTON**, Page A2 ▶

Future of DOE unclear

By LES BLUMENTHAL
Herald Washington, D.C., bureau

WASHINGTON — The Department of Energy was clearly on the chopping block Thursday as President Clinton outlined his plans to pay for a middle-class tax cut.

But exactly how deep the DOE will be cut remained unclear.

The White House has rejected proposals to eliminate the Energy Department outright. But administration officials said the president's proposal would entail major restructuring at DOE, the Department of Transportation, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the General Services Administration and the Office of Personnel and Management.

All told, the administration hopes to save \$24 billion over the next five years by consolidating and eliminating some programs, privatizing others and tightening management at the five agencies.

The administration offered few specifics, though officials indicated the plan would decimate HUD and result in deep cuts at the others. During Clinton's 15-minute speech Thursday night, he briefly mentioned DOE, saying only it could be cut by "billions of dollars."

Earlier this week, Secretary of Energy Hazel O'Leary outlined for the White House a package of \$22 billion in cuts at DOE alone.

The cuts could have resulted in a \$4 billion reduction in the budget for

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Hanford

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Nonetheless, he's preparing for additional reductions that could range from a 10 percent cut of about \$150 million to a 20 percent cut of \$300 million.

"The challenge here is how to manage these changes," Wagoner said during an interview Thursday.

One attempt will be to expedite commercialization of work now being done at Hanford so workers who lose jobs because of federal budget cuts can find work with private firms doing business at Hanford.

An example he cited is DOE's intent to hire a private firm to help stabilize 2,300 tons of spent nuclear fuel now stored 200 feet from the Columbia River in the K Basins.

"We also see opportunities for commercialization in the area of technology and waste treatment," he said.

ernment is trying to find ways to streamline. Our program is the biggest single environmental cleanup project in DOE's budget, and it makes a big target," he said.

DOE's overall budget is \$18 billion, and of that amount one-third — or \$6.5 billion — is spent for cleanup.

"I, too, have heard speculation that the current (Hanford) cleanup budget could go to \$1.3 billion in fiscal 1996," he said. "It's all very interesting to speculate, but right now, we just don't know."

"What I do know is that my job here is to figure out how to make cleanup cost as little as possible while at the same time accomplishing as much as possible," he said.

Wagoner said DOE and its contractors at Hanford "have to get the costs as low as we can, so that whatever may happen with the budget we can be sure that we can weather the cuts."

John Lindsay, president of the Tri-City Industrial Development Council, fears the pending financial storm could jeopardize Tri-City economic

"We as an organization saw a limited window of opportunity before downsizing. It's obvious that downsizing is occurring now."

On other issues, Wagoner said:

■ He read with interest Sunday's responses in the Tri-City Herald from workers about how to improve working conditions at Hanford. "Their concern is my concern."

"I know there are people who have lost confidence. ... I want to pick up on the groundswell the Herald started. ... I want to encourage workers to come forward to us with their ideas. It's people who do the work who know how to do it best."

■ He understands concerns expressed by many of those writers who spoke of frustrations, inefficiencies, unnecessary layers of management and smothering regulations from DOE, the Washington state Department of Ecology and federal Environmental Protection Agency.

"We understand those concerns. ... DOE has streamlined as an organization and so have our contractors. Within DOE we reduced a whole

employees to one for every 11 workers. He said the goal is to have one DOE supervisor for every 14 employees, and Westinghouse and its partners are pursuing the same goal.

■ He agrees with Hanford workers that multiple oversight sometimes delays cleanup. He said DOE regulations are being examined to see what to cut.

■ He is satisfied with progress between Bechtel and unions in negotiating a labor contract for environmental cleanup work.

■ A negotiated contract extension between DOE and Westinghouse is about to be signed. "And when it is, we will have a much better contractual structure in place."

That's all well and good, said labor leader Jim Watts. "But only if DOE works with the community to grow non-Hanford jobs."

"We've had so many ups and downs, ... and if we don't all work together, the effects of these latest proposed cuts could be devastating for the Tri-Cities," Watts said.

Watts and other community lead-

DOE

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cleaning Hanford and other DOE sites and savings of \$12 billion by selling the Bonneville Power Administration and other federal power marketing agencies.

Exactly what would be cut and by how much remains uncertain.

Administration officials were to present more details during briefings today. Vice President Al Gore also is scheduled to detail spending cuts Monday.

O'Leary abruptly canceled without explanation a scheduled meeting Friday of all DOE employees that she was to address by video link from Russia, where she is visiting.

The Clinton administration has not been the only one with its eyes on DOE. Congressional Republicans are looking at possible sharp reductions in funding for cleanup and

other DOE programs.

DOE's cleanup program has been one of the fastest growing in the federal government over the past four or five years, with spending of \$6 billion, including \$1.6 billion at Hanford alone.

Even Rep. Norm Dicks, D-Ore., a staunch defender of Hanford's cleanup program, said cuts are inevitable. "I assume it's a fact of life," Dicks said.

The department and its programs have become a part of an all-out bidding war as the House and Republicans try to determine who can be the toughest in the budget and who can pay the largest middle-class tax breaks.

Hanford, however, does have powerful allies, particularly in the Senate. As chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, Mark Hatfield, R-Oregon, will have a large say in DOE funding levels.

Sen. Slade Gorton, R-Wash., a member of the Senate Budget Committee, will be Hanford's prime defender against his Republican colleagues.

Clinton cuts would hit Hanford

By LES BLUMENTHAL
and WANDA BRIGGS
Herald staff writers

WASHINGTON — The Clinton administration will cut funding for environmental cleanup at Department of Energy nuclear sites by \$4.4 billion over the next five years in a move a top DOE official said means certain layoffs at Hanford.

Site-by-site funding and employment reduction figures weren't available Monday as the overall number was settled on over the weekend and discussions with field managers have just begun, said Thomas Grumbly, assistant secretary for environmental restoration and waste management.

INSIDE:

■ **WASHINGTON:** Gov. Lowry unveils state budget proposal. **Page A8.**

■ **WSU Tri-Cities:** Lowry's plan doesn't include funding for a consolidated Hanford library. **Page A8.**

When asked specifically about Hanford, Grumbly said, "You will see some further employment reductions in addition to those already announced."

The loss of 2,000 jobs at Hanford by early 1995 already has been announced. Of that total, 1,000 will be gone by the end of this year, mostly through an early retirement program. About 350 workers

are expected to take a voluntary resignation program when it is offered, and another 650 layoffs are likely by the first quarter next year.

Although not formally announced by DOE, Hanford could face additional budget cuts in the range of \$150 million to \$300 million for the 1996 fiscal year that begins Oct. 1, 1995, as part of DOE's latest belt-tightening move.

Those cuts would be on top of \$300 million in cuts already anticipated.

The further cuts could mean the loss of another 1,500 to 3,000 jobs at Hanford beginning next fall — depending on how deep DOE cuts to satisfy President Clinton's new austerity program.

And no matter what DOE or Clinton do, the new

Please see **HANFORD**, Page A2 ▶

BPA sale called off

By LES BLUMENTHAL
Herald Washington, D.C., bureau

WASHINGTON — The Clinton administration, under pressure from Northwest Democrats, shelved a proposal Monday to sell the Bonneville Power Administration.

But the federal power marketing

agency could still face a threat from congressional Republicans.

Vice President Al Gore, who talked with Rep. Norm Dicks, D-Wash., over the weekend, announced the decision at a White House briefing.

Dicks led the Democratic lobbying effort and said Gore and other

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Richland woman keeps brother's Christmas spirit



ALE

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example of what she had in mind.

"I've given a clear personal preference," she said of her support for turning the reserve over to the Yakamas. "It was inappropriate, but I've done it."

An official decision from the department is pending. Ultimately, Congress is expected to make the final decision.

The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation and the Nez Perce Tribe support the Yakamas assuming control. The Benton County commissioners prefer the BLM assume control.

Battelle-Northwest — which manages the area — is neutral on the issue.

The appropriate BLM and Yakama officials could not be reached for comment Wednesday.

Richard "Doc" Hastings, the Republican congressman-elect for the Fourth District, said he had not studied the ALE issue in detail and is undecided.

He said he is "not inclined" yet to endorse the Yakama proposal.

Hastings said he heard discussions of BLM selling some of its land in general.

"I think that is a positive action," he said. "But I can't tell you how that relates to where we are now" on the ALE issue.

BLM earlier said it would keep the ALE as a nature preserve if it is given control of that area.

O'Leary also endorsed designating the Hanford Reach of the Columbia River as a wild-and-scenic river.

That is the preferred option in the Department of Interior's Environmental Impact Statement on the Hanford Reach.

Dan Reicher, O'Leary's deputy chief of staff, said the secretary's endorsement was the first from a high-ranking department official, although such an endorsement has been made to the Interior Department on a lower staff level.

O'Leary offered no indication of what she thought might happen with Wahluke Slope, which the Interior Department would like to see turned into a federal wildlife refuge and agricultural interests would like to see, in part, used for farming. The Wahluke Slope, part of the Hanford reserve, covers 134 square miles north of the Columbia River.

Again, that decision ultimately rests with Congress. Hastings earlier

voiced support for the Wahluke 2000 Plan, which would open part of the Wahluke Slope to farming.

O'Leary has met with Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt to discuss Hanford, Reicher said.

"It was a fairly general discussion and they agreed to work together," he said.

O'Leary said her department is studying how much of the land and what buildings within DOE might be turned over to other government agencies or the private sector.

In a memo to field managers, O'Leary said the department's stewardship of its lands will be based on the "principles of ecosystem management and sustainable development. We will integrate mission, economic, ecologic, social and cultural factors in a comprehensive plan for each site that will guide land and facility use decisions."

O'Leary said each plan will consider the site's "larger regional context" and will be developed with public participation.

O'Leary said she would do away with the annual site development plans that were done annually at a total cost of \$18 million; instead, new comprehensive site plans will be developed and updated every five years.

Hanford

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Republican-dominated Congress may cut even more.

Overall, Grumbly said he expects the work force of 51,000 contractor employees involved in environmental restoration and waste management could be cut 20 percent to 25 percent during the current fiscal year and the fiscal year starting Oct. 1.

"We will take as much of the pain in terms of layoffs during fiscal 1995 as possible," Grumbly said.

He said under current budget projections, DOE's environmental cleanup programs would have received about \$35 billion over the next five years. Now, it will be less than \$31 billion.

Grumbly also said the department is exploring the possibility of giving states a far greater role in determining how cleanup money is spent at individual sites. Such a move could help halt the constant infighting over cleanup agreements such as the Tri-Party Agreement at Hanford.

Under the proposal, once the money was allocated by Congress, the states would be given an expanded voice in determining how the money was actually spent.

"We would use the states to help determine how to spend it at the sites," Grumbly said. "It would put it on the table closer to the point of attack."

The proposal would require congressional approval, but Grumbly said it seemed to fit in with the current drive to give states more freedom in determining how federal funds are spent.

"We believe it is a serious question that needs to be considered," Grumbly said. "We need to find a way to share power with them."

The reductions in the environmental cleanup budget were just part of the \$10.6 billion in cuts the Clinton administration has ordered for DOE over five years.

Another top DOE official did not rule out the possibility one of the department's national laboratories might have to be closed.

"A decision has not been made," said Bill White, DOE deputy secretary, adding the department wants to see the recommendations from the Galvin Commission studying the future of the laboratories before making a final decision.

"Those laboratories are valuable national assets," White said. "But we want to make sure they are run in such a way that they respond not only to the real needs of DOE, but also to the whole community of users."

Galvin Commission members earlier this year reviewed operations of Battelle-Northwest, which operates the Pacific Northwest Laboratory at Hanford for DOE. At that time, Battelle's operation here was highly praised.

At a press briefing, White said the department would achieve \$10.6 billion in savings by cutting applied research programs by \$1.2 billion, environmental management by \$4.4 billion, selling or privatizing the Naval Petroleum Reserve in California for \$1.6 billion and selling off about \$400 million worth of highly enriched uranium.

An additional \$3 billion in savings would be achieved by Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary's strategic alignment program, unspecified indirect cost reductions and facility transition.

"The numbers may change but not the bottom line," White said.

The majority of DOE's budget is paid to its contractors. "Our contractors will be expected to run their business like in a competitive market rather than contracting with the government with a semientitlement

mentality," White said.

White was filling in for O'Leary, who was headed home after a previously scheduled trip to Russia. O'Leary will hold a teleconference with all DOE employees today to discuss her realignment proposal.

DOE is taking the biggest hit among the five federal departments and agencies targeted by the White House for \$24 billion in savings designed to help pay for middle-class tax breaks.

O'Leary had outlined \$22 billion worth of possible cuts at the Department of Energy in an effort to turn back an attempt by some senior administration officials to eliminate DOE outright.

Grumbly said the cost of the environmental programs represent about 40 percent of DOE's total budget and will absorb about 40 percent of the cuts.

Grumbly said he expects to reduce employment levels selectively rather than across the board, and added contractors will also have to reduce costs. He said in some cases the cleanup costs are running 30 percent to 40 percent above similar cleanups in the private sector.

His office also will make a concerted effort to re-examine its programs and start dealing with the riskiest cleanup problems first. Congress has been pushing hard to overhaul the cleanup program and base priorities on projects that present the greatest risk to the public and the environment.

At Hanford, the greatest risk continues to be 177 underground tanks that contain 61 million of gallons of radioactive liquids and sludge, decaying spent nuclear fuel stored in the K Basins, followed by final decontamination and shutdown of the PUREX and Plutonium Finishing Plant.

"We are trying to deal with all inefficiencies and drive out the stuff that doesn't make good sense," White said.

Tank leak's severity increased

By the Herald staff

A one-gallon leak of chromium-laced water was upgraded in status to an "unusual occurrence" Monday at the Hanford tank farms.

The leak occurred Dec. 12 in a connector line during a flushing operation at Tank C-110, according to a Westinghouse press release.

The wastes in this single-shell tank — assumed to be leaking — are being pumped into a double-shell tank.

The water spill was cleaned up within 12 hours with no airborne release of contamination, according to Westinghouse.

Initial tests on the spill show the amount of chromium to be within nonhazardous levels. The spill was classified as an "off-normal" event — the least serious of three reporting categories for incidents.

But a backup sample was tested Friday. That test showed the chromium concentration was 27.6 milligrams per liter, compared with the 5-milligram level to be designated a hazardous waste.

That led to the spill being upgraded Monday to an "unusual occurrence" — the middle of the three reporting categories.

12-21-94

O'Leary wants to give land to tribe

By LES BLUMENTHAL and JOHN STANG

Herald staff writers

WASHINGTON — Secretary of Energy Hazel O'Leary said Wednesday she wants the 120-square-mile Fitzner-Eberhardt Arid Lands Ecology Reserve on Hanford to be turned over to the Yakama Indians.

"My personal preference is that rather than turning it over to another government agency, we should turn it over to real, live people," O'Leary said.

The Yakama Indian Nation and the federal Bureau of Land Management have submitted proposals to manage the reserve along the west side of Hanford.

The reserve originally was established to protect an almost pristine area of shrub-steppe land and its sensitive species. The area also has religious significance for area Indian tribes.

On Wednesday, O'Leary announced a new U.S. Department of Energy land-use policy designed to turn over some of the areas to the public and, at a minimum, allow for greater public participation in the process.

O'Leary said she wanted to take into account, more than in the past, the desires of people living near DOE sites, and the ALE reserve was an

■ IT'S YOUR CALL: Do you favor returning the ALE to the Yakamas? Page A2.

Please see ALE, Page A2.

WSU branch p Hanford library

By JOHN STANG
Herald staff writer

Washington State University will try to convince the Legislature to restore money for a consolidated Hanford library at its Tri-City campus.

"This is the major (legislative) agenda item for WSU Tri-Cities," said campus Dean James Cochran.

Plummeting timber revenues caused Gov. Mike Lowry to drop funding for the \$18 million Consolidated Information Center from his proposed 1995-97 state construction budget.

Income from state timberlands is earmarked for school construction. But losing some of that revenue prompted Lowry to look elsewhere to shore up elementary and secondary school construction.

And the consolidated library was one of those sources.

If the Legislature provides the

money, bids would be sought this summer, Cochran said. It is expected to take 20 months to construct the 70,000-square-foot complex to the north of the present WSU Tri-Cities buildings.

In 1993, the state allocated \$1.4 million for the project. The design work is completed.

WSU is seeking slightly more than \$9 million from the state in order to obtain \$7.5 million in federal matching money.

The federal money would be spread across 20 years, Cochran said. He said the state's appropriation

also could be spread across many years.

The purpose of the proposed center is to merge the Hanford technical library and WSU Tri-Cities' library.

The Hanford technical library — operated by Battelle-Northwest in Hanford's 300 Area — contains about 800,000 technical reports and it has subscriptions to about 1,000 sciences journals.

Cochran said the proposed center would be a major education and retraining center as the Hanford work force tries to adjust to changes at the reservation.

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High-risk cleanup comes first

O'Leary says DOE cuts must spark smarter work on sites

By WANDA BRIGGS

Herald staff writer

Nearly half the Department of Energy's proposed spending cuts depend on Congress and state governments authorizing DOE to spend money first on weapons sites where health and safety risks are worse.

Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary said DOE will have to renegotiate cleanup agreements with several states and will need congressional approval if it is to reduce cleanup costs by \$4.4 billion during the next five years.

Congress will be asked to appropriate cleanup money based on the



O'Leary

most pressing needs, even selecting the top priorities.

However, it may not be necessary to renegotiate the Tri-Party Agreement that governs Hanford cleanup because that 1989 pact recently was renegotiated, she said.

O'Leary offered few specifics about any DOE sites.

Please see DOE, Page A2

Battelle to drop 500 employees

By WANDA BRIGGS

Herald staff writer

Battelle-Northwest expects to reduce its work force at Hanford by a minimum of 500 early in 1995 to compensate for anticipated Department of Energy budget cuts.

The job losses will come from an as yet undefined blend of early retirements, voluntary resignations and layoffs, according to William "Bill" Madia, who took over Aug. 1 as Battelle director.

The Battelle news is the latest in a series of jolts that have rocked Tri-Citians and Hanford workers since



Madia

1,500 employees whose salaries are tied directly or indirectly to Hanford environmental programs. Those programs could face some \$600 million

ton, D.C., last week about President Clinton's plans for budget cuts to pay for a middle class tax cut.

Battelle-Northwest, which operates the Pacific Northwest Laboratory for DOE, has



Associated Press

Heavy rains caused the river to flood.

strange

the Chehalis River in Lewis, Grays Harbor counties. The Olympia, crested Tuesday night at 1 foot above flood stage this

high water from rain, and high things interesting," said Mark esman for the state Emergency Office.

vice forecasters predicted a dry 48 hours after heavy rains that In the 48 hours up to midmorning nches fell in Aberdeen, 4.39 inches in Seattle.

ish crested just before dawn at was expected to remain above the tage for another day, said Dave ologist with weather service.

a sinkhole caused by too much the surface of a 100-foot section of on's coastal highway, by 30 inches, officials said Tuesday.

aturated ground and the ground starting to slip," said Dave Davis, r the Oregon Department of

New plant, bugs sprout at

By JOHN STANG

Herald staff writer

Bladder pod plants usually bloom in May. So botanists Kate Beck and Florence Caplow were puzzled when some bladder pods bloomed in July and August near Hanford's White Bluffs area.

"We became suspicious and did some research on them," Beck said.

The Bellingham-based botanists sent samples to a Harvard University expert.

And in November, the answer came back: They had discovered a new plant species.

"We were excited. It's a once in a lifetime opportunity to discover something new and unique," Beck said. "It's been quite a few years since a brand-new species has been found in Washington."

Actually, the plant isn't the only discovery.

Three new insect species also were discovered at Hanford's Fitzner-Eberhardt Arid Lands Ecology Reserve (ALE) this year.

Scientists doing the studies said more new species might surface.

None of the four discovered species has been named.



Photo courtesy of the Nature Conservancy

This is the new, yet unnamed plant discovered on Hanford's North Slope. It is in the genus *Lesquerella*, or bladder pod.

The U.S. Department of Energy and the Nature Conservancy announced the discoveries this week.

The Nature Conservancy just finished the first

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Bechtel cashes in on bonus DOE performance fee earns firm \$2.4 million

By WANDA BRIGGS

Herald staff writer

Bechtel Hanford Inc. has earned a performance fee of \$2.4 million for the three-month period of July 1 through Sept. 30 in its first-ever evaluation by the Department of Energy.

That amount represents 88 percent of the \$2.7 million performance fee pool available to Bechtel during the first three months the firm was Hanford's Environmental Restoration and Management Contractor (ERMC).

"In most areas (Bechtel's) performance was outstanding," John Wagoner, DOE's Richland operations manager wrote to Bechtel Hanford President Ed Keen.

Bechtel assumed responsibilities for the ERMC work on July 1, 1994, after completing a four-month transition. There was no performance fee for the transition period.

The five-year, \$800 million Bechtel contract is a performance-based fee management contract. That means DOE sets objectives and Bechtel is judged on how well it meets them.

It is unlike an award fee management and operations type contract now held by Westinghouse Hanford Co. — and historically used at Hanford. In that kind of contract, Westinghouse, for example, earns an award fee only if it receives at least a score of 80 points out of 100 based on a complex formula in which work is judged from poor to excellent.

Bechtel is subject to a different fee structure than other Hanford contractors. But like Westinghouse, Bechtel's future appraisals will occur every six months.

The performance fee is in addition to the base fee of \$1,169,082 Bechtel received for its first three months.

Wagoner had high praise for Bechtel's work but tempered his appraisal by mentioning areas that need improvement.

"Bechtel exhibited great strengths in meeting

Please see **BECHTEL**, Page A2▶

Kennewick home fire leaves



Mindy Hughes sobs as she walks through the charred remains of her home. Kelly Williamson, a Kennewick firefighter, helps investigate the blaze until they arrived at a relative's house in S house caught fire. They have no insurance. Two cats were ki

Hanford

Continued from Page A1

plant could end up a candidate to be listed for protection under the federal Endangered Species Act.

Meanwhile, researchers headed by entomologist Richard Zack of Washington State University discovered three new insect species.

The three species appear to be related, and are in the leafhopper group, which feeds on plant juices.

Zack said the new insects look like cicadas but are one-tenth to one-fifteenth of an inch long.

"It's not unusual to find new species of insects, especially in other parts of the world which are not well studied," Zack said.

"In Washington, it is relatively unusual to find a new species. Our insects here are somewhat well-studied," he said.

Zack said many leafhopper insects are linked to specific plants, and many plants on the ALE are not found in great numbers elsewhere.

"Since a lot of these plants (on the ALE) have never been studied, we'll find a lot the insects there have never been studied. ... We expect to find several to many new species of insects," Zack said.

Zack said sorting through col-

lected insects, which often look much alike, is slow, tedious. Many specimens are shipped to side experts who can find the distinctions between species.

A leafhopper expert in C notified Zack that the ALE sa contained three previously unl species.

Zack said more study is n before determining if protect tus should be sought und Endangered Species Act.

Beck and Zack noted that H, — especially the ALE — is th pristine area of shrub-step left in the Northwest. And it that most closely resembles v

No leaks in 193 Ha

By WILL SWARTS

Herald staff writer

Drums of radioactive waste stored in underground trenches at Hanford are in more danger from what's outside than from what's inside, a Westinghouse official said Thursday.

Westinghouse Hanford Co. completed the first part of a three-year pilot project this summer to inspect 193 of the 38,000 drums, which hold a total of perhaps a half-ton of plutonium among byproducts of Hanford's defense production years.

Scientists found no leakage, said Randal Roberts, a project manager

for solid wastes, even though some of the drums have held their radioactive contents for as long as 24 years.

The 55-gallon drums, holding mostly tools, building materials, rags, soil and clothing contaminated with traces of plutonium, were buried from 1970 to 1988 in trenches meant to serve as temporary storage.

Now each drum must be inspected with ultrasonic equipment to test its thickness and assure it is in good condition before its contents can be reprocessed and stored in permanent disposal sites.

"These drums were supposed to be there for 20 years and those 20 years are up," Roberts said at a Thursday

Inspection pr

Westinghouse news conference.

While the soil around the trench in the 200 Area showed no significant radioactivity, several of the drums especially those stored closest to plastic covering over each b showed signs of decay.

Roberts said the wear on the drums came from the outside, as Westinghouse scientists expected.

"We have not seen any corrosion from the inside out," he said.

While most of the drums were in acceptable condition, one had a hole that required patching and five

Gingrich kills book advance

By The New York Times News Service

MARIETTA, Ga. — Responding to criticism from Republicans and Democrats the incoming House

Westinghouse removed 170 from the trenches and inspected 170 at the site. The 23 drums are now at the Transuranic Storage and Assay Facility, where they are being X-rayed and their contents checked against storage records.

Large-scale drum cleanup is set for



gains and harm his party's ambitious legislative agenda.

"We're about His agent, Lynn Chu of Writers' project will continue for the next two summers.

"The more retrieval we can do before (the drums) get holes in them, the cheaper it's going to be," he said. "It's... the laws of nature driving us."

Battelle to celebrate 30 years at Hanford today

By WANDA BRIGGS

Herald staff writer

Battelle's not getting older. It's getting better.

That's what Battelle-Northwest Director William "Bill" Madia is expected to tell employees today as the research and development firm marks its 30th anniversary in the Tri-Cities as operator of the Department of Energy's Pacific Northwest Laboratory.

It was on this day in 1965 that the Richland division of Ohio-based Battelle Memorial Institute assumed management of the federal government's Hanford laboratories — later renamed the Pacific Northwest Laboratory.

Battelle employment today is 4,661 —

about double the number when the firm began operating in the Tri-Cities. Layoffs and retirements are expected to drop that total by about 500 early this year to compensate for anticipated Department of Energy budget cuts.

And, while Battelle's work force has grown over three decades, so, too, has its business volume, increasing from \$20 million to \$570 million annually.

PNL's original mission was focused on nuclear technology and the environmental and health effects of radiation. Over the years, its mission diversified and now the laboratory does research in nearly every field of basic science to solve environmental, energy, health and national security problems. The laboratory was named one of 10

national, multiprogram laboratories in the mid-1980s to reflect its diversified mission.

Highlights for PNL since 1965 include:

■ 1967: Assuming management of the 120-square-mile Arid Lands Ecology Reserve.

■ 1969: PNL was the only Northwest organization chosen by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) to analyze lunar material collected by the Apollo program.

■ 1971: President Richard Nixon visited the Richland laboratory.

■ 1973: The Marine Research Laboratory (later renamed the Marine Sciences Laboratory) opened in Sequim.

■ 1979: A major solar eclipse was documented by PNL photographers.

■ 1980: Immediately after Mount St. Helens erupted, PNL researchers began collecting and analyzing samples of ash to determine potential environmental and health impacts.

■ 1984: Bill Wiley was named PNL's seventh director.

■ 1986: PNL aircraft collected air samples in the United States of the fallout from the Chernobyl nuclear accident in Ukraine.

■ 1993: Wiley joined other DOE national laboratory officials, President Clinton and Vice President Gore for the signing of an agreement between the Big Three automakers and the federal government. The effort is aimed at producing a cleaner, more efficient automobile.

PNL has the lead for developing the superplastic forming technology to meet new

mileage emissions and recycling goals.

■ 1994: Construction began on the \$230 million Environmental Molecular Sciences Laboratory. Madia was named PNL's eighth director and the Arid Lands Ecology Reserve was renamed the Fitzner/Eberhardt Arid Lands Ecology Reserve after Dick Fitzner and Les Eberhardt, who spent several years observing animals at the reserve.

The two scientists died in a plane crash while studying wildlife near Yakima in 1992.

Since it was created in 1965, PNL has produced dozens of major scientific innovations that aid in environmental restoration, energy conservation and health.

Madia is expected to talk to reporters about some of Battelle's contributions this afternoon.

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Hanford cut targets unfold

By JOHN STANG

Herald staff writer

Hanford's budget ax looms.

Possible targets were unveiled Thursday. The list is long.

Possibilities:

■ Cutting back or finding outside sources for up to half of the work done by Boeing Computer Services' and ICF Kaiser Hanford Co.

■ Making workers ride Ben Franklin Transit Authority buses — rather than Hanford buses — into inner Hanford.

■ Cutting medical benefits costs.

■ Slicing cost for travel and professional development.

That just scratches the surface of the plan outlined Thursday to the Hanford Advisory Board in Kennewick.

Ron Izatt, Hanford's deputy manager for the U.S. Department of Energy, briefed the 33-member board — representing the entire Hanford political spectrum — on what will be looked at.

The ax is being taken to the upcoming — and yet-to-be-set — budget, which covers Oct. 1, 1995, to Sept. 30, 1996.

The cost-cutting mood in Washington, D.C., prompted DOE to look at trimming Hanford's budget. The current 1995 Hanford budget of about \$2 billion allocates \$1.6 billion for cleanup.

Between \$450 million and \$600 million is expected to be trimmed out of the cleanup budget for 1996. That is expected to translate to elimination of 2,000 to 5,000 jobs from Hanford's work force of 18,700.

"Hanford is getting thin and trim and taking this cost-effectiveness seriously," Izatt said.

DOE and Hanford contractor officials identified numerous places where cuts could be made.

"There are no sacred cows. Everyone here has at least one sacred cow (on the list)," Izatt told the Hanford Advisory Board.

Budget-cutting studies are expected to take about three months. Izatt expects the studies to show some of the proposed cuts will be impractical and should be rejected.

However, he hopes the studies will identify \$150 million to \$200 million worth of cuts spread across the cleanup programs and the noncleanup programs.

The potential cuts are selective and would allow Hanford to meet its Tri-Party Agreement obligations, Izatt said.

Consequently, the potential cuts concentrate on administrative and support functions.

Dan Silver, the Washington Department of Ecology's assistant director for waste management, said the state opposes negotiating major changes in the Tri-Party Agreement — which governs Hanford's 40-year cleanup — to help DOE cut its budget.

However, he said the regulators will try to be flexible, to help DOE, as long as major milestones are met.

The potential budget cuts stay away from projects DOE has identified as its top priorities. These are the tank farms and tackling the spent nuclear fuel in the K Basins.

Izatt said DOE also wants to keep money flowing to close and clean the Plutonium Uranium Extraction Plant, the Plutonium Finishing Plant and the Fast Flux Test Facility. That would enable DOE to reduce the worker requirements at those sites in later years, Izatt said.

DOE pins part of its budget-cutting hopes on a recently implemented early retirement program.

Other areas to be studied for cuts include:

■ Eliminating or finding outside suppliers for up to 50 percent of the services provided by Boeing and Kaiser by September 1996. Boeing provides computer services, and Kaiser provides engineering and architectural services as subcontractors to Westinghouse Hanford Co.

Some duplications were created when Kaiser — previously a full contractor — became a Westinghouse subcontractor.

This practice — called outsourcing — is a relatively new DOE concept to hire outside companies to handle functions previously handled in-house at Hanford.

This also is being considered for MACTEC and some other general support offices at Hanford.

Boeing employs about 1,100 people. Kaiser employs about 3,000.

■ Reducing the cost of Hanford's medical benefits package.

Westinghouse Vice President Hank McGuire said the emphasis will be on keeping benefits intact, but hunting for cheaper ways to provide them.

■ Cutting back on travel, professional development training, professional conferences and security investigations.

■ Restricting overtime for employees not directly involved in specific cleanup projects.

■ Finding an outside agency to manage Westinghouse's pension system. Izatt said this would be merely finding an outside manager and not moving the actual pension money.

■ Approaching the Richland Fire Department about taking over fire protection of Hanford's 300 Area and 1100 Area, which border the city.

■ Approaching the Ben Franklin Transit Authority about taking over bus service for Hanford.

■ Freezing purchases of personal computers.

■ Eliminating the analytical labs from the Hanford Environmental Health Foundation because they duplicate work in other Hanford labs.

■ Not replacing two Hanford fire stations.

■ Not improving the main Hanford highway north of the Wye Barricade.

■ Not tackling several utility projects.

Area. WRAP 2A's purpose is to take certain low-level mixed radioactive wastes — glove box debris, construction debris, contaminated laundry, solid residue from treated liquid effluents — and package them in boxes or barrels for burial at special sites.

It is expected to handle 20,000

Meanwhile, construction of the Waste Receiving and Processing Facility Module 1 (WRAP 1) is continuing, Hanford officials said.

The \$89 million project's purpose is to examine barrels and boxes contaminated with radioactive and chemical materials, sort them and repack faulty containers.

It is scheduled to be completed in 1997.

t on hold ste plant

et of material a year for 30 aid Westinghouse Hanford teswoman Judy Graybeal.

ver, DOE plans to study the project might be accomplished more efficiently by an pny because of the Handing crunch, Izatt said.

40 million price tag is spread several years up to 1999, Gray-

100 people from several con- and subcontractors are in the design project. The 40 ouse people on the project will be reassigned until the ork resumes, Graybeal said.

1-6-95

PNL wins tank task

By WANDA BRIGGS

Herald staff writer

The Pacific Northwest Laboratory operated for the Department of Energy by Battelle-Northwest at Hanford has been given a key role in DOE's national cleanup efforts.

PNL will lead DOE's efforts nationwide to develop technology needed to quickly, safely and cheaply dispose of millions of gallons of radioactive wastes stored in underground tanks at Hanford and three other sites.

In addition, PNL is a partner in an effort led by DOE's Savannah River site in South Carolina to find solutions to ground water problems.

"National cleanup focus areas were developed to focus on critical technology needs — needs that are driven by the users of the technologies," said Bob Rosselli, DOE Richland assistant manager for technology management.

For the tank cleanup, PNL will oversee a team from the national laboratories and the management and operating contractors that have direct responsibility for disposal of the high-level wastes.

That's no small job.

Just at Hanford 61 million gallons of radioactive sludge are in 17 million-gallon storage tanks. Hanford has DOE's most complex tank problems.

Battelle spent about \$59 million last year on a variety of work related to Hanford's tanks. Nationally, DOE spends about \$200 million annually on research related to tanks.

Wastes in the tanks are left from four decades of producing weapons materials at Hanford. That mission ended with the shutdown of the N Reactor.

Today, the mission at Hanford and at other DOE sites is to clean the contamination left from weapons production. That job will cost billions and take decades to complete.

The new management approach was the brainchild of DOE's cleanup czar, Tom Grumbly, who aims to cut duplication of efforts and costs. He decided to create five "focus areas" and asked the national labs — including PNL — to bid on specific tasks. Those areas were tanks, ground water contamination, mixed wastes, landfills and decontamination and decommissioning.

The choice was easy for PNL. "We have a strong interest in tank issues and we felt the tanks were most critical to us," Battelle's Joe Spencer

Please see PNL, Page A2

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By JOHN STANG

Herald staff writer

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INSIDE:

■ **ISOTOPES:** Endorsement is sought for a proposal to produce radioactive medical isotopes at Hanford. **Page A3.**

■ **WRAP 2A:** Design work on a \$140 million waste processing plant is on hold. **Page A8.**

■ **PLUTONIUM:** Tri-Citians participate in discussion on plutonium disposal. **Page A8.**

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budget. The current 1995 Hanford budget of about \$2 billion allocates \$1.6 billion for cleanup.

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However, he hopes the studies will identify \$150 million to \$200 million worth of cuts spread across the cleanup programs and the noncleanup programs.

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Please see HANFORD, Page A2

An eye for art

Diced or au gratin, Moses Lake show no half-baked idea

By BROOKE BRANNON

Herald Basin bureau

MOSES LAKE — It's the latest question in edible art circles:

Can spuds scintillate?

Ag-minded art lovers might find the answer at *Baked, Mashed or Fried*, an art exhibit devoted to all things potatoesque.

The second annual tater fest will be Jan. 27 to Feb. 25 at the Adams East Museum and Art Center, on the corner of Third and Ash streets in Moses Lake.

Artists with an eye for eyes have until Monday to register their tubers, which can be delivered later in the month. Artists must be Washington residents.

And the work must be inspired by the potato. It can be used as the inspiration, the subject or the medium.



thwest

A3

Thursday, Jan. 12, 1995 Tri-City Herald

et their Waterloo at N Springs

os testing for underground barrier wall near N Reactor

ended watching the barrier project.

ineers N Springs are cribs near the now-defunct N Reactor that are filled with water laced with strontium 90. That water is slowly trickling to the nearby Columbia River.

not be The \$29 million underground wall project — dubbed the Waterloo Barrier — was designed to stop or at least slow the contaminated water long enough for it to be pumped out and treated.

Bechtel hired RCI Environmental of Kent for \$6.8 million to test and fine-tune the design.

RCI Environmental picked five locations to use a crane and vibrating hammer to pound 60-foot-high, 4-foot-wide and half-inch-thick test walls into the ground, Schlatter said.

The walls must reach at least 45 feet deep for the barrier design to work, Schlatter said.

The soil stopped all five walls at

various depths — averaging about 30 feet, Schlatter and Staats said.

The edges of the metal sheets curled up as the pounding continued, Schlatter said.

The soil at that depth is so dense the walls cannot push through it, Staats and Schlatter said.

However, augers can penetrate that layer, which is 10 to 15 feet thick, Staats said.

Bechtel suspended work to avoid

additional costs until the next step is planned, Schlatter said.

DOE and Bechtel are studying what to do next.

One possibility is abandoning the concept, Schlatter and Staats said.

But other alternatives are also being studied, they added.

Staats said one possibility is numerous holes could be drilled in the ground to weaken the soil layer.

Hanford officials had hoped to have the Waterloo Barrier in place later this year.

DOE request cuts \$75 million

By WANDA BRIGGS

Herald staff writer

The U.S. Department of Energy will ask Congress to approve \$1.29 billion to clean up Hanford next year, which is \$75.4 million less than the current budget and means certain layoffs at Hanford.

However, if that budget is approved, cuts would be less than earlier feared.

The number of jobs that must be eliminated at Hanford by the end of this calendar year is 2,700.

What was not known Wednesday night was if that total includes 844 jobs already abolished at Hanford and another estimated 1,500 expected this year — or if they are in addition.

Jim Watts, president of the Richland-based Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers union, hopes the 844 workers who took an early retire-

ment program offered last fall by Westinghouse Hanford Co. and some 350 to 450 expected to voluntarily resign are part of the 2,700 total.

In addition, Westinghouse and Battelle-Northwest have announced work force reductions this year of 1,500. Those cuts — added to those achieved by the retirement plan and those from resignations — would be more than the 2,700 being asked for.

"My concern is the reductions

already made might not be part of the 2,700," Watts said.

Hanford's cleanup budget beginning Oct. 1, 1995, would be \$1.363 billion. However, it will ask Congress for \$1.29 billion because DOE Hanford is expected to carry over \$69.3 million from the current budget.

The plea for 1996 funding, as well as a targeted request of \$1.136 billion in fiscal 1997, is contained in the federal budget President Clinton is

scheduled to unveil on Feb. 7.

Unless the Republican Congress further slashes the budget — which is likely — Hanford's budget hit would not be as steep as initially estimated.

In December, there was speculation Hanford's environmental cleanup budget could face cuts in the range of \$150 million to \$300 million for next year and those cuts would be on top of another \$300 million in anticipated reductions.

Overall, DOE is asking Congress to approve a national environmental management budget of \$6.59 billion, which is \$534.9 million less than the current budget of \$7.1 billion. That \$7.1 billion includes \$1 billion added this year when DOE's Savannah River site in South Carolina became an official cleanup location.

By fiscal 1997, which begins Oct. 1, 1996, DOE projects its overall

Please see DOE, Page A2 ▶

DOE

Continued from Page A1

environmental management budget at \$5.7 billion.

"Arriving at these dollar levels was an arduous task," Thomas Grumbly wrote Wednesday in a two-page memo he sent to all DOE managers, including John Wagoner in Richland. The Herald received a copy of the memo from a source outside DOE. To live within those budgets means a work force reduction nationally of 12,000 contractor employees — including 2,700 from Hanford, said Grumbly, DOE's assistant secretary for environmental management.

"Any savings over and above the needed (fiscal year 1996) offsets will be available to your office for other program requirements," Grumbly told Wagoner and other managers.

Also, Grumbly explained, DOE is looking to cut its overall environmental budget by \$4.4 billion over

five years. "We will not get to this level by efficiency improvements only. Some legislative relief may be necessary."

In mid-December, Grumbly and DOE budget guru Eli Bronstein asked site managers for proposals on how DOE's overall environmental management budget could survive with \$500 million less.

Each DOE site was specifically asked to focus on reducing indirect and overhead costs — true reductions, they were told, not merely shifting costs to other departments. Also, site managers were told privatization should be considered whenever practical.

Instead, most operations offices responded by identifying work and schedule delays, Grumbly wrote. Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary said in December some cleanup agreements DOE has with states must be renegotiated and Congress will be asked to appropriate cleanup money based on the most pressing needs, even selecting top priorities. The agreement governing Hanford cleanup recently was renegotiated and may not require additional

amendments now, she said.

"At the same time," Grumbly added, "there may be activities in fiscal year 1995 that should be discontinued given that funding is not sufficient to sustain them in fiscal year 1996."

The reductions DOE must make by 2000 "gives us an idea of the financial restrictions that we must face in the coming years. It forces us to clearly focus on our mission. It will make us address high risk work first. We must move in this direction quickly," Grumbly wrote.

Already, DOE critic Steve Blush has been hired by the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee to evaluate and recommend changes in cleanup at Hanford and at other sites. Blush specifically is looking at risks and is to submit his report in February.

Wagoner and his deputy Ron Izatt were in Washington, D.C., on Wednesday and could not be reached for comment. Westinghouse-Hanford President LaMar Trego could not be reached in Pittsburgh.

Basin/Northwest

2 more Hanford waste tanks off list

DOE OKs removing single-shell tanks as threat of explosion is nonexistent

By the Herald staff

The Department of Energy has authorized Westinghouse Hanford Co. to remove two more of Hanford's radioactive waste tanks from a list of potentially dangerous tanks.

The two tanks were removed because they were determined to be too wet to cause violent chemical reactions, such as an explosion.

The two single-shell tanks were among 24 Hanford tanks listed in 1990 as top priority safety concerns because of the suspected presence of

ferrocyanide. Four tanks were removed from the watch list last year.

Ferrocyanide was added to some tanks between 1953 and 1957, causing radioactive cesium in the waste to settle to the bottom of the tanks. This allowed liquid to be pumped from the tanks to make room for more waste from fuel reprocessing.

Ferrocyanide later became a safety concern because laboratory studies showed that dry mixtures of ferrocyanide and nitrate compounds are in the tanks can cause a violent chemical reaction at high temperatures.

When the mixtures are wet, however, no reaction is possible.

Sampling of the ferrocyanide tank waste and moisture retention studies by Westinghouse and Battelle-Northwest have shown the ferrocyanide waste retains a high percentage of water. Other studies also have shown over the last 35 years the ferrocyanide has degraded to non-reactive chemicals.

Robert Cash, manager of Westinghouse's ferrocyanide safety technology program, said DOE's decision to remove the tanks from the watch list is a step toward resolving Hanford

tank farm safety issues.

DOE's decision was based on the research of Westinghouse engineers who uncovered historical records from the 1950s.

Those records were used to determine how much ferrocyanide was added to the 24 tanks.

"We studied historical data on waste discharged from the U-Plant, which reprocessed nuclear waste to recover defense materials," Cash said. "As with the previous four tanks, our research showed that no ferrocyanide solids had been placed in these tanks."

O'Leary says cuts will be negotiated

By LES BLUMENTHAL

Herald Washington, D.C., bureau

WASHINGTON — Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary sought Thursday to reassure state and local communities the Department of Energy will not be heavily handed in renegotiating agreements such as the one covering Hanford.

O'Leary made it clear, however, changes will be needed as DOE seeks to cut its budget.

"I cannot pretend to you that the agreements made may not be at risk in the long term," O'Leary told the House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee.

Department officials previously have indicated parts of the Tri-Party Agreement at Hanford may have to be renegotiated with Washington and the federal Environ-

mental Protection Agency.

O'Leary, in an effort to save DOE from elimination, promised the White House she would trim \$10.6 billion over the next five years. Cuts include \$4.4 billion in the budget for environmental restoration and waste management.

While the Interior Appropriations Subcommittee has jurisdiction over a small part of DOE's budget, mostly involving alternative energy sources, the three Northwest members — Republicans George Nethercutt of Washington and Jim Bunn of Oregon and Democrat Norm Dicks of Washington — all had Hanford-related questions.

O'Leary said she is not sure the department can meet all the milestones in the Tri-Party Agreement and still cut its costs, but she added any changes would be negotiated. "It can't happen without the assent of the people affected," she said.

She added any renegotiated milestones for Hanford cleanup should be "reasonable, achievable and cost-effective."



O'Leary

O'Leary OKs Hanford cleanup plan

By WANDA BRIGGS

Herald staff writer

Seven months ago, Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary said she would support proposals aimed at speeding cleanup of Hanford while spurring economic growth in the Mid-Columbia.

Late Wednesday, she kept her word and endorsed 26 propositions that were hammered out during last June's Hanford Summit II by a committee of the "stakeholders" interested in Hanford.

The initiatives cover such areas as regulatory reform, openness, training, public involvement and economic and technology development.

Copies of the document outlining O'Leary's initiatives are being mailed to stakeholders today.

O'Leary delayed signing the document until she was convinced Northwest Indian

tribes would also support the proposals.

During the summit in June, some tribes said they weren't sufficiently consulted.

The centerpiece is a "demonstration zone" to be established by DOE, the Environmental Protection Agency and Washington state. O'Leary said the zone will help display new ideas, new ways of doing business and new possibilities for the nation's largest nuclear waste cleanup effort at Hanford.

Noting the zone complements Hanford's designation as a laboratory for "reinventing" government, O'Leary said DOE's Richland office can begin implementing the initiatives immediately.

"The demonstration zone is not a specific facility or location," O'Leary said in a prepared release. "It is a concept under which innovative ideas, processes and technologies can be created, tested and demonstrated."

Ideas proven to make cleanup better, faster, safer and more cost effective would be

applied across the Hanford site, throughout the Department of Energy complex and to the commercial marketplace where applicable."

O'Leary's adoption of the proposals was hailed as good news by officials of the Tri-City Industrial Development Council.

"I'm very encouraged this has been signed," TRIDEC board Chairman Bud Russell said late Wednesday.

"Now we have a basis to go forward," he added. "We need to approach this in a positive vein. We need to get all the stakeholders and people in this community to push down one road — and that's diversification."

TRIDEC President John Lindsay agreed, but said he worries that "given the environment that exists now, there is a serious question if resources and leadership exists to implement these initiatives."

"TRIDEC feels that it is our community responsibility to take those initiatives identified at the summit and make them priori-

ties and make sure they are performed," he said.

In fact, TRIDEC is hiring a vice president whose responsibilities would include pursuing the proposals embraced by O'Leary and others identified by Gov. Mike Lowry.

Other initiatives supported by O'Leary include:

- Streamlining regulations without compromising public safety, public involvement or legal intent.

- Maximizing public access to Hanford information.

- Expediting declassification and release of documents from past DOE operations.

- Supporting employee rights proposals.

- Working to increase stakeholder participation in Hanford decision-making.

- Building the Hazardous Materials Management and Emergency Response Center, subject to congressional funding.

- Developing partnerships and other innov-

ative practices in small business, education, training and technology.

The initiatives call for setting up partnerships to achieve cleanup and economic development objectives. DOE will, for example, establish an Environmental Business Enterprise Center with the objective of helping more small businesses and entrepreneurs do business at Hanford.

O'Leary did not support a proposal for a new agreement and policy relating to enforcement of environmental laws at DOE sites.

DOE's position is that current legislation addresses enforcement issues, and she reaffirmed DOE's commitment to comply with environmental laws.

O'Leary endorsed school-to-work partnerships and other education proposals, but said funding should come from the states or private sector.

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Hanford cleanup work announced

By WANDA BRIGGS

Herald staff writer

State and federal agencies have agreed on cleanup schedules for four of Hanford's former nuclear facilities.

When work is done, annual operating costs for those plants will be reduced by about \$150 million.

The tentative agreement shifts three of the facilities from an operational standby condition to a less costly and less environmentally hazardous surveillance and maintenance condition over the next six years.

The plants are the Plutonium Uranium Extraction (PUREX) Plant, Uranium Trioxide (UO₃) Plant and Fast Flux Test Facility (FFTF).

The draft agreement also schedules cleanup work at main processing areas within the Plutonium Finishing Plant (PFP).

A 45-day public comment period begins Feb. 13 and ends March 30. The trial agreement was negotiated by the Department of Energy, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Washington Department of Ecology. Public hearings are scheduled March 2 in Seattle, March 7 in Portland and March 9 in the Tri-Cities. Times and places have not been set.

"Until these facilities are transitioned to an environmentally sound, but low maintenance condition, we face year after year of bearing their high costs," said Roger Stanley, ecology's lead negotiator.

Paul J. Krupin, DOE's lead negotiator, said, "Transition of these facilities reduces operational costs so the taxpayer's limited resources can be focused to other higher risk, higher priority cleanup efforts."

Doug Sherwood, EPA's negotiator, said the agreement also emphasizes the cleanup minimize the creation of additional waste.

The draft also establishes a process for decommissioning Hanford production plants in an effort to reduce overall costs of Hanford cleanup.

The agreement provides:

- PUREX work is to be done by July 1998. The plant in Hanford's 200 East Area, about 20 miles northwest of Richland, was shut down in 1992. It processed spent nuclear fuel to separate weapons materials.

- UO₃ work is to be done this month, about six months ahead of schedule.

The plant processed a uranium-based chemical solution into a uranium powder.

Current annual operations costs of PUREX and UO₃ total \$45 million. Completion of the transition work will cut those costs to about \$2 mil-

lion annually.

- The FFTF transition is to be done by December 2001.

The research reactor in Hanford's 400 Area, about 10 miles northwest of Richland, began operation in 1982 to test fuels, materials and components as part of the national breeder reactor research program. The 400-megawatt, liquid sodium-cooled reactor was shut down in 1993.

Current annual operations costs at FFTF, now about \$60 million, would be decreased to about \$1 million.

- PFP, in the 200 West Area about 25 miles from Richland, needs to have scrap materials, including plutonium-laden sludges, process solutions and other hazardous materials, cleaned up and disposed of. The plant, which began operating in 1951,

processed plutonium-bearing chemical solutions, converting them to metal and oxides. Production stopped in 1989. The tentative agreement establishes an early cleanup schedule that includes some key glovebox and exhaust ventilation ductwork.

A completion date for cleanup of PFP's main processing areas will not be set until after an environmental impact statement and decision are issued in June 1996.

PFP also stores plutonium in secured vaults, and this will continue for many years after process area cleanout is done.

Current annual operation costs at PFP are now about \$85 million and would be reduced to \$30 million to \$40 million.

Power firm to open plant in Tri-Cities

By WANDA BRIGGS

Herald staff writer

A Marysville company aims to build an assembly plant in the Tri-Cities in 1997 to produce a new breed of small, cost-effective, nonpolluting electrical generators.

Within five years, LM Manufacturing predicts its work force will be "four digits" and perhaps 6,000, said Eric Anderson, chief operating officer and director of engineering.

The generator will use the principle of liquid metal magnetohydrodynamics (MHD), which is a simple, reliable way to produce electricity.

"Our generators are expected to produce electricity at rates well below the national average (cost),"

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Judge seals report critical of Hanford radiation study

By The Associated Press
and the Herald staff

SPOKANE — A court-appointed scientist concludes a \$27 million study of past radiation releases from Hanford is flawed, but a judge has ordered his findings sealed.

U.S. District Judge Alan McDonald of Yakima sealed the report by Thomas Pigford before it was submitted to the court last month.

Pigford is a nuclear engineer and retired professor at the University of California at Berkeley.

He was hired as a special "scientific master" to help the court determine whether the Hanford Environmental Dose Reconstruction Study is valid to use in class-action lawsuits filed by so-called Hanford downwinders, people who claim their health was affected by radiation.

McDonald's order prohibits attorneys from discussing Pigford's report under threat of contempt.

Pigford said Thursday he didn't know his report was sealed.

"I wish I could talk to you about it, but I'm supposed to follow the rules of the court," he said from his home in Oakland, Calif.

A spokesman for McDonald, clerk Tom Monaghan, said the judge would not comment on his reasons for sealing Pigford's conclusions.

The dose study's major findings were released last April after seven years of work.

The government study concluded people living within 20 miles of Hanford were subjected to less radiation than previously estimated. But it revised upward its exposure estimates for people living farther away in a 75,000-square-mile area of the Pacific Northwest.

Battelle-Northwest, which manages the Pacific Northwest Laboratory at Hanford for DOE, conducted the study. It was directed by an independent panel of scientists not associated with Battelle.

Scientists conducting the dose study have asked for more federal money to pursue issues raised by Pigford, said Mary Lou Blazek of

Salem, who chairs the panel directing the study.

"We are aware of the Pigford report, but we haven't seen it yet," Blazek said.

The federal government admitted in 1990 that the Hanford radiation releases were large enough to cause health damage.

Less than a month later, the first lawsuits were filed against current and former contractors who ran Hanford for the government since 1943.

The critique — which faults the dose panel's computer modeling for failing to consider topographic "hot spots" — may have implications for another federal study of thyroid disease. Those same topographic "hot spots" concerns were also raised as the dose study was released and published in Northwest newspapers.

If the estimated Hanford doses are inaccurate, it would throw off the results of the Hanford Thyroid Disease Study, said Scott Davis, an epidemiologist at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle.

Westinghouse signs renegotiated contract

By WANDA BRIGGS

Herald staff writer

Westinghouse Hanford Co. has signed a contract extension with the Department of Energy that will penalize the firm for mistakes, offer greater rewards for a job well done and pay bonuses for cutting costs.

The pact also encourages Westinghouse to buy goods and services from private businesses in an attempt to drive down cleanup costs and grow new jobs in the Tri-Cities.

The renegotiated contract, which eliminated language in place since 1947, adds another year to the current agreement and will run through March 31, 1997.

"This represents a significant new approach to government contracting at Hanford, incorporating major contract reform initiatives that provide Westinghouse with incentives for financial reward based on performance," said John Wagoner, DOE's Hanford manager.

"We expect to work in partnership under this contract to drive down costs, accelerate progress and ensure proper attention to safety as we carry

out the mission of cleanup at Hanford."

The agreement doesn't represent all that Wagoner believes can be accomplished.

Next, he pledged, will come agreements allowing Westinghouse Hanford Co. and its partner, ICF Kaiser Hanford, to use their people and products and DOE facilities and equipment to do work at Hanford for private firms.

Currently, only Battelle-Northwest and Bechtel Hanford have that ability.

The first such authority will go to Kaiser. "We are well along at looking at how to make those changes," Wagoner said. That was good news to Bob Tiller, ICF Kaiser's acting president.

"And," Wagoner said, "we will work with Westinghouse Hanford Co. to permit it to seek additional business. We are very open to a variety of possibilities."

Among the changes in Westinghouse's new contract extension are:

■ The traditional award fee system under which Westinghouse was subjectively evaluated on performance is replaced by a combination

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Plant

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Anderson said.

"Equipment reliability and long life expectancy result from having no moving parts. In addition, the generator is environmentally sound because it uses a self-contained process, uses nothing toxic and produces no wastes, unless combustion heat sources are used," he said.

Currently, LM Manufacturing is preparing to market generators only to California and Texas, states where it believes it can sell 80,000 units.

"Farmers will be our biggest customers," Anderson said. "They can use these lower-cost, gas-driven generators to run water pumps."

For example, he explained, the going price to farmers per kilowatt in California ranges from 10 to 14 cents.

"We can sell electricity with our generators at a cost per kilowatt ranging from 2½ to 4 cents," Anderson said.

Surplus equipment once used in research at Hanford's Fast Flux Test Facility, called sodium test loops, will be used in the production of those generators.

The process works like this: The MHD technology uses heat to pass a conductive liquid, in this case the metal gallium, through a magnetic field to produce electricity.

That's why LM wanted the FFTF

sodium test loops used breeder reactor reconfigure the system to manufacture the liquid metal that can produce as small as 5 kilowatts or as large as 250 kilowatts.

The MHD generator is a complex component that operates at low temperatures and is made from conventional materials, not from industrial waste. It also uses geothermal heat.

LM generators are primarily for power generation systems in plants, construction and even refrigeration.

Westinghouse Hanford Co. and the Department of Energy will transfer four sodium test loops to LM Manufacturing under terms of a Cooperative Research and Development Agreement.

Such agreements allow the government to join with private industry to promote new technologies.

"This agreement allows our firm to use excess research equipment from the Hanford site to build our engineering and production demonstration prototypes. In exchange, DOE will receive royalties, plus a stock

New cleanup plant 'a major accomplishment'

By WANDA BRIGGS

Herald staff writer

The 300 Area Treated Effluent Disposal Facility doesn't look like much from the outside.

But TEDF is more than just another new Hanford acronym.

The \$16.2 million plant is the first major tangible cleanup accomplishment at Hanford. And it was built on time and under budget.

On Thursday, state and federal officials and community leaders gathered at the new plant for a ribbon-cutting ceremony and touted it as a role model for success.

The plant sits a few miles north of Richland off Stevens Drive just beyond Hanford's 300 Area laboratories, almost dwarfed by three giant water tanks that store nonradioactive waste water before it's treated at TEDF.

The water comes from operations in the nearby 300 Area and contains traces of silver, copper, mercury, aluminum and

organic contaminants.

Since the beginning of Hanford's history, such wastes were dumped into trenches one-quarter mile from the Columbia River and allowed to seep into the ground, and eventually into the river.

That was then.

Now TEDF takes the waste water and cleans it through a series of high-tech and state-of-the-art processes and procedures before it's discharged into 1,800 feet of pipe that runs to the river. Leftover nonhazardous sludge is stored in barrels for even-

tual burial in a Hanford landfill.

"This is a major cleanup accomplishment since it marks the beginning of a new way of dealing with waste waters on site," said DOE Hanford Manager John Wagoner.

"We had a major obligation to cease discharging contaminants to the soil at Hanford," Wagoner said. "This facility accomplishes that goal."

The plant is the first of three waste water plants to be built at Hanford under terms

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Hanford faces more job losses

By WANDA BRIGGS
Herald staff writer

Proposal would trim another 2,700 from payroll

Job losses at Hanford by year's end could be twice the 2,500 originally projected, senior Hanford officials have confirmed.

The final number will depend on how Congress alters the Department of Energy's proposed fiscal 1996 budget. But top Hanford officials believe when President Clinton releases his proposed budget Feb. 6 it will show Hanford's work force could be reduced by as much as 5,200 from its 1994 peak of about 18,500.

The 5,200 total includes 2,500 jobs DOE already planned to cut in fiscal 1995, which

ends Sept. 30. Some of these cuts already have taken place.

The new number also includes up to 2,700 more that Tom Grumbly, DOE's assistant secretary for environmental management, has said must be eliminated by the end of this calendar year.

However, the additional cuts projected by Grumbly are being negotiated behind the scenes, and senior Hanford officials, who asked not to be named, expect the final number to be less.

Those officials said they have been asked

not to talk publicly about DOE's fiscal 1996 budget until it is officially announced by the president.

However, there is talk of little else at Hanford.

DOE will ask Congress to approve \$1.29 billion to clean up Hanford in fiscal 1996, which starts Oct. 1. That is \$75.4 million less than the current budget.

But that amount is not expected to be approved by a Republican Congress intent on deep budget cuts.

"What we must do is make it crystal clear to

this community that the work force reduction at Hanford will be more than (the) 2,500 that we've already talked about," said one senior official.

"We don't want to create hysteria, but as I see it the 5,200 number is a bit higher than what it will actually be. I see this site losing between 4,000 and 5,000 jobs by December," he said.

"I hear our congressional delegation is starting to weigh in on this. ... I only hope they are," he added.

Aides to U.S. Rep. Richard "Doc" Hastings,

R-Wash., and U.S. Rep. Norm Dicks, D-Wash., said no concrete numbers have surfaced. And they said an overall picture probably won't be available until the president's budget goes to Congress.

"We haven't got a chance to look at anything yet," said Shiela Riggs, press aide to Hastings.

"There are no hard numbers yet. ... Maybe there will be pieces that we will be aware of earlier (than Feb. 6)," said George Behan, press aide to Dicks.

Riggs speculated part of DOE's budget might be discussed at a Tuesday session of

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Inland Coast Guard

11-man unit patrols



Micron tax deal hits snag

By ERIK SMITH
Herald Western Washington bureau

OLYMPIA — A tax bill deemed essential to Washington's hopes of luring Micron's \$1.3 billion microchip plant is heading

Thursday, Feb. 2, 1995 Tri-City Herald

Group pushes for lean Hanford board

By WANDA BRIGGS
Herald staff writer

Symbolic 'speed boat' proposal expected to sink

The Hanford Advisory Board will be asked today or Friday in Pasco to restructure itself to become more efficient with less financial support from the Department of Energy.

The request to reinvent the board and to limit its 1996 budget request to \$250,000 — down from its current \$1.2 million budget — will come from Richland Mayor Jim Hansen, on behalf of the Hanford Communities Governing Board, which he serves as chairman. The board meets at 8:30 a.m. both days at the Pasco Red Lion Inn.

Hansen's plea is expected to fall on deaf ears.

Kennewick's and Pasco's representatives on the board do not support the proposal being driven by Richland City Manager Joe King.

"Politically, the timing is not right," said Kennewick Councilman Tom Walker.

"The Tri-Cities needs allies who can apply

pressure to continue Hanford funding ... putting this on the table would only drive a wedge between the Tri-Cities and groups that could fight for Hanford cleanup funding," Walker said. The Kennewick council this week agreed not to support the proposal.

Pasco Councilman Charles Kilbury agreed with Walker.

"This is not the time to support this idea," he said. The concept was floated this week at a meeting of the Tri-City caucus of the Hanford Advisory Board.

A year ago, Kilbury came up with his own proposal to cut the board's budget. "I lost my battle quickly. But I think this is an inappropriate time to try again ... this would never get through the Hanford Advisory Board, many of whom we would alienate with this proposal," he said.

"We realize this is an out-of-left-field notion," King said. "We know our request isn't going anywhere ... but we think we ought

to go on record as saying this board's budget is too high and its size too unwieldy."

King emphasized this is not an effort to disband the board.

"I've been a strong supporter of this board, even though we have been frustrated from time to time with all kinds of issues, including procedures the board follows and the degree to which the board sometimes strays away from a role we would prefer of providing high-level value-based advice to regulators and DOE," King said.

"This board gets bogged down in details," he said.

King argues Hanford's cleanup budget faces severe cuts that could result in the loss of some 5,000 jobs on the federal site this year, and the board, in its current form, is too costly.

Thirty-three members are on the board. Each has an alternate. There are monthly meetings, usually in the Tri-Cities, Seattle,

Portland or Spokane. There are subcommittee meetings or conference phone calls. Members' travel, meals and child care expenses are paid.

In addition, he said, some \$400,000 of the budget goes to a Portland-based company that coordinates meetings, and still more dollars are spent hiring consultants to review DOE procedures.

The Hanford Advisory Board is entering its second year. It was created to provide advice to DOE, the Washington state Department of Ecology and Environmental Protection Agency. Similar boards were created at other DOE sites. The advisory board at the DOE's Savannah River site operates on an annual budget of \$350,000.

"We know there won't be much support for our position, but we feel this is a critical time. This board, instead of being a big ocean liner, needs to be more like a speed boat," King said.

"DOE has made it clear that to comply with the president's reduced budget, cleanup spending will be less. We think it's important for the Hanford Advisory Board to share in that budget cutting responsibility ... to do that, the board must be recast," he added.

King isn't suggesting Hanford critics on the board be removed. "Whether we ever agree on anything with Heart of America or HEAL (Hanford Education Action League), or Columbia River United, those are decent, sincere folks who represent valid interests of the Northwest.

Kennewick's Walker said the advisory panel is trying to cut spending. It has decided not to replace Sue Gould, who resigned late last year as chairwoman. For that position, she was paid \$60,000. Instead, the chairmanship will be rotated among nonpaid members.

Hansen will ask board members to reduce monthly meetings to quarterly sessions, to reduce or eliminate subcommittee meetings, to eliminate consultants and to provide broad-based advice instead of detailed direction.

Ecology hearing set on Hanford permit

Washington's Ecology Department has scheduled a public hearing from 7 to 9 p.m. Wednesday on modifications to the Hanford Hazardous Waste Permit.

The hearing in the department's Nuclear Waste Program office, 1315 W. Fourth Ave., Kennewick, will be for public comment on proposals for five waste management closures at Hanford.

They are the 216-B-3 expansion ponds, 2101 M pond, the simulated high-level waste slurry unit, 218-E-8 Borrow Pit demolition site, and the 200 West Area ash pit demolition pit.

A 45-day public comment period on the modifications will end March 2. Written comments should be sent to Moses Jaraysi at the waste program office.

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DOE not innovative, report says

By LES BLUMENTHAL

Herald Washington, D.C., bureau

WASHINGTON — The Department of Energy has ignored technology waiting "in the wings" at national laboratories that could reduce the cost and quicken the pace of cleaning its nuclear sites, a DOE report states. The report, released Wednesday, advocates a larger role for the labs in DOE's environmental program.

The report was conducted by a commission

studying the future of the department's 10 major laboratories, including the Pacific Northwest Laboratory at Hanford. It blasted DOE's cleanup program as plagued with "acute and pervasive" problems ranging from management inefficiencies to unworkable consent agreements.

"Probably the most important reason behind the slow pace of assessment and cleanup is the low quality of science and technology that is being applied in the field," the report said. "Because the Environmental Management Program so badly needs high-

INSIDE:

■ **WEAPONS:** A task force wants Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory to transfer some of its nuclear weapons business to other labs. **Page A11.**

quality science and engineering development, the national laboratories together have a critical role to play, a role very much larger than at present."

The report, while implying the department

has ignored technological developments, offers no specifics.

It simply states: "We now have a poignant situation, for technology known to senior scientists and engineers both in the national laboratories and in the country's universities is in the wings that, appropriately applied, could dramatically alter current prospects."

The report said that as problems in the cleanup program have mounted, one consequence has been that bureaucrats have stopped looking for bold approaches and are interested only in avoiding risk.

"It has a name: 'the Hanford Syndrome.' It has become widespread and severe in the EM (Environmental Management) program," the report stated. "Its symptoms are an unwillingness to alter familiar behavior patterns, to stick with unproductive or failing procedures, to enhance tendencies for excessive resource allocation and regulation, and to oppose innovation. It is an important element in sustaining unproductive patterns of work."

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7 firms to test melting technology

By WANDA BRIGGS

Herald staff writer

Seven firms have been selected by Westinghouse Hanford Co. to test a variety of melting technologies to turn Hanford's low-level radioactive waste into glass for long-term storage and eventual disposal.

These new contracts reflect the Department of Energy's pledge to involve private industry in environmental cleanup, said Westinghouse spokeswoman Margi Legowik.

The program will use nonradioactive simulated wastes to test waste-feed processing and glass melter technologies. Information from the first tests will support the conceptual design for Hanford's low-level vitrification, or glass making, plant.

Westinghouse is looking for a way to make 200 tons of glass each day in a plant that could be built for about \$500 million and in operation by 2005.

The melter technology for this plant will be selected by June 1996. Plans call for two separate vitrification plants to process Hanford's separated low-level and high-level tank wastes.

The seven vendors under contract for phase one of the testing must prove they can make glass con-

tinuously for periods from 24 hours to five days. The melter technologies being demonstrated use a variety of heating methods to melt the glass, Legowik said. Temperatures in the varying melters range from 2,100 degrees to 2,700 degrees.

Once results from first phase are complete, phase two can start. The second phase, expected to begin in June, allows for more comprehensive testing by those firms selected to continue the project. At the end of the second phase of testing, a preferred and backup technology will be selected by Westinghouse.

The goal is to have an initial low-level waste plant capacity for 100 metric tons of glass per day, and later, raising that capacity to 200 metric tons per day.

"Some of the vendors are also developing their own glass formulations for testing, while others are using low-level waste glass formulations developed by DOE laboratories," said Chuck Wilson, principal engineer for Westinghouse's Vitrification Development for Tank Waste Remediation Systems.

"The glass durability will be tested using an established leachability test in which powdered glass samples are immersed in 90 degree centigrade (195 Fahrenheit) water for seven days," he said.

Five of the companies completed the first phase of testing and have made glass using nonradioactive simulants.

They are Babcock & Wilcox of Alliance, Ohio; Envitco of Toledo, Ohio; Westinghouse's Science and Technology Center in Madison, Pa.; GTS Duratek of Columbia, Md.; and Penberthy Electromelt of Seattle. Companies yet to complete the testing are U.S. Bureau of Mines in Albany, Ore., and Vectra GSI of Richland.

All are scheduled to complete initial testing by April.

Scientists have studied the characteristics of wastes stored in underground tanks at Hanford and have developed nonradioactive substitutes that behave similarly. The initial low-level waste simulant used for phase one testing closely matches the material in the Hanford double-shell slurry feed tanks. Future testing will include simulants formulated to represent wastes stored in older Hanford single-shell tanks.

The simulants, like the wastes, are comprised primarily of sodium nitrate, nitrite, hydroxide and aluminate, and small amounts of other chemicals, in a concentrated alkaline liquid or slurry form. These are then mixed with glass-making materials to form an inert glass.

establishing an independent, not-for-profit corporation to run them.

"They would operate exactly like a private corporation," Galvin said, adding such a move could produce savings that could cut in half the \$6.8 billion the labs currently receive.

Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary said that over the next year the labs will be streamlined and reorganized. While supporting many of the commission's recommendations, O'Leary ruled out any major restructuring.

"I read the report as saying they're too fat and too heavy and too costly," O'Leary said, adding there will be no proposals to close any labs in the budget President Clinton will send Monday to Congress. "There's no fire sale at these labs."

O'Leary said the only "quarrel" she had with the Galvin Commission report was its criticism of the department's cleanup program.

"It takes a look backward," O'Leary said. "The report reflects a review of documents from before we arrived. It does not capture the savings we have achieved. ... I have set up clear and measurable goals and by and large we have met them."

PNL Director Bill Madia said he

was not surprised the commission did not recommend any closures.

"That was expected," he said. But the commission noted excess research and development capacity was in the system and that could ultimately have "implications" for the laboratories in general, Madia said.

He said he was excited about the report's recommendations that the labs be given a bigger role in cleanup and thought even though the Environmental and Molecular Sciences Laboratory under construction at Hanford wasn't mentioned, it was the kind of facility the commission must have had in mind.

"Obviously we need to do something differently," Madia said. "We need to be looking forward, developing heretofore unheard of or unthought of approaches. That's what EMSL was designed to do."

Madia said he did not necessarily agree with picking a lead lab on cleanup and he was concerned about any effort to develop single-purpose laboratories.

"When you start to pigeonhole labs ... you start to underutilize them," Madia said. "Some of our greatest investments started out one way and ended up another."

Hanford board rejects restructuring proposal

By WANDA BRIGGS

Herald staff writer

Richland's proposal that the Hanford Advisory Board restructure itself and cut its fiscal 1996 budget request to \$250,000 was rejected Thursday.

"It's what we expected," said Richland Mayor Jim Hansen. "But I'm absolutely disappointed we didn't get support from Pasco and Kennewick."

Benton County Commissioner Ray Isaacson and Dr. Thomas Henn of the Benton Franklin Health Department voiced the only support for Hansen's proposal.

The board is expected today at the Pasco Red Lion Inn to approve its fiscal 1995 budget — ending Sept. 30 — of \$1.026 million, which includes about \$226,000 left over from 1994 money.

Hansen argued pending Department of Energy budget cuts that will result in an estimated 4,000 job losses at Hanford this calen-

dar year ought to drive the board to cut its costs.

"We urge this board to demonstrate sensitivity by reducing its fiscal 1996 budget request (from the projected \$650,000) to \$250,000," Hansen said.

"It's our opinion that there's got to be a better way to do this... we need to reinvent this organization. This board has value — but it needs to function more cost effectively," Hansen said.

"We believe this board can be creative with less money," he added.

Tom Walker, who represents the Kennewick City Council on the board, quickly pointed out the proposal didn't have support from Kennewick or Pasco.

"Politically, the timing is not right," Walker said. "The Tri-Cities needs allies who can apply pressure to continue Hanford funding."

Gerald Pollet of Heart of America Northwest, a Hanford activist organization, was just as quick to ask Hansen if Richland

would support a 25 percent cut in federal money provided the communities for economic transition.

Isaacson wants the board to sit down with DOE to see if costs DOE and contractors charge the board can be trimmed. "We're sympathetic with (Richland's) concept."

Henn, who was introduced to the board when he moved to the Tri-Cities last year, said bluntly the board operates like none he's seen before.

"We spend time trying to decide do we implement policy — or offer advice. All this creates an atmosphere of micromanaging. I'm in sympathy with Richland, (although) I don't know what the amount should be. I do know there ought to be better ways to do business."

Jay Rhodes of the Hanford Atomic Metal Trades Council — the umbrella organization that represents 15 affiliate unions at Hanford — did not support Hansen. "But if there are ways to cut costs, we're all for it."

Dr. Richard Belsey of Physicians for Social

Responsibility said the board, now in its second year, has started to function.

"We have finally learned how to work together and that's important, particularly in this climate of severe budget constraints," he said.

"Our sweat equity in this board more than matches what's being spent. We're a good business investment and DOE and the regulators are just starting to reap the benefits," Belsey said.

The board expenses in fiscal 1994 — from Oct. 1, 1993, to Sept. 30, 1994 — were \$1,056,930. That included \$31,168 for member costs, including travel and per diem; \$21,484 for alternate member costs and their expenses; \$86,000 for salary and travel costs for former Chairwoman Sue Gould; \$251,437 to the Portland firm that coordinates board activities; \$20,219 to rent hotel space for meetings; \$438,653 for duplicating, advertising, copier rental and audiovisual support.

Big-ticket items in fiscal 1994 were \$421,376 for salaries for DOE, Westinghouse and Bat-

telle-Northwest support staff and another \$25,588 for their travel, hotel and meal costs. In addition, \$161,005 was spent for presentations for the board by DOE and contractor representatives.

Some of those costs will be eliminated in fiscal 1995, including salary for Gould. Her job was permanently filled Thursday by Marilyn Reeves, of the Oregon League of Women Voters.

Reeves has been acting chairwoman since Gould's resignation in the fall. She announced Thursday she will take no salary. Patty Burnett of the Benton-Franklin Regional Governmental Council was elected vice chairwoman.

Other reductions expected in fiscal 1995 will come from travel costs. The '95 budget also includes no money for advertising.

Gerald Sorensen, Richland, chairman of the board's budget committee, said in his memo that because of the federal budget squeeze, the board's budget for fiscal 1996 — beginning Oct. 1 — could be about \$640,000.

DOE hopes to farm out waste tanks

By LES BLUMENTHAL

Herald Washington, D.C., bureau

WASHINGTON — The Department of Energy has concluded it may be feasible to privatize cleanup of high-level radioactive waste at Hanford, and at least 14 contractors are interested in doing the work, according to internal DOE documents.

The department is considering a plan under which a private contractor would be responsible for the retrieval, treatment and vitrification of waste in Hanford's underground storage tanks.

The contractor would finance the effort and would design, license, construct, operate and eventually clean up the facilities.

DOE would pay the contractor only for treated waste that meets specifications.

"If approved, the Hanford initiative will be the largest effort by the Environmental Management program to require a contractor to assume the financial, technical and the operational risk of a program, rather than the U.S. taxpayer," stated one document.

Other documents suggest an additional 550 employees working on the tank waste program may be laid off

over the next year or so if the privatization effort proceeds. DOE's expectation is private firms would hire current Hanford tank waste workers for such jobs.

In addition, changes would be required in the Tri-Party Agreement to adjust various interim deadlines, though the ultimate completion dates for having the tank waste cleaned up might remain unchanged.

One document suggests waste from other sites might be shipped to Hanford for processing.

"Longer term, the privatized tank waste treatment facilities conceivably could be used to process similar waste from others, but this has not been assessed and it is not now part of the option," the document stated.

While no indications were given as to how much money may eventually be saved by turning to a private contractor, one document expressed concern that unless changes were made, a shortfall of \$2.5 billion in funding for the tank waste program could occur by 2000.

In a Jan. 24 memo to Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary, Thomas Grumbly, who oversees DOE's environmental management office, said

Tanks

Continued from Page A1

he was concerned whether the department would be able to fund the estimated \$40 billion program currently in place to store, treat and dispose of the waste.

"We believe privatization can be feasible and cost effective, but it must be done in a careful, disciplined way to be successful," Grumbly wrote.

The department is expected to reveal today some details of what it is considering, including a two-phase plan leading to privatization.

Under Phase 1 lasting from 1996 to 2002, two contractors would be selected to build and operate facilities to pretreat and vitrify about 2 million gallons of waste. Vitrification involves turning the waste into a glass-like substance suitable for long-term disposal.

If Phase 1 is successful, a contractor would be selected to build scaled-up facilities to treat the remaining waste by 2028.

Contractors would be selected by competitive bid and the contracts would be fixed-price.

"Privatization provides a significant opportunity to reduce the life-cycle cost to remediate tank waste,

but presents a significant level of risk if the privatization concept is not successfully developed and implemented," Grumbly wrote O'Leary.

Among contractors that have expressed an interest are: American NuKEM Corp., BNFL, Fluor Daniel, Martin Marietta, M4 Environmental, Raytheon Engineers Constructors, 3M New Products Department, Bechtel National, Environmental Corporation of America, Lockheed Environmental Systems, Morrison Knudsen Corp., Parson Environmental Services, Spar Environmental Systems and VECTRA Technologies.

DOE has held extensive consultations with the potential contractors and will continue those consultations until this summer, when a decision on whether to proceed with privatization will be made.

"DOE's cleanup work represents a major potential market for private industry and they are very interested," one document stated.

The department also plans to consult with Congress, Washington state officials, federal and state regulators, the Hanford Advisory Board, Indian tribes and various community groups before deciding whether to pursue privatization.

Please see TANKS, Page A2▶

2-3-95

N Springs barrier needless, Bechtel says

By JOHN STANG

Herald staff writer

Bechtel Hanford, Inc. is recommending against installing an underground barrier at N Springs, saying the latest study shows the flow of radioactive strontium 90 to the Columbia River is one-fifth the original estimate.

But state and federal regulators said they want to closely scrutinize Bechtel's data before commenting on that recommendation.

A decision on the proposed barrier is expected sometime this month.

This is the latest wrinkle in the debate over the proposed \$29 million project.

N Springs is an underground flow of water next to the Columbia River that is contaminated with strontium 90 seeping from two cribs near the now-defunct N Reactor. The

closest crib is about 1,000 feet from the river. The N Springs cleanup plan adopted last year estimated an average of 0.8 curie of strontium 90 seeps into the river each year.

That is 750 times the state limit for drinking water, but it is diluted to safe levels by the flow of the Columbia, which averages about 750,000 gallons per second.

The latest estimate is 0.16 curie trickles into the river a year — 150 times the state limit. A curie is a quantity of radioactive material. About 15 curies of radioactive iodine were released in the 1979 Three Mile Island reactor incident.

The proposed remedy at N Springs is to insert a steel and grout barrier wall about 40 feet deep into the ground along about 3,000 feet of the river's shore.

The idea is the barrier will slow the flow of contaminated ground water until a facility is built to pump the water out of the ground and treat it.

A Bechtel subcontractor tried to hammer five small test walls into the ground, but found the soil too dense to pound the walls through.

Greg Eidam, Bechtel's manager for remediation projects along the shore, said scientists analyzed the subsurface obstacle.

He said that study determined:

■ The contaminated ground water appears to flow in a subsurface "channel" less than 20 feet deep and about 1,800 feet wide. That is much less than the 3,000-foot-wide strip needed to contain what was originally thought to be a widening plume of seeping water, he said.

■ The underground walls appear unable to reach lower than 30 feet deep, about 10 feet short of reaching subsoil capable of blocking water. That means contaminated ground water could seep under the underground barrier.

Consequently, Bechtel recommends not

putting in the barrier wall, Eidam said.

That would mean Bechtel would have to redesign the pump-and-treat operation because the original plan factored in an underground barrier wall, he said.

"At least DOE is coming to the conclusion that the wall may not be warranted," said Linda McClain, DOE's assistant manager for environmental restoration at Hanford.

But the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Washington Department of Ecology have not had a chance to study Bechtel's data and conclusions, said Dennis Faulk, an environmental scientist with the EPA, and Steve Alexander, a section manager for Ecology.

And regulators want to withhold any decision until Bechtel's recommendation is studied, they said.

"At this point, we don't know if (Bechtel's) numbers are valid," Faulk suggested. "We

wouldn't be doing our jobs unless we scrutinize those numbers heavily."

Faulk said regulators are worried about Bechtel's data appearing radically different from information gathered in previous studies.

Questions on the new data would include calculations on the speed of the ground water toward the river and on how the strontium 90 bonds with the surrounding dirt, Faulk said.

Faulk said public input would be sought if the N Springs remedial plan is changed.

Alternate solutions might include drilling auger holes into the dense soil to weaken it enough to pound the barrier walls through. Or a cryogenic "frozen wall" might be installed underground to slow the water.

Both of these possibilities have technical problems that would have to be addressed, regulators said.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 1995

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Hanford advisors urge rules for out-of-state waste

By JOHN STANG

Herald staff writer

Any state wanting to ship radioactive wastes to Hanford for treatment should have to prove it has its act together first, the Hanford Advisory Board recommended Friday.

The board sent that recommendation to the Department of Energy and the Washington Department of Ecology, which control the flow of any outside radioactive wastes headed to Hanford.

The 33-member board represents the entire Hanford political spectrum and needs almost unanimous approval for any recommendation. It met Thursday and Friday in Pasco.

Currently, no outside radioactive wastes are imported into Hanford.

But one DOE document recently suggested consideration be given to treating outside radioactive wastes at Hanford, especially if Hanford's tank waste facilities are privatized. That privatization is being considered by DOE.

The Hanford Advisory Board recommended outside wastes not be allowed at Hanford unless:

■ The shipments meet Washington waste laws.

■ The wastes put no storage, financial or cleanup burdens on Hanford.

■ The state sending the waste agrees to store the waste until ready for treatment and to quickly take back all the wastes after treatment. The schedule must be in writing before any waste would be shipped to Hanford.

Also Friday, the board:

■ Adopted a \$1.26 million budget for 1995, with the stipulation reductions would be sought by April.

Richland Mayor Jim Hansen argued for trimming the budget to \$654,000, saying costs for meeting rooms, facilitators, technical consultants, and expense of board-member alternates could be cut. He contended the board should not dodge the massive cuts faced by other Hanford programs.

Several board members disagreed with the extent of Hansen's proposed cuts. They said those

expenses could lead to savings as Hanford programs are scrutinized.

But the board decided to analyze its monthly expenses and try to come up with cuts in April.

Board member Gordon Rogers of the Tri-Cities Technical Council said: "We need to force fiscal discipline on ourselves before someone else does it for us."

■ Endorsed the Nuclear Medicine Research Group's push for the creation of a Hanford center to produce cancer-fighting isotopes out of radioactive waste.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 1995

Contamination found; workers clean

By the Herald staff

Seven Westinghouse Hanford Co. workers were checked for possible inhalation of radioactive particles after contamination was detected inside a laboratory work area.

Follow-up results showed no detectable internal dose for any of them, and the employees have returned to the job, said company spokeswoman Marilyn Druby.

The contamination was initially detected Tuesday afternoon in the 222-S Analytical Laboratories hot

cell area, where radioactive materials are prepared for a variety of chemical analyses, Druby said.

Westinghouse Hanford Co. operates the Department of Energy laboratory.

Contamination was initially found adjacent to a fume hood and surrounding floor area, as well as on an air sampler adjacent to the hood. Work was stopped, a room survey was made and decontamination work started.

Nasal smears were taken and although the results were only 1/20th

of DOE reportable levels, seven employees were asked to visit the Hanford whole-body radiation counter Wednesday morning as an additional precaution.

The results were negative for all, reported Marsha L. Bell, director of Analytical Services.

Those in the laboratory at the time were three chemists, two chemical technologists and two radiation control technicians.

After cleanup, routine operations resumed Friday. Investigation is continuing into the incident, Druby said.

The land fell under federal control

urges state-run ALE reserve

with establishment of Hanford in 1942, and was left largely undeveloped and undisturbed as a buffer zone for the nuclear reactor operations on the Columbia plateau.

The Arid Lands Ecology Reserve, a 120-square-mile area west of Highway 240 and including Rattlesnake Ridge, has been set aside for ecological study since 1967.

No longer needed by the Department of Energy, the land is subject to competing claims. Both the Yakama Indian Nation and the Bureau of

Land Management have staked claims to the ALE reserve.

Mattawa-area farmers hope to develop a portion of the North Slope area north of the Columbia, but environmentalists want it preserved.

The memorial asks Congress to place the land in the custody of the state, "to be managed by the state to preserve the land's ecological system for research and education." It states the land is a major part of the state's surviving shrub-steppe ecosystem.

Hankins said state control would dovetail with state efforts to buy manage environmentally sensitive land, a program launched by Mike Lowry and former Gov. Evans in 1990.

"The land has never had any on it," she said. "It's a pristine piece of property."

As a memorial, the measure would not carry the force of law. Congress can choose to ignore memorials frequently does.

Budget cuts 4,774 at Hanford

By WANDA BRIGGS

Herald staff writer

A total of 4,774 Hanford jobs could be cut by Dec. 31 under the budget President Clinton presented Monday to Congress.

However, that total could be more or less because:

- It includes 500 who work at the Hanford tank farms. That work will continue, under a Hanford contractor or under a yet-to-be approved privatization plan. There is no guarantee, however, the 500 tank farm jobs would be retained.

- It includes 200 to 300 employees whose work is expected to be contracted out to private firms. Again, there is no guarantee all 200 to 300

jobs would be retained.

■ Congressional Republicans have said Clinton's budget is "dead on arrival" because they expect to make more cuts. Whether those cuts would be to Hanford programs is unknown.

"But it's pretty predictable that if Congress cuts this budget proposal substantially, job losses will increase," said John Wagoner, DOE Hanford manager.

Wagoner said DOE has requested a total Hanford budget of \$1.88 billion in fiscal 1996, which begins Oct. 1. That amount is down \$81 million from the current fiscal year.

Of the 1996 total, \$1.483 billion would be spent on environmental cleanup programs, an \$88 million

reduction in current cleanup spending of \$1.571 billion.

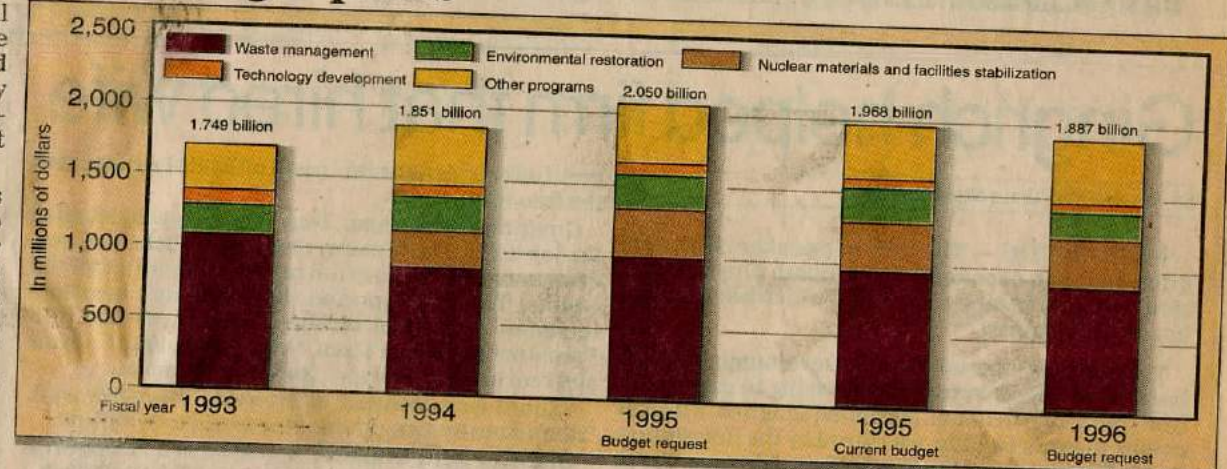
The difference between the total and the cleanup budgets — some \$404 million — mostly is earmarked for the Pacific Northwest Laboratory operated for DOE by Battelle-Northwest. That compares with a current budget of \$397 million.

"This fiscal 1996 budget challenges us to develop the right cleanup strategies at Hanford," Wagoner said. "The message is, 'We've got to do more with less.' Nobody wants us to back away from cleanup, but this budget requires us to make change."

The proposed cleanup budget includes:

Please see HANFORD, Page A2

DOE budget plans



Herald/Sherry Emery

Clinton plans for BPA Inc.

Power utility would be a U.S. corporation

By JOHN STANG

Herald staff writer

A Clinton administration plan to convert the Bonneville Power Administration into a wholly owned government corporation might trim some future electric rate increases a little, Northwest utility officials said.

This conversion is part of President Clinton's proposed budget, unveiled Monday.

The conversion probably would not affect utility customers directly, said area utility officials.

Future rate increases might be less with a government-owned corporation marketing electricity in the region, they said.

But Rep. Peter DeFazio, D-Ore., warned the proposal could be the first step toward selling BPA, a move he said eventually would force rate increases for customers of the Northwest's largest power wholesaler, according to The Associated Press.

The Benton and Franklin public utility districts, the Benton Rural Electric Association and many other Northwest utilities have pushed for BPA to become a government corporation similar to the U.S. Postal Service or the Tennessee Valley Authority.

BUDGET '96

The Budget Dollar

Fiscal year 1996 outlay estimate:

\$1.61 trillion

Where it comes from

- Individual income taxes
- Social insurance receipts
- Corporate income taxes
- Borrowing
- Excise taxes
- Other



Where it goes

- Direct benefit payments for individuals
- Other federal operations
- State and local grants
- Net interest
- National defense



TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 1995

TRI-CITY HERALD

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Counties toss support to reach development

By DOUG CAMPBELL

Herald Valley bureau

PROSSER — Benton, Franklin and Grant counties are gaining support for their plan for the future of the Hanford Reach.

A half-dozen Eastern Washington counties have joined commissioners from those three counties in countering a federal proposal to make the reach a wildlife preserve. Benton, Franklin and Grant commissioners want to establish local control over the area.

As of Monday, Lewis, Stevens, Columbia, Garfield, Klickitat and Kittitas counties had passed resolutions opposing a wild-and-scenic designation for the 51-mile reach.

The county measures call for the establishment of a local partnership — including county, state and federal governments — to plan for the use and management of the 105,000-acre area, where Cold War restrictions to keep humans out have allowed wildlife to thrive.

Mid-Columbia officials said Monday they aren't surprised by the sweeping endorsement. Benton, Franklin and Grant county commissioners asked Eastern Washington officials to support their plan in December.

"I think you're seeing more of an attitude of local control asserting itself," said Benton County Commission Chairman Ray Isaacson. "They don't want the Depart-

ment of Energy telling them what they can and cannot do. They support local control."

The National Park Service has recommended the reach — which is home to 48 sensitive animal species — be protected as a wildlife refuge.

It is the river's most productive spawning area of chinook salmon.

Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt has yet to make his recommendation about the future ownership of the reach. His recommendation will go to Congress, which will have the final say.

Mid-Columbia commissioners say the Columbia River corridor is vital to the area's hopes of economic diversification. They want to keep the reach open for access to water and limited development, but insist much of the riverfront area should be protected — primarily under existing laws — for wildlife and recreation.

Benton commissioners are stepping up efforts to strengthen public support for their agenda. They are planning an open forum to outline their views and argue a wild-and-scenic designation would restrict access — whether industrial or recreational — to the reach.

Responses have yet to be received from Yakima and Walla Walla counties. A Yakima County spokeswoman said the county prosecutor is reviewing the proposed resolution before forwarding it for commissioner approval.

DOE plans to ditch rules

By the Herald staff

Burdensome Department of Energy regulations that slow Hanford cleanup will be ditched by March 30, DOE officials pledged Thursday.

"DOE has a whole set of rules at Hanford that they control by themselves," said Tom Grumbly, DOE's assistant secretary for environmental management.

"We're going to eliminate 90 percent of those rules by March 30, and then wait to see who screams."

The drive to jettison some rules that create unnecessary hurdles for Hanford workers is coming from the top.

DOE Hanford Manager John Wagoner said, "It will be done."

Wagoner said DOE was impressed Bechtel Hanford Co. — DOE's first-ever environmental remediation contractor — inherited 2,500 procedures when it took over the work from Westinghouse Hanford Co. last summer.

"Without DOE telling them to do so, Bechtel has eliminated all but 1,400 of those procedures," Wagoner said.

Throughout talks with employees and community leaders Thursday, Grumbly said regulations that regulate regulations have got to go. Wagoner said he's willing to make a start.

Waste site work suspended as contents of barrels studied

By the Herald staff

Work has been suspended at a Hanford waste storage site while experts investigate whether six barrels contain potentially dangerous chemical mixtures.

Westinghouse Hanford Co. is trying to figure out whether the problem is paperwork or a genuine hazard.

The problem surfaced Thursday when Hanford chemists reviewed the paperwork on two 55-gallon drums containing small bottles of chemical compounds shipped from

the Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory in California, according to Westinghouse.

The paperwork showed the chemicals in the barrels could be mixed in percentages in which an explosive or flammable mixture could be created if some of the chemicals decay, Westinghouse said.

A further check located four more containers in the Central Waste Complex that might contain the same potentially dangerous mixtures.

Westinghouse has stopped all shipments to the complex, which is

in the 200 West Area. A team of Westinghouse, federal and Lawrence Berkeley officials is studying the situation.

The suspected drums contain "very small amounts" of radioactive materials, according to Westinghouse, but no radiation hazard appears to exist.

The suspect drums are held in a small structure designed to store combustible materials.

The entire storage complex has 17 buildings and holds about 22,000 drums and boxes of chemical wastes that contain low levels of radioactivity.

4 waste storage barrels rearranged to avoid problems

By the Herald staff

Work resumed Saturday at the Hanford waste storage site after an investigation into six potentially dangerous barrels.

Westinghouse Hanford stopped operations late Friday to investigate whether the six barrels contained explosive or flammable chemicals.

A team of experts throughout the country determined the 55-gallon drums at the waste site in the 200 West Area do not contain mixtures of chemicals that are flammable or explosive.

However, four drums containing small bottles of chemical compounds will be rearranged to assure pressure will not build up within the containers, said Westinghouse Hanford Co., spokesperson Judy Graybeal. "There is an indication that over time, those drums may pressurize and cause

the container to bulge, but the configuration in the barrel still isn't considered a fire hazard," she said.

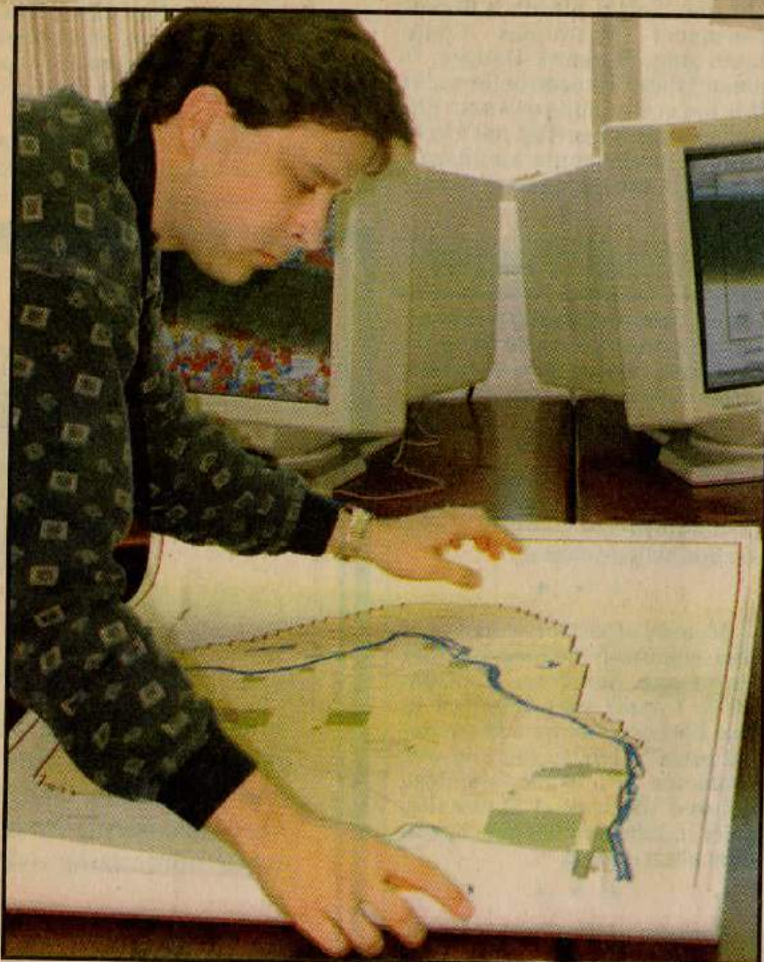
Those drums will be taken to a secure area and rearranged, Graybeal said.

The problem surfaced Thursday when Hanford chemists reviewed the paperwork on two drums shipped from the Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory in California, according to Westinghouse.

The paperwork showed the chemicals in the barrels might become explosive or flammable if some of the chemicals decayed.

A further check located four more containers in the Central Waste Complex that were believed to have contained the same potentially dangerous mixtures.

As a precaution, shipments to the complex were stopped until chemists could analyze the problem, Graybeal said.



Herald/Doug Campbell

Darin Arrasmith is one of two Benton County planners developing a Hanford land-use plan to help officials plot future development of the now off-limits real estate.

Benton County plots Hanford land future

By DOUG CAMPBELL
Herald staff writer

PROSSER — The layout of 21st century Hanford is being plotted in minute detail in a small county office here.

A museum at the old Hanford town site? An industrial waste management complex at the 300

Area? How about a cattle ranch at the Arid Lands Ecology Reserve?

Benton County has hired two planners to pick up where a federally funded blue-ribbon committee left off. Their mission: Devise an intricate land-use master plan to spell out how post-cleanup Hanford will cohere with the adjacent

Please see **LAND**, Page A2 ▶

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Hanford

Continued from Page A1

Tri-City community.

It's a "Herculean task," said Phil Mees, a county long-range planner who supervises two other planners recently charged with drafting what's being called the Hanford Comprehensive Plan.

"This is a must-do for the county. By itself or with the coordination of other agencies, the county simply has to do this," Mees said. "The economic implications to the county are huge."

As county officials see it, the comprehensive plan will accomplish several goals.

It will identify which sectors of Hanford's now off-limits real estate are best suited for industrial, recreational, or open-space development, to name a few. It will determine which agencies should assume ownership of different areas. It might even help the Department of Energy decide where to focus cleanup efforts.

"If you have a definitive designation as to what the future use is, then you can apply some logic to your cleanup activity," Mees said.

The plan will be at least three years in the making, Mees said. Two Benton planners — Darin Arrasmith and Adam Fyall — have been doing the

legwork for about a month, compiling mounds of maps and documents before plunging into the meatier chore of drafting a land-use map.

"We've taken a bite, but we haven't really sunk in our teeth yet," Arrasmith said.

When they're done, they'll have an inventory and database of Hanford's existing infrastructure — pumps, roads, buildings and natural resources. They'll also have a map designating where light vs. heavy industries should be, which areas are so contaminated they should remain undeveloped, and perhaps where riverfront picnic areas should be groomed.

The plan will culminate in a series of public hearings, much as when the state Growth Management Act was implemented.

"It's in the best interest of the community that the lands, once they're disposed of, be put together as a package," Mees said. "This way, we make sure future activities aren't compromised."

Planners won't be starting from scratch. Just two years ago, the first major report on Hanford land uses was released by the Hanford Future Uses Working Group, a DOE-funded committee whose members included all the Hanford stakeholders.

The report designated three land use categories: restricted, unrestricted and exclusive, each designation suggesting a different level of cleanup.

2-16-95
The county's comprehensive plan will go further, Mees said. Whereas the working group sometimes identified as many as 10 uses for one area, the county wants to narrow that range to one or two activities.

In that effort, they may not be alone. County officials are scheduled to meet with DOE and Richland executives next week to discuss whether to coordinate on the comprehensive plan.

Though similar meetings over the past year have produced few tangible results, all the agencies say they are committed to incorporating as many stakeholders as possible into the process.

Wednesday, a DOE official said the comprehensive plan is getting a serious look.

"The Department of Energy is interested in working with the local communities, the city and county in looking at how we plan for the site," said DOE's Maynard Plahuta.

The stakeholders include the Bureau of Land Management, the state Department of Ecology, environmental groups and regional Indian tribes — entities whose land-use proposals may have a profound effect on Benton County's planning efforts.

The Yakama Indian Nation, for example, has proposed the Arid Lands Ecology Reserve be returned to the tribe. And the National Park Service has recommended the Hanford Reach become a wildlife refuge.

Hastings names Hanford panel

21-member board to advise lawmaker on Mid-Columbia cleanup issues

By the Herald staff

A 21-member Hanford advisory task force composed of scientists, political leaders and business people from the Tri-Cities has been established by Rep. Doc Hastings, R-Wash.

"The Hanford Task Force is an informal, informational group designed to advise me on key issues related to the Hanford site, as well as on Tri-City economic development as Hanford's waste is eventually cleaned up," said Hastings of Pasco.

The task force volunteers will meet monthly in the Tri-Cities and be "on call" to answer technical questions related to deregulation, cleanup and funding at Hanford.

"The members of the task force come from diverse backgrounds and interests representing

business, labor and local government," Hastings said. "These individuals have all worked and served the Tri-Cities and Hanford communities over a number of years."

Hastings will officially announce formation of the task force and introduce its members at a press conference scheduled for 10 a.m. today at his Tri-City office. The address is 320 N. Johnson St., Suite 500, Kennewick.

Task force members are:

- Mike Fox, Westinghouse Hanford Co.
- Joe King, Richland city manager.
- Wanda Munn, American Nuclear Society.
- Eric Gerber, Westinghouse Hanford.
- Mike Knotek, Battelle-Northwest.
- Bob Ferguson, Science Applications International Corp.
- Lucy Love, ICF Kaiser Hanford Co.

- John Schlatter, Bechtel.
- Sam Volpentest, Tri-City Industrial Development Council.
- John Lindsay, Tri-City Industrial Development Council.
- Mike Schwenk, Westinghouse Hanford Co.
- Gary Muth, president of the Hanford Atomic Metal Trades Council.
- Jim Worthington, Sheet Metal Workers union.
- Bill Lampson, Lampson Cranes.
- Leonard Dietrich, Basin Disposal Inc.
- Bill McCurley, McCurley Chevrolet.
- Reed Kaldor, Advanced Sciences Inc.
- Sandy Matheson, Hanford Environmental Health Foundation.
- Steve Young, Northern NEF Inc.
- Joe Beck, Battelle-Northwest.
- Manuel Chavallo, MAC Technical.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 1995

TRI-CITY HERALD

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Hanford losing 671 by month's end

By WANDA BRIGGS

Herald staff writer

Hanford's work force will shrink by another 671 by the end of this month.

That total represents workers who have been approved for the voluntary reduction of force program (VROF).

The VROF program followed an early retirement buyout accepted by 844 workers late last year. Both programs are part of an overall attempt to cut 4,774 Hanford jobs by Dec. 31.

The move is part of the Department of Energy's broader effort to cut employees nationwide by 19,000 because of significant budget cuts.

At Hanford, for example, the overall budget for fiscal 1996—beginning Oct. 1, 1995—will be reduced by \$81 million, and money earmarked for Hanford's cleanup will be cut by \$88 million.

Those eligible for the VROF program were

allowed to choose among inducement options, including up to 26 weeks of severance pay, one-time cash payments, extended medical benefits and financial assistance for education and relocation.

Dom SanSotta, who heads DOE's work force restructuring efforts in Richland, said the 671 total includes 543 employees from Westinghouse Hanford Co., and its partners, ICF Kaiser Hanford Co., and Boeing Computer Services Richland; 117 from Bechtel Hanford Co., and 11 to date from the Hanford Environmental Health Foundation.

Seven Westinghouse workers were denied VROF because their job skills are needed, SanSotta said. Westinghouse was told it could not refill positions left vacant through the VROF program.

"These seven (who were denied) included some data processing skills that Westinghouse couldn't now live without," he said.

"We're pleased with the results," SanSotta said. "We did get oversubscribed in some job categories, and we know that it will pinch us

awhile by accepting their applications. But from the long-term standpoint, this was the right thing to do."

For example, SanSotta said, the goal was to cut 30 secretarial and clerical jobs with the VROF program. Instead, about 150 applied and were accepted for the plan.

The bulk of the VROF's will be off the payroll by Feb. 28. Many are already gone. But departure will be delayed until June 1 for some jobs, SanSotta said.

The next phase of the restructuring program is layoffs.

DOE and its contractors currently are examining job categories to see where those cuts will come. Congress began a 30-day review Monday of a federally-mandated plan aimed at mitigating cutbacks for workers and the community.

Hanford contractors cannot begin layoffs until that plan has been approved. But they now can give employees notice that in 60 days their jobs will be lost. Such letters go out probably next week to Westinghouse,

ICF Kaiser and Boeing Computer Services Richland workers.

DOE is pushing a plan to transfer some work at Hanford to outside contractors as a way to cut costs, and at the same time offset job reductions.

For example, DOE wants to transfer operation of its radioactive waste tanks to an independent contractor, SanSotta said. However, it isn't known whether the 500 Westinghouse workers at the tank system would be retained under the yet-to-be-approved privatization plan.

Likewise, SanSotta said, three other programs—which employ 265 Hanford workers—may be farmed out to private firms.

The targeted programs are Project Earth, which aims to allow workers in the Hanford Technical Services Division to work for private firms, Hanford mail services and computer software maintenance, SanSotta said. Again, he emphasized, there are no guarantees private firms would hire all 265 workers.

Another VROF program may be offered to

all 265 workers if those programs are commercialized, he said.

DOE is also negotiating with Battelle-Northwest and Bechtel about programs to be offered to their employees to compensate for job reductions.

Tom Grumbly, DOE assistant secretary for waste management, said he expects DOE to reduce its staff by 10 percent nationwide as part of the downsizing.

However, DOE's Richland Operations was approved last year to hire 158 new federal employees to oversee contractors and cleanup. Those slots are not yet all filled.

DOE spokesman Mike Talbot in Richland said he does not know what impact DOE nationwide cuts will have on Hanford.

"We expect we will see the impact, probably in conjunction with the department's realignment effort."

DOE and its contractors will establish a placement office in Richland to provide workers who lose their jobs with information on how to find new ones.

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Green run's greatest harm may be psychological

By LES BLUMENTHAL

Herald Washington, D.C., bureau

WASHINGTON—Members of a presidential advisory committee said Thursday it may never be possible to know the actual medical effects of the 1949 green run on those living near Hanford, but the intentional radiation release surely took a psychological toll.

The presidential advisory committee is expected to release its report on human radi-

whether it will recommend compensation in any of the experiments, including the green run, but it is an issue the committee has begun to grapple with.

"Even if they weren't harmed, they were wronged," Ruth Macklin, a bioethics professor at Albert Einstein College of Medicine, said of those who may have been exposed to radiation during the green run.

"No matter how we define it, it is viewed as a human experiment," said Nancy Oleinick, a professor of radiation biochemistry at Case Western Reserve University. "We must con-

tamination was tracked by military aircraft.

The radioactive cloud was detected over 100 miles northeast of the site and radioactive iodine was found on vegetation over large areas of Southeast Washington and parts of Oregon.

The public was never warned about the release.

The problem for the advisory committee is the 8,000 curies of radioactive iodine released during the green run represent only about 1 percent of the total iodine

Law, Ethics and Health Program at Johns Hopkins University, agreed.

"It's hard to talk about the effects of the green run abstract from everything else," she said.

Others, however, insisted the cloak of government secrecy surrounding the green run until only recently continues to cause problems.

"The actual harm from the green run will disappear into the epidemiological background, but the psychological harm could have been mitigated by a more enlightened

committee field hearings.

"There were people who cried into the microphones with anger and angst," Tuckson said. "These people believe correctly or incorrectly they were harmed. I feel we owe them a response."

Several members said the best the committee may be able to do is to make recommendations to assure such intentional releases never occur again.

"We must have checks on the admirals and the generals so that it doesn't continue ad

Saturday, Feb. 18, 1995 Tri-City Herald

Hanford wastes \$274 million, Wyden claims

By JOHN STANG

Herald staff writer

An Oregon congressman is calling for the Appropriations Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives to rechannel \$274 million in the proposed Hanford budget from overhead expenses to cleanup activities.

That \$274 million includes money earmarked for a range of items, including contractors' bonuses, Westinghouse Hanford Co.'s legal support and \$2.7 million in economic development funds to the Tri-City area.

Rep. Ron Wyden, D-Ore., and Gerald Pollett, director of Heart of America Northwest, a Hanford activist organization, held a Portland press conference to identify what

they believe are wasted dollars in Hanford's budget.

In a news release, Wyden said he will "strongly urge" the House Appropriations Committee to reroute the \$274 million. He also called for the House's Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee to "investigate these and other examples of waste in (U.S. Department of Energy) cleanup budgets."

In a phone interview, Pollett said, "We're not saying: Reduce the cleanup budget by (\$274 million). We're not saying lose people. But we need to change priorities for spending those dollars."

The proposed 1996 Hanford cleanup budget of \$1.483 billion includes \$451 million for overhead and support costs. Those costs include utilities, transportation,

Oregon lawmaker wants money used for cleanup

safety training, landlord services and administration.

DOE and Westinghouse Hanford Co. spokesmen said it is premature to discuss publicly—point-by-point—Wyden's proposed cuts and changes.

But they agreed Hanford's overhead costs can be reduced.

"We agree with DOE and the stakeholders there is an urgent need for more cleanup done with fewer dollars. ... Yes, overhead and support costs are high, and we're committed to driving down support costs," said Westinghouse spokesman Craig Kuhlman.

"They are talking about things we are already dealing with," said DOE spokesman Mike Talbot.

U.S. Rep. Richard "Doc" Hastings, R-Wash., said he is unfamiliar with Wyden's proposal.

It comes one week after a U.S. Senate committee ordered DOE to cut its proposed budget for the entire department by \$500 million to \$1 billion.

Wyden's and Heart of America's proposal calls for:

■ Reducing overhead and support costs by \$150 million. These would include \$20 million for legal support

for Westinghouse and \$500,000 for the Hanford Science Center.

■ Westinghouse not receiving a possible \$63 million bonus by declaring up to \$435 million could be saved by a decision to build less than six new underground waste tanks as originally planned.

Wyden's and Heart of America's plan also contends another \$20 million would be saved by eliminating other "savings" awards from "canceling jobs that don't need to be done."

■ Shifting DOE's safekeeping responsibilities for weapons-grade plutonium to the U.S. Department of Defense, freeing up \$39 million.

■ Cutting \$2.7 million in economic development funds not directly related to cleanup. Pollett said he could not get a breakdown of that amount from DOE. Sam Volpentest,

executive vice president of the Tri-City Industrial Development Council, said he could not comment on that proposal until he knows the specific funds that would be targeted.

Kuhlman and Talbot noted Westinghouse's contract was recently changed to cut its base fee, increase its potential bonuses and penalize it for mistakes.

Pollett contended the restructured contract was "a tiniest baby step ... they need to go miles further."

Talbot also said DOE has consolidated its outside legal services for a class-action downwinders lawsuit from six law firms to one to save money.

He said DOE's outside legal fees this fiscal year on this issue appeared to be running about half the annual average of \$7.25 million of the past few years.

Hanford workers wait for their ride

Bassett Transit could step in

By CARRIE SCHAFER and DAVE SCHAFER

Herald staff writers

At least one Mid-Columbia business is interested in filling the void when the Department of Energy drops its bus service to Hanford.

The vice president of Richland-based Bassett Transit Service said the company could provide bus service to Hanford once DOE stops its bus lines.

"There are many different

options," Laura Stiles of Bassett said Tuesday. "We could do a number of things to fill that need."

Meanwhile, Ben Franklin Transit Authority officials said it lacks money and facilities to add new buses or Van Pool vans to its fleet. However, it could organize Hanford commuters under its ride share program.

"We don't have any plans to supplant the DOE's service," transit manager John Olson said.

"Frankly, we don't have the money,

Please see BUSES, Page A2 ▶



Herald/Dorothy Adcock

Nichole Grall of Richland and Tony James of Kennewick get off a Hanford bus Tuesday at the bus barn in Richland. The Department of Energy has announced a plan to eliminate the bus service.

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Buses

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the space or the employees to do it."

DOE announced last week with notices posted throughout the site it would stop bus service at Hanford, but it did not announce a stop date. Westinghouse Hanford Co., which operates the service for DOE, is to make recommendations on the best way to end the service.

Ending bus service will cut \$4.5 million in annual expenses, result in layoffs for an estimated 35 to 45 Hanford bus drivers and displace 1,200 passengers.

Workers stopped after getting off the buses Tuesday evening said they and friends are already talking about car pools. But most predicted a private company will save them the hassle.

Bart Anderson of Richland rides the bus to Hanford's farthest work site, the 100-N area 40 miles from Richland. He said fellow workers already mentioned getting together to share the cost of commuting.

It's not so easy for Lynn Barger of Pasco, who is in her first week of a new clerical job in the 200 East area, about a half-hour bus ride from Richland.

Barger said she was disappointed when she found out the bus service would be canceled because she enjoys the convenience.

"I like the bus because I get sleepy," she said. "A lot of people get an extra hour a day of rest."

But what would Hanford workers pay to keep their bus service? None questioned Tuesday knew where they'd draw the line between convenience and cost.

Each agreed \$1.50 a day — the current fare — is a good deal. Barger said her husband drove up a \$60 gas bill each week when he commuted to his job site for a while.

And that doesn't include wear and tear and insurance costs commonly used in calculating mileage cost. Even splitting a month's worth of commuting between four friends, a worker could still end up paying more.

Stiles said Bassett Transit is qualified to save workers the hassle. After all, the company took workers to the 200 East, 200 West and 100 North areas before the Ben Franklin Transit Authority was established, she said.

Then Ben Franklin began service to the 400 Area, while DOE served the 200 East and 200 West areas of the site. After losing the Hanford business, Bassett began charter services and daily rides to Seattle.

Stiles said Bassett likely could provide the service at a profit by operating on slimmer margins than the federal government.

"We can look into leasing equipment, there are other options," Stiles said, but added that the com-

Benton supports BLM land plan

By ERIK SMITH

Herald Western Washington bureau

OLYMPIA — Benton County is backing a Bureau of Land Management takeover of a central portion of the Hanford site — in hopes the agency will free other Hanford land for industrial development.

County Commissioner Ray Isaacson told the House Natural Resources Committee that the federal agency's proposal would open the door to development of uncontaminated land elsewhere on the reservation.

Isaacson's comments countered a proposal from state Rep. Shirley Hankins, R-Richland, to put the Hanford Arid Lands Ecology Reserve under state control. Her idea takes the form of a memorial to Congress, a type of resolution that Washington, D.C., is free to ignore, and frequently does.

After Isaacson and a representative of the Yakama Indian Nation



blasted Hankins' proposal at a hearing Tuesday, Chairman Steve Fuhrman, R-Colville, said he couldn't see any reason to take Hankins' memorial any further.

"It's not really on the list to move past this point," he said. "Receiving conflict on a joint memorial makes it difficult."

Hankins' proposal would ask Congress to hand over the ALE Reserve to state control.

The undisturbed 120-square-mile area lies to the west of Highway 240. The focus of ecological study since 1967, it is now at the center of the debate over Hanford land use.

The federal government took over the property in 1942 when it established the Hanford Reservation. Now that the Department of Energy no longer needs a "buffer zone" for plutonium-producing reactors, the

BLM and the Yakama Indian Nation are seeking control.

For the Yakamas, Rattlesnake Ridge is a sacred site, said Dawn Vyvyan, representing the tribe. The tribe would preserve ALE as a reserve.

But Isaacson said BLM control offers advantages for the county. That is because the agency has offered to exchange its holdings of developable land on the Hanford site for ALE.

He envisions control of the developable land would go to Benton, Franklin and Grant counties, which are negotiating with the Department of Energy to establish a plan for development and preservation of areas of the Hanford site.

Right now, BLM holds title to a "checkerboard" of uncontaminated land in the southern part of the reservation. BLM would regain control of the land when it is declared surplus, but Isaacson said if it retained ownership the land could not be developed.

Instead, a BLM swap for ALE would benefit the most interests, he said. "This would protect the ALE Reserve from commercial development and would permit economic development on prime industrial and agricultural lands that are free from contamination. The economic potential of the developable lands is in the billions of dollars."

Hankins' memorial also asks that Hanford's surplus North Slope area north of the Columbia River be turned over to the state. That would inject the state into a separate debate over environmental preservation of the Hanford Reach and development of adjacent land for agriculture.

Hankins said Tuesday she is willing to drop that portion, adding her focus is preservation of ALE. "I think this is something the state could use in an education program," she said.

The memorial provides that the land would "be managed by the state to preserve the land's ecological system for research and education."

2-22-95

Columbia highly polluted in 1960s, new study says

By The Associated Press

PORTLAND — A new state study concludes radioactive levels in the Columbia River from 1963 to 1969 exceed what is allowed under current federal drinking water standards.

Most of the radioactivity came from the Hanford nuclear reservation. The study shows that within four years of the shutdown of the final Hanford reactor that discharged cooling water directly to the Columbia River in 1971, radioactivity levels in the river dropped drastically.

Ray Paris, manager of the division's Radiation Protective Services, which produced the study, said there is no easy answer to the question of whether excess radioactivity might have harmed anyone.

"Our electronic detection ability is very, very sophisticated," he said. "But just because someone can detect something, it doesn't mean there is necessarily a health hazard."

He said the study was informative and should not be cause for alarm.

People who ate fish from the river or swam in it regularly in the 1960s probably were exposed to levels of radioactivity above current federal standards. However, the levels were far below the standards that were in existence at the time.

A follow-up study is being conducted to determine which activities exposed people to the greatest amount of radioactivity.

The Oregon Health Division report describes 31 years of radioactivity measurements in the Columbia and other Northwest rivers, as well as in lakes and ocean bays.

"Until the 1970s, the lower Columbia River held the

distinction of being the most radioactive river in the United States," the study concludes.

Despite the pollution, there was no attempt to restrict access to the water or consumption of fish from the river because the Health Division did not believe there was much risk.

Most of the contamination resulted from coolant water discharge from as many as eight plutonium production plants at Hanford, the federal nuclear complex on the Columbia 35 miles north of the Oregon border.

The coolant water ran directly through the core of the reactors, a system that has since been replaced in more modern plants.

In 1967, the study says, the river between Hanford and Portland averaged more than three times the radioactivity allowable under 1995 federal drinking water standards.

The Trojan nuclear plant near Rainier on the lower Columbia did not add any contamination to the river because its coolant system was designed differently from those at Hanford, the study says.

The federal and international standard for drinking water allows as much as 50 one-trillionths of a curie of radioactivity per liter.

That translates to an allowable dose of 4 millirem per year.

A dental X-ray delivers about 200 to 300 millirem, although to a small part of the body.

Dr. Richard Belsey, a retired pathology professor at Oregon Health Sciences University and a member of the Oregon Hanford Waste Board, said that although the river's contamination level was relatively low, it still is a matter of concern because it existed over a long period of time.

Wagoner praises site plan idea

By DOUG CAMPBELL
Herald staff writer

Hanford Manager John Wagoner said Tuesday he is impressed with a joint proposal by Benton County and Richland to draft a plan for future development of the federal nuclear reservation.

"I'm really impressed with the thought that's gone into this so far, and I think it's got a real positive angle on it," Wagoner told top county, city and Department of Energy officials.

"I don't know of anything in DOE that's been done to this magnitude with respect to transitioning."

Benton County has hired two planners to devise an intricate land-use master plan to outline how post-

cleanup Hanford will develop alongside the Tri-Cities. Informal talks about the land-use plan have been happening for more than a year between the county, Richland and DOE.

Officials on Tuesday set a March 17 deadline for DOE to respond to a draft memorandum of understanding between the agencies. It would be DOE's responsibility to incorporate local Indian tribes and other interested groups into the planning process.

Joe King, Richland city manager, stressed that the Hanford Comprehensive Plan is intended to reflect the entire community's land-use vision of Hanford, not just that of elected city and county officials.

"It doesn't serve DOE well to have a

site plan that is different than the community's perception of what ought to happen at Hanford," King said.

Complicating the planning effort is that several chunks of Hanford land already are up for grabs.

The Yakama Indian Nation and Bureau of Land Management have submitted separate proposals for the Arid Land Ecology Reserve while the National Park Service has recommended the Hanford Reach become a wildlife refuge.

Cleanup report expected to target immediate risks

By LES BLUMENTHAL
and WANDA BRIGGS
Herald staff writers

WASHINGTON — A report due next week is sure to be controversial and spark renewed debate whether Hanford cleanup should be based on risk analysis, the chairman of a key Senate committee says.

"It will stimulate your readers," Alaska Republican Sen. Frank Murkowski said when asked about a report prepared by Steve Blush, a former Department of Energy official whose earlier report on Hanford angered many at the reservation.

"It will be controversial, and I'm sure we will have to go into it in great depth," Murkowski, chairman of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, said in an

Murkowski refused to reveal any details of the report, which could be presented to the committee as early as Tuesday.

Sen. Slade Gorton, R-Wash., and Rep. Doc Hastings, whose 4th District includes Hanford, said they do not know yet what the report will recommend.

The report is being closely held, and not even top officials at Hanford have been able to obtain advance draft copies. The report, however, is expected to indicate cleanup costs at Hanford could be

■ **EMSL:** Battelle-Northwest says budget cuts approved by a House subcommittee won't threaten a \$230 million Hanford laboratory. Page A3.

Environmental risk study flawed, say Hanford advisers

By JOHN STANG

Herald staff writer

SEATTLE — A soon-to-be-released study is flawed in the way it ranks environmental risks at Department of Energy sites, the Hanford Advisory Board believes.

That study appears flawed because Mid-Columbia Indian nations, Hanford regulators, Bechtel Hanford Inc., unions, activist groups and other stakeholders were not consulted, board members contend.

Board members are worried this study will influence how Congress views DOE cleanup nationwide.

The board decided Thursday in Seattle to send a letter to DOE about this concern. The report is due to be released in a few days.

The study was conducted by the Consortium for Risk Evaluations (CERE), a team of representatives from universities and corporations that analyzed records at six DOE sites, Hanford, Rocky Flats, Idaho Falls, Savannah River, Oak Ridge and Fernald.

The CERE study gathers and condenses existing reports on the DOE sites.

Ralph Patt, a hydrogeologist specializing in Hanford for the Oregon Department of Energy, has monitored the CERE meetings and initial drafts for the Hanford Advisory

Board. He is chairman of the board's environmental restoration committee.

Patt said the study has errors in its data; he cited ground water movement figures.

He also said the initial indications are the CERE study will say there are no immediate off-site risk at Hanford to health or the environment, and a moderate risk to the Columbia River.

Patt is concerned DOE has indicated it wants feedback on the study by mid-March. That is too short a time to absorb and comment on the report, he contended.

Board members — who represent the entire Hanford political spectrum from Tri-

City interests to activist groups — agreed that excluding input from stakeholders is a mistake.

"The thing is not only flawed, but fatally flawed," said board member Todd Martin, a researcher for the Hanford Education Action League.

Patt said Assistant Energy Secretary Tom Grumbly told him he will make decisions on allocating cleanup money based in the rankings of environmental risks at the DOE sites.

Patt is worried Hanford's risks will rank toward the bottom.

The board's letter contends:

■ Priorities from Hanford's current and pre-

vious public committees should be considered.

■ DOE should recognize the data gathered from the six sites will be different from site to site.

■ All the stakeholders should be part of the risk evaluations.

■ If those parties are excluded, the report should note that.

The letter stopped short of criticizing the actual data in the study because several board members believed it would be premature to do so before the report is unveiled.

DOE officials in Washington, D.C., could not be reached for comment Friday.

Hanford's tank waste reduced by evaporator

By JOHN STANG

Herald staff writer

SEATTLE — Radioactive wastes in Hanford's 177 underground tanks have been reduced from 61 million gallons to 56 million gallons.

John Wagoner, Hanford manager for the U.S. Department of Energy, told the Hanford Advisory Board this week the waste volume has been reduced with an evaporator facility. The plant removes water from the sludge in the tanks.

The ongoing processing of the waste also makes it likely Hanford may not have to build two to six new underground storage tanks, as was originally expected, Wagoner said.

The 33-member Hanford Advisory Board represents the entire Hanford political spectrum and advises DOE and Hanford's regulators on policy issues.

The advisory board also heard Wagoner outline DOE's budget estimates for environmental cleanup at Hanford through 2001, though Wagoner said the figures are likely to change.

The preliminary figures are about \$1.44 billion for the 1996 fiscal year, \$1.23 billion for 1997 and slightly more than \$1 billion each for 1998, 1999 and 2000.

In 2000, Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary's master plan to trim DOE's budget runs out. Consequently, the preliminary estimate for environmental management at Hanford in 2001 is \$1.27 billion.

Nemec replaces Keen as Bechtel Hanford president

By JOHN STANG

Herald staff writer

Bechtel Hanford Inc. vice president Joseph Nemec has replaced Edward Keen as president of Hanford's environmental restoration contractor, Bechtel announced Friday.

The change took place Wednesday, said Bechtel spokesman John Schlatter.

Keen is retiring, but will remain a

member of Bechtel Hanford's board of directors, Schlatter said.

Keen was out of state Friday, and Nemec was on vacation. Neither could be reached for comment.

Bechtel became Hanford's first environmental restoration management (ERMC) contractor in July 1994, when its \$800 million, five-year contract kicked in.

It employs about 800 people and took over environmental restoration duties from Westinghouse Hanford Co.

Nemec was Bechtel's vice president of operations, and will be succeeded by Steven Liedle, who was Bechtel's manager of projects.

Nemec has more than 25 years of experience in environmental restoration, nuclear facility decommissioning and reactor operations, according to a Bechtel news release. He has been with Bechtel since 1982.

Prior to coming to Hanford in 1994, Nemec was manager of Bechtel's 550-person office in Oak Ridge, Tenn., which provides environmental ser-

vices to government and private clients, the release stated.

Nemec worked at Hanford with UNC Nuclear Industries from 1965 to 1971 and from 1974 until he joined Bechtel.

He is a native of Butte, Mont., and earned a bachelor's degree in physics from the University of Montana.

Liedle is a native of Milwaukee, and has a bachelor's degree in zoology and a master's degree in oceanography and limnology, both from the University of Wisconsin. He earned a

doctorate in environmental science and engineering from UCLA.

He joined Bechtel in 1982 and has been in various environmental projects since, the release stated.

Keen has had a 35-year career with senior management positions in the aerospace industry, environmental restoration and the Olympic Games, the release stated.

He plans to stay to advise Bechtel on expanding its Richland operation to do environmental work outside of Hanford, Schlatter said.

In the release, R.C. Johnstone Jr., chairman of Bechtel Hanford's board, said "Joe Nemec's knowledge of the Hanford site and his experience in managing complex environmental restoration projects make him ideally suited for this important assignment."

"I appreciate the fine work Ed Keen did in getting Bechtel Hanford to a good start with the environmental restoration contract," Johnstone said.

Hanford tank testing plan faulty, advisory board says

By JOHN STANG

Herald staff writer

SEATTLE — Westinghouse Hanford Co. did not plan well for last year's tests at Tank 106-C, and it must plan future tank-farm tests better, Hanford Advisory Board members have agreed.

The board decided Thursday to send a letter stating its concerns to the Department of Energy in April, after fine-tuning its language.

The board's conclusion is shared by Westinghouse, DOE and Hanford critics.

The work began in March 1994 to test for leaks and to study safe levels for the water covering radioactive sludge in the underground storage tank, which contains 229,000 gallons of radioactive waste.

During the test, the water level dropped to the point where the sludge was improperly exposed, according to DOE documents. That was corrected.

Then, too much water was added later in summer to compensate for

■ **FLAWED:** The Hanford Advisory Board sees problems in an upcoming study on environmental risks at Department of Energy sites. Page A10.

water lost by Westinghouse spokesman Mike Berriochoa. He said the tank's safety was not threatened during the test.

That put the water level 0.2 inch above the maximum level used as a safeguard against leaks. The 0.2 inch translates to 550 gallons.

DOE reviews showed the test was not well planned, Westinghouse was slow to react, confusion existed on procedures, and communications were poor.

"The test criteria and expectations were poorly and inconsistently defined," wrote Gregory Morgan, DOE's East Tank Farms program manager in a December memo distributed to the Hanford board Thursday. The confusion was complicated when an in-tank thermometer initially gave false low readings and then higher true readings as a water pocket around it collapsed.

"We recognized early on that we could have done this better," said

Westinghouse spokesman Mike Berriochoa. He said the tank's safety was not threatened during the test.

The Hanford Advisory Board — which represents the entire Hanford political spectrum — plans to endorse most of the recommendations submitted Thursday by board member Tom Carpenter. He is an attorney for the Government Accountability Project, a whistleblower advocacy organization.

Those recommendations are to upgrade monitors, improve communications, study the situation more, and for DOE to more strictly ensure that Westinghouse plans properly and follows procedures.

Morgan said he agrees with those recommendations. But he balked at Carpenter's contention that Tank 106-C should be put on Hanford's list of 68 leaking tanks.

Morgan said no conclusive evidence exists that Tank 106-C leaks. Also, he said the tank is already on the fastest-possible track to pump its contents into a double-shell tank, starting in 1996.

Big dreams for nuclear isotopes

Hanford scientist sees future for cancer treatment in Tri-Cities

By The Associated Press

Scientist Bob Schenter believes the Tri-Cities will someday be as famous for cancer treatment as the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota is for health care and research.

Westinghouse Hanford Co. and the Pacific Northwest Laboratory are working together to produce a medical isotope — already being tested as a cancer treatment in human clinical trials around the country — from nuclear waste at the Hanford nuclear reservation near here.

The treatment still must be approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

But Schenter envisions a day when cancer patients from around the country will travel to the Tri-Cities for their treatment.

"It's only natural," the Westinghouse Hanford scientist said. "The isotope has a short half-life and needs to be used as soon as possible. So it's easier to bring the patients to the treatment rather than bring the treatment to them."

"Within 10 to 15 years, I predict we'll have the Hanford — or maybe the Northwest — world center for cancer treatment," he said.

Perhaps the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle will establish a clinic here, he mused.

Anything's possible.

Westinghouse Hanford and PNL, both contractors at the Energy Department's Hanford site, are working with the Tri-City Industrial Development Council to interest private industry in extracting the isotope — yttrium-90 — from Hanford wastes for commercial marketing.

"There's some serious interest," said LaMar Trego, president of Westinghouse Hanford Co., the division of Pittsburgh-based Westinghouse Electric that manages Hanford for the U.S. Energy Department.

"There are real business plans being put together right now and discussions going on about signing an actual agreement."

He declined to say which companies were interested, and any deal would be contingent on FDA

approval. But Alan Fritzberg, chief scientist at NeoRx Corp., said his Seattle-based biopharmaceutical company is looking closely at Hanford's supply of yttrium-90.

"We have a strong commitment to developing yttrium-90 for targeted radiotherapy," Fritzberg said. "One of the sources is the Hanford material, and we've also been looking at what ways we could develop that as a product."

The only other U.S. source of yttrium-90 is Wilmington, Del.-based DuPont, he said, though there are English and Canadian sources as well.

Turning Hanford's medical isotope program over to private industry is the main goal, said Bill Madia, president of the lab at Hanford managed by Columbus, Ohio-based Battelle. PNL is one of the nation's 10 federal laboratories.

"This is turning lemons into lemonade. This is a good example of knowing how to be in science and technology business," Madia said.

"To the uninformed, Hanford

might look like a waste dump. ... To the entrepreneur, Hanford looks like a whole world of opportunities.

"When you talk to health industry, they say they need better diagnostic and therapeutic isotopes," he said. "Take that need and marry it with the assets that I call Hanford, and you've got a wonderful marriage, using people and facilities that don't exist many places."

Westinghouse Hanford Co. now sells yttrium-90 to universities and research hospitals for less than it costs to extract it, said Sue Golladay, who is in charge of those sales.

"It's appropriate for the government to be involved in medical isotopes. ... The government owns the isotopes anyway and they decay away anyway, so they might as well use it for medical treatments," Golladay said.

Private industry can be enticed to step in after they've been tested and approved, a process that takes years.

"Then it becomes profitable," she said.

Oncologist optimistic about isotope

By The Associated Press

Dr. Huibert Vriesendorp is leery of talking about cures for cancer.

But the radiation oncologist at the M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston is optimistic a radioactive isotope called yttrium-90 will one day be used to kill cancer cells immediately after a patient is diagnosed.

"I would not be surprised to find out yttrium is going to be useful in many kinds of common cancers," Vriesendorp said. "But we have to do the studies cautiously and carefully."

Vriesendorp is testing the isotope, extracted from nuclear waste stored at the Hanford nuclear reservation near here, on cancer patients.

"It's nice because (patients) do appear to respond. Three out of four get shrinkage of their tumor," Vriesendorp said.

The isotope is not a cure — tumors recur within a year in most patients. But researchers are working to address that.

Sixty patients with Hodgkin's Disease, a cancer of the lymph system, have participated in Vriesendorp's

study at the Houston center so far. At least six other human clinical trials of yttrium-90 are under way around the country, the National Cancer Institute said.

The Houston cancer clinic has applied for a \$5 million NCI grant over five years to expand its study of yttrium-90 as a weapon against brain, ovarian and breast cancer, Vriesendorp said.

But he worries federal budget problems will mean the cancer institute, the U.S. Department of Social and Health Services and other agencies will cut back support of studies like his. He believes researchers could be on the verge of a breakthrough involving development of a new protein carrier to deliver yttrium-90 to the tumor.

"We don't have enough people to do the tests, we don't have enough funds to buy the animals and do the analysis," Vriesendorp said.

"But if this new protein works for Hodgkin's Disease, I think we'll be close for something that will be useful at the time of diagnosis. I'd love to call it a cure, but I'm not comfortable using that word."

The yttrium-90 studies involve patients who have failed to respond to more traditional cancer treatments: radiation and chemotherapy and bone-marrow transplants.

"When they come to us, they really don't have any other treatments available to them," Vriesendorp said.

In the outpatient treatment, patients receive two injections, the

first with a diagnostic isotope that determines whether the protein carrier will deliver the yttrium-90 directly to the cancer.

Hanford ice age climate research is nothing to sneeze at

■ Each Monday the Herald takes a look back at a person or event in the Mid-Columbia's past.

By JOHN STANG

Herald staff writer

Need to know what Hanford will be like a few thousand years from now?

Just look through a microscope at pollen grains that are smaller than the width of a human hair and tens of thousands years old.

That is what University of Oregon geography professor Cathy Whitlock began doing 11 months ago.

And she will continue to do so for the next couple of years.

What she finds, and what a Battelle-Northwest paleo-climatologist analyzes, will help determine how a Hanford project is designed.

Confused?

Here is what is happening.

Monday Update

Last summer, Hanford engineers built a prototype project in which a trench is dug. Then contaminated material was buried in it with a mound of different layers of soils covering the trench.

It will be tested and studied for three years.

A major question is what types of weather will pound away at the covering mound over the next few thousand years.

That is important so engineers can design future mounds to resist wind and rain erosion.

So how do you look at Hanford's climate a few thousand years from now?

You look way, way back into the past.

That's because changes in climate occur in regular cycles, said Ken Petersen, a paleo-climatologist for Battelle.

Ice ages usually last 100,000 years with 10,000 years of nonglacial climate between each ice age.

"Just like clockwork. ... We've watched this pattern over and over," Petersen said.

He figures the next ice age could be in about 2,000 years.

While glaciers usually don't go south of the Spokane area, they will likely change the climate in the Mid-Columbia, he said.

The way to predict climate changes is to look at old pollen grains. Different trees and plants have different types of pollen.

If you identify a pollen grain and figure out how old it is, you have a good clue about what trees and vegetation were around at a certain time.

Researchers look for ancient pollen grains in places where microbes and oxidation won't gnaw away at the tiny grains.

That would be under a lot of soil under still waters — like under a lake with no stream flowing into it.

Carp Lake near Goldendale is a prime spot discovered by Whitlock in 1980 when she was working on her doctorate.

In 1980 and 1990-91, she supervised drilling from a barge into the lake's bottom to collect

soil samples, ultimately reaching 18 meters beneath the lake.

The pollen in those samples dates back about 70,000 years, Petersen said.

Examining dirt samples is tedious. It takes about eight hours of lab and slide work to do a census of pollen grains in a 200-year layer of soil, Petersen said.

So far, samples have turned up pollen from pine trees, spruce trees, fir trees, grass and sagebrush.

Hanford — interested in how to design the mound barrier — put up \$70,000 to drill to the rock beneath Carp Lake to try to find samples from before the last ice age.

The drilling in April reached the 23-meter mark. But it ran out of money before it found the rock underneath the soil.

Whitlock and Petersen hope 23 meters will reach 100,000 to 115,000 years in the past — and hope that will be enough to look before the last ice age.

The next couple of years of lab work will tell, they said.

While the analysis of the 1994 samples are under way, the studies of the 1990 samples are almost finished.

Petersen said studies show Hanford can expect to be cold, windy and dry during the next ice age.

Also, Hanford probably will have more grass and less sagebrush after the ice age arrives.

This is important to the Hanford barrier mound because sagebrush's deeper roots suck up more water than shallower grass roots, Petersen said.

Also, the 1990 data show Hanford can expect an annual rainfall of 3 to 9 inches during an ice age, Petersen said.

Today, Hanford averages 6 inches of rain a year, and the barrier mound will be tested to cope with 18 inches annually.

"To me, it's just a delight to have a way to apply my field (of paleo-climatology)," Petersen said. "Here, it is really helpful as it applies to a real engineering problem."

3-6-95

Hanford landfill limits could cost county

By JOHN STANG

Herald staff writer

The state is considering limiting amounts of slightly contaminated rubble at US Ecology's Hanford landfill.

But Benton County Treasurer Claude Oliver argues the new limit would cut revenue the county and a local economic development fund receive in surcharges on the wastes.

The proposed new limit is the topic of a 10 a.m. Tuesday public hearing at the Richland library and a 10 a.m. Wednesday hearing in Tumwater.

The Washington Department of Health proposes to limit the US Ecology site to accepting 8,600 cubic feet of "Naturally Occurring or Accelerator Produced Radioactive Material" — or NARM waste — a year.

NARM waste is essentially rubble slightly

tainted with uranium or other radioactive substances. It is found in mining and industrial sites, and is usually less radioactive than low-level radioactive wastes.

In 1994, the US Ecology site accepted 50,850 cubic feet of NARM waste and 124,735 cubic feet of low-level radioactive wastes.

Low-level radioactive wastes would include protective clothing, and isotope wastes in barrels.

The health department is considering limiting NARM waste because it does not want NARM waste taking up space that could otherwise hold low-level radioactive waste, said T.R. Strong, director of the health department's division of radiation protection.

Also, the health department supports a long-term state drive to lower the amount of radioactive wastes in Washington.

Another wrinkle is the US Ecology site is legally limited to accepting low-level radioactive wastes from 11 states. But it is

allowed to accept NARM wastes from anywhere in the nation.

However, Strong said that was not a factor in the health department's NARM-waste proposal.

The United States has only two sites allowed to receive low-level radioactive wastes — Barnwell, S.C. and Hanford. Others are on the drawing board.

But other sites can legally accept NARM wastes, with the nearest in Utah.

Barry Bede, US Ecology's lobbyist in Olympia, could not be reached for comment. But Oliver opposes the proposed limit.

That is because it would trim income Benton County and the Hanford Economic Diversification Fund get from a \$6.50-per-cubic-foot surcharge on wastes sent to the Hanford landfill.

That surcharge went into effect in 1994, and was split evenly between the county and the fund. That sent \$570,654 to each in 1994, according to county figures.

In 1995, the split of the surcharge changed with \$2 going to the county and \$4.50 going to the economic fund.

If the amount of NARM wastes drops from 50,850 cubic feet to 8,600 cubic feet — assuming a \$2 surcharge at both volumes — that would translate to \$84,500 in lost revenue to the county.

The money would go to roads and capital projects, Oliver said.

And that same drop in volume — assuming a \$4.50 surcharge — would translate to a \$190,125 loss to the diversification fund, which is supposed to use the money to help the Tri-City economy.

The governor appointed a 11-member committee in late 1994 to decide how to use the money. The committee, which is still organizing, is leaning toward lending the money to entrepreneurs' projects likely to create jobs, said committee chairwoman Sue Watkins Frost.

West Richland's recent unsuccessful courtship of Micron Technology Inc. could have been a possible recipient of some of that money to help sweeten the pot for Micron, she indicated.

The committee is studying what position it wants to take on the health department's proposed limit, she said.

Oliver contended there is no economic or scientific basis for reducing NARM waste, since it is less radioactive than low-level wastes. He said the federal government disposes greater volumes of NARM wastes in its Hanford operations surrounding US Ecology's site.

Strong said the state does not have jurisdiction over federal NARM waste.

US Ecology, a private company, subleases the landfill site from the state, which leases some central Hanford land from the federal government.

Benitz urges caution on Hanford land plan

By DOUG CAMPBELL
Herald Valley bureau

PROSSER — Even as county officials reported progress Monday in negotiations over a multi-agency Hanford land use plan, Benton County Commissioner Max Benitz Jr. expressed reservations about the federal government's involvement in the project.

"I have problems accepting this type of a concept," Benitz said. "It is a county plan and this county plan should be implemented by the county."

Benitz said the Department of Energy shouldn't be a partner in land use planning for post-cleanup Hanford.

"Once that land is put back into county, state or city control, that's where Benton County's land use plan then has the authority," the freshman commissioner said. He added

planning for surplus Hanford lands should be no different than planning for any other county lands.

DOE, county and Richland officials have set a March 17 deadline for signing an agreement in principle outlining how the agencies will coordinate efforts to draft a single Hanford comprehensive land-use plan.

As envisioned, the plan would outline how 21st century Hanford would develop alongside the Tri-Cities, suggesting varying degrees of decontamination depending on the intended future land use. Industrial, commercial and recreational land classifications also would be established.

DOE officials are poised to sign the agreement in principle, county planning director Terry Marden said Monday. The item was on the Richland City Council's consent agenda for approval Monday night.

Benitz is the first high-ranking county official to publicly object to a

joint Hanford planning process. Commissioner Ray Isaacson, who was out of town Monday on county business, lobbied more than a year to launch the project, and Commissioner Sandi Strawn on Monday urged Benitz to rethink his protest.

"How would you perceive that we would do this better?" Strawn asked Benitz. "I am convinced that this needs to go ahead."

Marden argued a cooperative planning approach would ensure different jurisdictions wouldn't draw conflicting land use maps, which could threaten economic development.

"We don't want to say one area should be industrial and then have it planned (by DOE) for something different so that before they release it the land isn't cleaned properly," Marden said.

County commissioners are to continue deliberations over the Hanford plan next Monday.

DOE cleanup report delayed

By WANDA BRIGGS
Herald staff writer

The unveiling of a report expected to say Hanford cleanup should be based on risk analysis has been delayed until March 14.

"It will stimulate your readers," Alaska Republican Sen. Frank Murkowski said recently when asked about a report prepared by Steve Blush, a former Department of Energy official.

The results of the Blush report were tentatively scheduled to be released today.

However, a spokeswoman for Sen. Blush said they have been told release of the report has been delayed a week.

The report has been closely held, and not even top officials at Hanford

have been able to obtain advance copies. The report, however, is expected to indicate cleanup costs at Hanford could be reduced dramatically — perhaps by half — if the effort concentrated only on problems that present an immediate risk to workers, the public and the environment.

The risks expected to be cited by Blush include the same high-risk projects on DOE Hanford Manager John Wagoner's list of priorities:

■ The 56 million gallons of highly radioactive waste stored in underground storage tanks, many of which have leaked.

■ The 2,300 tons of used and decaying fuel rods stored in the huge ponds a few hundred feet from the Columbia River, called the K Basins, which were never meant as permanent storage sites.

■ Plutonium left in various facilities that are no longer used. Recent reports ranked Hanford's Plutonium Finishing Plant (PFP), which contains the majority of the site's stockpiled plutonium, as DOE's fifth-most-hazardous problem.

The nation's 13 former nuclear defense production sites store about 28.6 tons of plutonium and at least 6,000 nuclear bomb triggers.

Blush was hired as a consultant to do the report by Louisiana Democratic Sen. J. Bennett Johnston, who was chairman of the committee until Republicans took control of the Senate in the November election.

Blush was to be paid \$100,000 for the six-month job to evaluate and recommend cleanup changes.

Blush made several trips to Hanford to interview DOE and contractor officials and employees.

3-7-95

Limit on radioactive rubble opposed at Tri-City hearing

By JOHN STANG
Herald staff writer

The state may reconsider a proposed limit on the amount of radioactive rubble US Ecology's Hanford landfill can accept.

Strong opposition was expressed at a Tuesday hearing on limiting the site to no more than 8,600 cubic feet of slightly contaminated wastes annually.

Opposition came from Benton County officials, the Tri-City Industrial Development Council, Allied Technology Group, the Washington Public Power Supply System, the Bonneville Power Administration and US Ecology.

Since opposition appears universal so far, the state will consider adjusting the proposed limit "to make it more palatable," said Terry Strong, director of the State Health Department's division of radiation protection.

A second hearing is scheduled at 10 a.m. today in Tumwater.

About 15 people attended Tuesday's hearing in Richland on the state proposal to limit the amount of naturally occurring or accelerator-

produced material — or NARM waste — at the Hanford landfill.

NARM waste is essentially waste slightly tainted with uranium or other radioactive substances. It is found in mining and industrial sites and is usually less radioactive than low-level wastes.

In 1994, US Ecology accepted 50,850 cubic feet of NARM waste and 124,735 cubic feet of low-level radioactive wastes.

Low-level radioactive wastes include protective clothing and isotope wastes in barrels.

Strong said the proposal to reduce NARM waste stems from an unwritten state policy dating back to 1978. "The state of Washington does not want to take more than its fair share," he said.

Only Hanford and a site in Barnwell, S.C., accept low-level radioactive wastes, with Hanford accepting waste from only 11 states. Five sites — including Hanford and Barnwell — accept NARM waste, with no limits on where it can come from.

In 1994, US Ecology accepted 135 NARM waste shipments from 32 states, said US Ecology regional manager Barry Bede.

So far in 1995, the Hanford site has accepted 105 shipments totaling 48,000 cubic feet of NARM wastes, Bede said.

There is a state-mandated surcharge of \$6.50 a cubic foot on the waste, which is split between Benton County and a Tri-City economic development fund.

Opponents of the 8,600 cubic feet limit argued:

■ The state has not shown any health or safety benefits by limiting NARM waste at Hanford. "The greatest danger to the public is if NARM waste is placed randomly around the country," Bede contended.

■ The surcharge money would be lost to Benton County and the economic diversification fund.

■ Questions exist on determining which NARM wastes to accept.

■ Difficulties exist in discussing a policy that is not written.

Strong said the 8,600 cubic feet figure was reached by looking at US Ecology's NARM waste for the past 2½ years and discounting amounts that had been stockpiled for long periods. He said the number was calculated as the annual average of waste produced.

Tri-City lawmakers point out Hanford's woes to legislature

By ERIK SMITH
Herald Western Washington bureau

OLYMPIA — Where's the Seattle press when they need it?

With Hanford cuts on the way, Tri-City lawmakers say the reservation could use a little of the attention it got just a few years ago, when nuclear waste hazards made headlines on a daily basis.

A pair of Hanford memorials cleared the state House and Senate on Thursday, giving Tri-City lawmakers a chance to point out the effect of Department of Energy layoffs on the waste cleanup.

"I ask all of you to think seriously about what's happening in our corner of the state," said state Sen. Valoria Loveland, D-Pasco.

DOE has announced the Hanford payroll will be cut by about 4,800 workers by the end of the year, part of a nationwide budget cut for the department. House Joint Memorial 4026 and Senate Joint Memorial 8020 ask Congress work to reduce regulatory obstacles, so more money might be directed to cleanup. The memorials carry no legal weight.

"For many years, the process of cleanup at Hanford has been slowed by a mass of overlapping regulations," said state Sen. Pat Hale, R-Kennewick. DOE work orders specify in minute detail how each act is to be done, she said.

The Senate measure passed 46-0. In the House, the memorial scored a 97-0 vote.

State Rep. Shirley Hankins, R-Richland, said it's curious to see the press quiet a decade after it trumpeted the problems of the Washington Public Power Supply System and Hanford waste management.

"I'm not sure a lot of people understand the issue here (in Olympia) because there is not the intense feeling about Eastern Washington there used to be, in the field of energy. In the early '80s, it was on the front page every day, and now it isn't. And now we need to get the pressure on to get the job done."

The pressure appeared to abate in 1989, she said, when DOE and the state Department of Ecology negotiated a landmark agreement to set a timetable for Hanford cleanup. "We need to keep their feet to the fire to keep that going," she said. "It's not just important to our area, it's important to the state."

Listed as sponsors of the House and Senate measures was the full Tri-City delegation, including state Reps. Jerome Delvin, R-Richland, Dave Mastin, D-Walla Walla, and Bill Grant, D-Walla Walla.

In other legislative action, the farm lobby won another long-running battle in the state Senate.

In the midst of a 1991 budget crunch, legislative budget writers snared the interest from 300 dedicated accounts. The accounts rely on user fees to fund specific programs. They included 23 funds controlled by the Department of Agriculture, notably for grain inspection and state and county fairs.

And with \$500,000 diverted to the state budget over the last four years, farm groups say they have been squeezed.

Senate Bill 5003, sponsored by Senate Agriculture Chairwoman Marilyn Rasmussen, restores the interest to the agriculture funds. The measure passed 47-0. A similar measure sponsored by state Rep. Jim Honeyford, R-Sunnyside, awaits action in the state House.

3-7-95

Hanford's tank image improves

By WANDA BRIGGS

Herald staff writer

Two programs are providing Hanford workers with valuable information about the 57 million gallons of highly radioactive waste stored in giant underground tanks.

They are:

■ The fourth in a series of eight cameras now ready for permanent installation in Hanford's double-shell tanks.

■ Monitoring systems that will be installed in all 25 of Hanford's hydrogen "watch list" tanks by mid-April.

The new camera will be installed in tank AN-107 this month in preparation for a mixer pump that is to be added to the tank later this year. The camera will tell engineers how well the 75-horsepower mixer pump is performing and if it is putting undue stress on parts of the tanks, including weld joints.

"We have been working for two years to improve the ability to take images inside tanks," Rick Raymond, plant engineer, explained Thursday. The new color camera will cost less than the first tank cameras, offer better lighting and be able to remain inside the tank indefinitely.

The mixer pump is being added to reduce a corrosion problem. The pump will mix a caustic compound — sodium hydroxide — with the tank's contents to neutralize the acid.

Views from this video camera will help engineers see what happens once the mixing begins.

For now, Tank AN-107 is the only double-shell tank that will receive the new camera.

Westinghouse-Hanford Co. engineers assembled the 800-pound camera system at the 306E fabrication shop using state-of-the-art commercial equipment, Raymond said.

The largest units, which fit into a 12-inch pipe, cost about \$120,000, while the smaller camera systems, which fit

into 3-inch pipe, cost about \$20,000.

The first color camera system, built at a cost of about \$200,000 lasted just a week inside troublesome tank 101-SY last year before radiation fouled the system.

Meanwhile, Kelly Carothers, project engineer for AN-107, said probes have already been installed in six other of the hydrogen "watch list" tanks.

Hydrogen is a flammable gas which forms in a number of Hanford's high-level radioactive waste tanks.

In most cases, the hydrogen is released harmlessly as it is generated. But in other instances, the gas becomes trapped and is released in concentrations high enough to cause concern about explosion.

"We expect the new equipment to give us accurate data that will put a lot of fears to rest," said Jerry Johnson, manager of Flammable Gas Tank Safety for Westinghouse.

Also, he noted, "Because of our concern over the potential for hydrogen to exist in those tanks, we imposed constraints on work activities around the tanks to avoid the potential for sparks that could ignite any hydrogen that might exist."

As a result, cabinets containing the instruments are now in place at all of the watch list tanks.

Workers are installing the equipment to connect instruments to the tanks. In those tanks with active ventilation systems, such as the double-shell tanks, the instruments are installed in the ventilation exhaust.

For those tanks which do not require ventilation systems, probes are put into the air space in the tanks. The hydrogen monitors draw vapors through the probes and passes them through the analytical instruments.

If discharges exceed a preset limit, valves capture a vapor sample which can then be analyzed further, said engineer Eric Straalsund.

The monitoring systems cost \$5.3 million — or \$225,000 per unit.

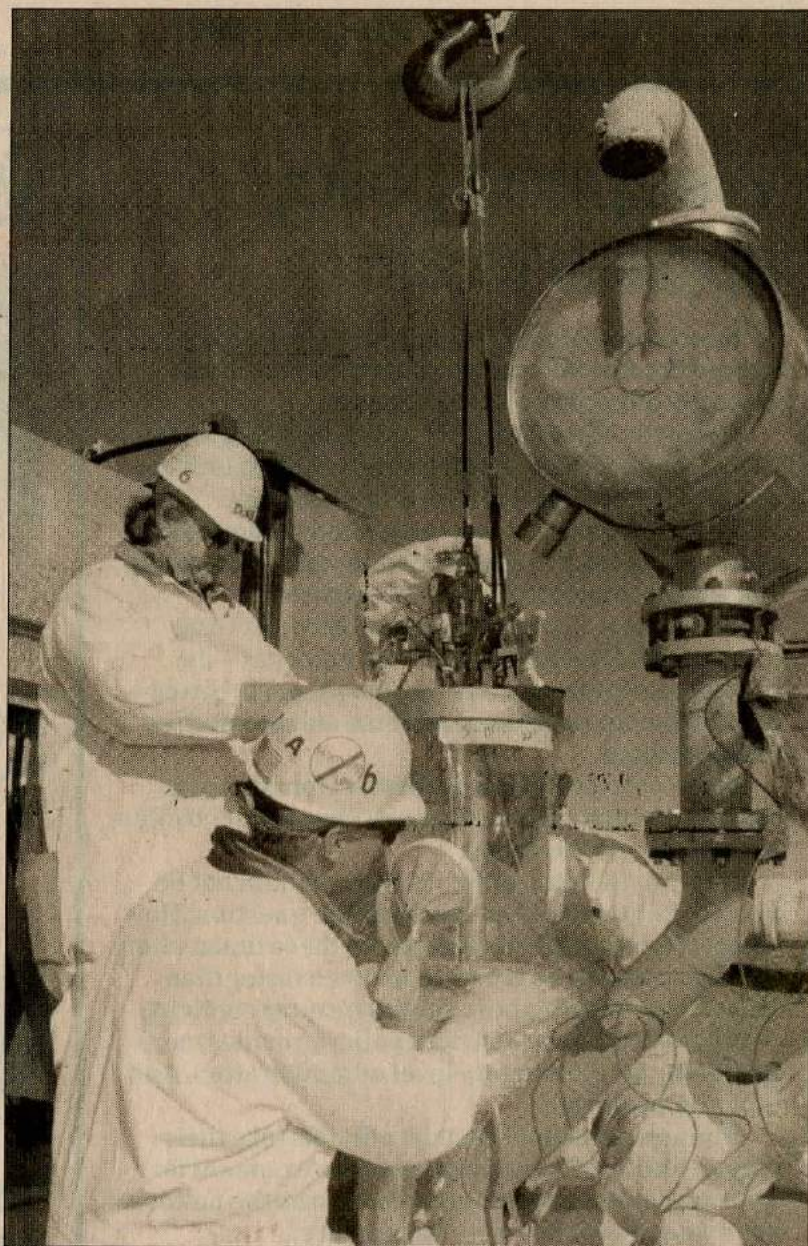


Photo courtesy Department of Energy

Hanford workers install monitoring equipment on 25 "safety watch list" tanks that generate hydrogen gas. The devices tell scientists which tanks require monitoring and which don't.

OLYMPIA — The Washington Senate's decision Tuesday to grant a \$150 million tax break to manufacturers was hailed as a bold step to create jobs and criticized as a premature giveaway that could hurt state services.

The upper house voted 45-4 to accept a version of a bill that already has the blessings of the Republican



Democratic governor. Negotiators will decide the final version, with approval now all but assured.

In recent years, lawmakers and the governor have been trying to attract manufacturers — and

Evergreen State by deferring or exempting plant construction from the sales tax. That tax tops 8 percent in some locales.

A deferral program has been in place for firms locating in distressed areas, such as the timber counties, and for the high-wage high-tech industry.

The latest version states new plant construction or major expansion

Machinery, equipment and installation also would be exempt.

It transforms last year's tax deferral program for high-tech companies into an exemption.

Under an amendment sponsored by Sen. Jim Hargrove, D-Hoquiam, a deferral program for timber and lumber companies in distressed areas would get an outright exemption. That added \$2.5 million to the

Report blasts Tri-Party pact, cleanup efforts

By LES BLUMENTHAL

Herald Washington, D.C., bureau

WASHINGTON — A new report offered a damning indictment Tuesday of the cleanup program at Hanford and called on Congress to rewrite the cleanup agreement with Washington state and to cap spending for five years to control costs.

The 250-page report concludes current efforts to rein in spending are fruitless and said Hanford's budget can be cut significantly only by reducing the work force.

It contained no suggestion additional job losses would be needed beyond the roughly 4,700 already announced by the Department of Energy. About 1,500 of those jobs already have been eliminated through early retirement and resignation programs, with layoffs now under way to cut the rest by Dec. 31.

The report, prepared for the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee by former DOE official Steve Blush, spreads the blame for the problems to almost everyone involved — DOE, the federal Environmental Protection Agency, Wash-

ington state, the contractors and especially to Congress for passing conflicting environmental laws.

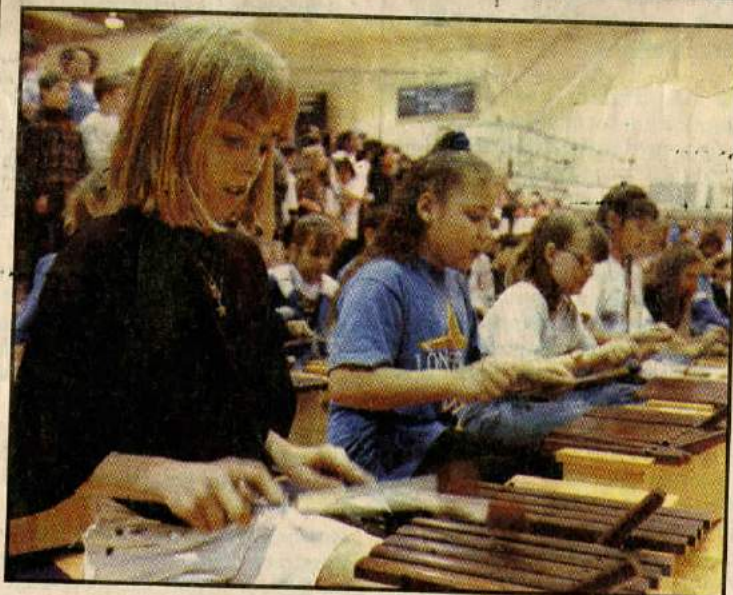
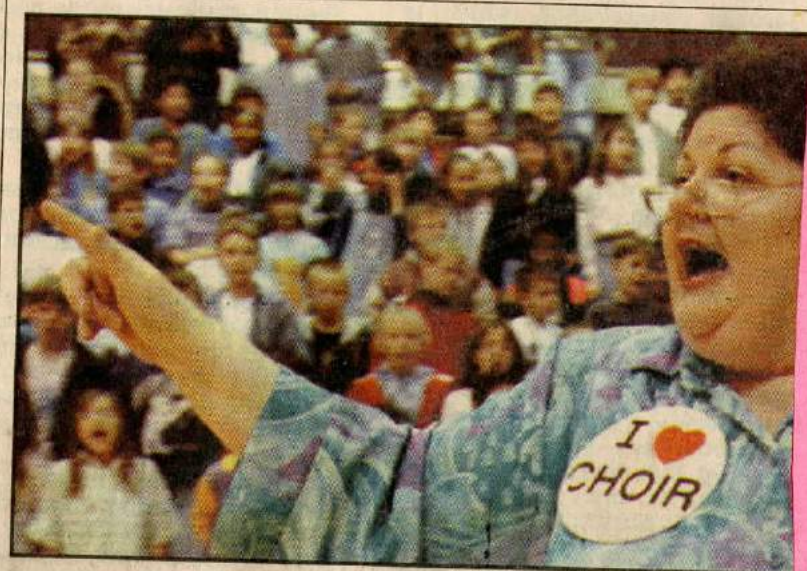
A major target in the report is the regulatory morass that has grown up around cleanup.

"There is almost no aspect of the current approach to cleaning up Hanford that can withstand scrutiny," the report stated. "DOE and its regulators lack a clear and realistic vision of the cleanup. ... There is a limit to what the federal government can, will and should pay to clean up Hanford."

The report took dead aim at the Tri-Party Agreement between the state, DOE and the EPA. The 1989 agreement sets cleanup schedules and deadlines.

"The Tri-Party Agreement does not and cannot provide a sound framework for prioritizing the work of cleaning up the site," the report said. "It offers the illusion of progress where little exists, and eventually the parties will have to admit the schedules have no meaning."

The report stated Congress must alter the agreement and various fed-



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Doc, Gorton push privatization

By WANDA BRIGGS

Herald staff writer

U.S. Sen. Slade Gorton and Rep. Doc Hastings introduced legislation Wednesday they said is aimed at protecting existing jobs at Hanford and creating new ones with the help of private industry.

The legislation, which would make it eas-

ier for the Department of Energy to privatize work done by Hanford contractors, came on the heels of a report Tuesday criticizing DOE's management at Hanford.

Gorton and Hastings said their reform proposal is the best long-term solution to Hanford cleanup.

"Sound legal and regulatory reforms at Hanford" are the best way to protect Hanford jobs, Gorton said. "Those who simply

INSIDE:

■ **RIGHT BUT WRONG:** A scathing report on Hanford cleanup rightly identified known problems but downplayed progress, two Department of Energy officials say. **Page A3.**

want to put a fence around Hanford and walk away need to know there are solid solutions

to DOE's management problems.

"They must be assured the money spent at Hanford is getting the job done effectively and efficiently," Gorton added. "The status quo will hurt us in the long run as those who want to wish away Hanford cleanup grow skeptical about the way DOE is managing the site. ...

"If taxpayers are confident the cleanup is effective and efficient, they will support

efforts that guarantee stability for funding of Hanford cleanup," Gorton said.

Hastings agreed.

"Congressionally imposed statutes and DOE regulations have made the cleanup expensive and complex," he said. "Government management is inherently inefficient. What we need to do is leverage private sector

Please see **DOC**, Page A2 ▶

Doc

Continued from Page A1

know-how to speed the cleanup and spur the economy.

"This bill is the first of what will be a very positive step to get on with cleanup at Hanford," Hastings said. "We hope by the time all this process is done, cleanup will be done at a better expense to American taxpayers."

Similar legislation was introduced by Gorton in 1991, but got hung up in the House.

Under the bill:

■ The DOE secretary will have the authority to enter into private contracts for up to 30 years, with two 10-year renewals, for the treatment, management and disposal of nuclear waste and waste byproducts. Currently, DOE has authority to enter into 10-year pacts, but rarely does.

■ The contractor's plant, or laboratory facility, must be within a 25-mile radius of Hanford. And, the energy secretary is instructed to give preference to those contractors who intend to reinvest in the communities where their work is conducted. In addition, the secretary must give preference to contractors whose bids include jobs for local workers, or workers with site experience.

■ Indemnification and other legal protections are provided to insulate contractors from any pre-existing conditions that were not caused by the firm. The bill places strict limits on contractor liability during cleanup, except in cases of negligence. This would ensure a contractor is not held responsible for waste his firm did not create.

■ A ban on cost-plus contracting is included. The bill encourages performance-based contracts, such as those recently renegotiated between DOE, Westinghouse Hanford Co. and Battelle-Northwest. In such contracts, contractors are awarded bonuses for

working cheaper and smarter.

■ A provision protects the contractor from subsequent rule changes by DOE or Congress that would directly affect cleanup efforts. The bill states if DOE mandates new environmental laws that affect cleanup schedules, the private contractor is entitled to renegotiate the contract without penalty.

■ The energy secretary is authorized to lease federally owned land to contractors. By leasing the land, the government permits the contractor to do work not related to DOE sites. For example, an outside contractor may want to vitrify waste at Hanford. With this legislation, the contractor could open its facility at Hanford.

■ There is patent protection.

The bill is expected to be referred to the House Committee on National Security, on which Hastings serves, and the Senate Armed Services Committee.

"The fact we both introduced this bill sends a strong signal of its inter-

est level," Hastings said. "This is the first in what we hope will be a long series of reforms we are working together on."

Although DOE officials did not comment directly on the Gorton-Hastings legislation, a top official Wednesday lauded privatization as a key part of DOE's future.

"Privatization is the way to go," said Tom Grumbly, assistant DOE secretary for environmental management, who oversees cleanup complexwide, agrees at least some of the cleanup work should be farmed out to private industry.

The current approach, with the government managing cleanup activities through a complex web of private contractors, "has brought us mediocrity," he added.

State questions Hanford barrier

By JOHN STANG

Herald staff writer

The state is likely to recommend a delay in the installation of an underground barrier at Hanford's N Springs.

Within the next 10 days, the Washington Department of Ecology expects to send a letter to the Department of Energy urging further study of the issue, said Roger Stanley, Ecology's Hanford project manager.

Bechtel Hanford Inc. recommended not installing the 3,000-foot-long, 40-foot-deep underground wall after studying the project. Current plans call for pounding the wall into the soil along the Columbia River to slow radioactive ground water as it seeps to the river.

The water contains strontium 90 from two waste disposal cribs near the defunct N Reactor.

An attempt to install test walls showed the soil is too dense for the project. Bechtel's studies also con-

"If the state is concerned about the data analysis we provided, we'll be glad to discuss it ..."

— John Schlatter,
Bechtel spokesman

cluded the width of the plume of contaminated ground water appears slightly more than half of the original 3,000-foot-wide estimate.

Bechtel now believes the amount of strontium 90 is one-fifth of the 0.8 curie per year listed in the 1994 N Springs remedial plan.

Even if Bechtel's strontium estimate is correct, that would still be 150 times the state limit for drinking water.

Stanley said Ecology believes it is not feasible to pursue installing the underground wall for now. Instead, he said the state wants more study to consider, for example, whether a shallower wall would work, or if other installation methods can be used.

That could take until early 1996.

The state wants proceed as soon as possible with an already planned small facility to pump water out of the ground and treat it, Stanley said. This would provide information for a larger operation.

Also, Ecology wants to drill three planned bore holes in the crib area as soon as possible to help analyze the ground water, he said.

Ecology is wary about Bechtel's low estimate of strontium 90 reaching the

river. "We didn't feel that (Bechtel) had solid enough technical grounds to draw that lower number," Stanley said.

He added no agency appears solid enough technical information to estimate accurately the amount of strontium 90 going into the river.

Past estimates have ranged from Bechtel's 0.16 curie a year to as much as 20 curies.

Bechtel spokesman John Schlatter said disagreements on how to interpret data — such as the strontium 90 estimate — are common in such a project.

"If the state is concerned about the data analysis we provided, we'll be glad to discuss it with the state, and provide other information that it would like to see," Schlatter said.

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M, 1995 Tri-City Herald

Officials say report ignores success

By WANDA BRIGGS
Herald staff writer

A scathing report this week that concludes Hanford cleanup has cost too much and accomplished too little rightly identified known problems but played down the progress, two Department of Energy officials said Wednesday.

Tom Grumbly, DOE's assistant secretary for environmental management in Washington, D.C., and Ron Izatt, deputy DOE manager in Richland, criticized the solutions suggested in the report prepared for the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee by former DOE official Steve Blush.



Grumbly

The report suggests simplistic solutions to problems that are extraordinarily complex, Grumbly told reporters in a conference call Wednesday. He and Izatt responded to the report.

Sen. Frank H. Murkowski, R-Alaska,

who is the committee's new chairman, and Sen. J. Bennett Johnston, D-La., who as previous chairman ordered the report, said this week that legislation would be written only after hearings on the report's recom-

"We believe we are on the right track with a variety of changes already under way."

—Tom Grumbly

Medical miracles

Hanford researchers turn waste into hope

By DON McMANMAN
Herald staff writer

Hanford scientists Friday wove a dream of wonder drugs from the deadliest radioactive wastes.

They envision cancer patients making pilgrimages to the Tri-Cities for treatment. And they foresee high-paying jobs emerging as Mid-Columbia researchers discover ways to combat arthritis, heart disease and even AIDS.

And the scientists based that dream not on a snake-oil peddler's fantasy, but on 68 people who should be dead—but aren't.

Those people suffer from Hodgkin's disease, cancer of the lymph nodes. Each patient endured every standard procedure of medical science; each suffered a relapse.

"Their medical options were otherwise completely exhausted," said Darrell Fisher, a staff scientist at the Pacific Northwest Laboratory's Life Sciences Center.

Because their cases were considered hopeless, they became part of an 80-member group to test a drug that had its genesis in Hanford waste.

Friday's meeting was designed to enlist support and enthusiasm from Tri-City business and community leaders for such isotope-based drugs.

"One of the greatest resources we have is Hanford radioactive waste," Fisher said.

When Hanford engineers produced plutonium for bombs, one byproduct was strontium 90, which can be converted into yttrium 90 in a process scientists call "milking."

Technicians attach yttrium 90 to a man-made protein and inject it into the body of a Hodgkin's disease suf-

ferer. Scientists at the Friday meeting described the protein as a "smart bullet." It drifts through the body looking for cancer cells, and when it finds them, locks onto them—still carrying the yttrium 90.

The yttrium 90, snuggles close to the cancer and bombards it with radioactivity. Thus, the radiation affects only those cells physicians want to kill. In other radiation and chemical therapies, vast portions of the body are affected, occasionally causing dreadful side effects.

"Yttrium 90 does produce some side effects, but less than other treatments," Fisher said.

But the isotope is difficult to recover. A technique developed by Hanford chemist and former state legislator Lane Bray produces by far the purest form of yttrium 90 in the world, said Susan Golladay, customer sales and service representative for Westinghouse Hanford Co.

Yttrium 90 also is ephemeral. Its half-life is 64 hours, meaning it loses half its radioactive potency in 64 hours. In 128 hours, it's down to a quarter of its original potency.

It must be used quickly, and that's to the advantage of the Tri-Cities.

"It's so much easier to send it across the street than across the country," Golladay said.

That could create a thriving therapy center in the Mid-Columbia, attracting medical professionals and their patients from around the world, said Thomas Tenforde, chief scientist at Pacific Northwest Laboratory's Life Sciences Center, operated for the Department of Energy by Battelle-Northwest.

It also could attract pharmaceutical companies to the Tri-Cities.

Please see **MIRACLE**, Page A2

Rep. Hastings pushes Hanford privatization

Newt likes idea, says Tri-City lawmaker

By ERIK SMITH
Herald Western Washington bureau

OLYMPIA — U.S. Rep. Doc Hastings, R-Wash., said Friday his proposal to privatize Hanford cleanup efforts offers an answer to a scathing report on bureaucratic red tape.

The report by former Department of Energy official Steve Blush, released Tuesday, contends there is little to show for the \$7.5 billion the federal government has spent on Hanford waste cleanup over the last six years.

Hastings, addressing the Senate GOP Caucus, said it is an acknowledgement of a theme he and fellow Republicans have sounded for months: Hanford cleanup has been strangled by bureaucracy and overregulation.

Hastings said his staff has spoken with Blush. "We find much in that Blush report that we could consider to be common ground."

The report made the latest bleak headline in a winter of bad news for Hanford. DOE has begun job cuts that are expected to total 4,700 Hanford workers by Dec. 31. About 1,500

already have retired early or taken a reduction in force program.

The cuts were prompted by overall Clinton Administration plans to chop the DOE budget. In addition, Republicans in Congress are looking to put government on a Slim-Fast diet, and U.S. Sen. Bennett Johnston, D-La., is talking about introducing a bill to cut and cap Hanford's budget.

Hastings is trying to steer a course that defends cleanup, the single largest project in his district, at the same time embracing regulatory reform that aims to cut its costs, the GOP aim for the overall federal budget.

Hastings believes regulatory reform and privatization offer a conservative solution.

"When you look at the history of our country, you can see that our problems are solved by individuals making private economic decisions," he said. "We need to try this sort of stuff at Hanford."

The view is not his alone. During a campaign visit to the Tri-Cities last October, House Speaker Newt Gingrich, R-Ga., said Hanford cleanup is a national obligation—but support for cleanup is not the same thing as support for bureaucracy and regulation. Now that the election is over, Gingrich continues to express the same position—most recently at a meeting of the Energy Communities Alliance in Washington, D.C., last week.

Hastings said the privatization proposal he introduced with U.S. Sen. Slade Gorton, R-Wash., this week fits today's tight economic times. The measure would make it easier for DOE to strike long-term contracts for cleanup, emphasizing performance rather than compli-

ance. Blush was critical of privatization efforts, "but that is not exactly what he meant," Hastings said. "What he was critical of was the way the Department of Energy privatizes, but he is not opposed to my and Slade's approach."



Hastings

Hastings said he does not view Sen. Johnston's plan as a threat: "As Slade pointed out, Sen. Johnston is in the minority party, and a lame-duck," he said. "That really says it all."

There's no telling how deep Republican cuts at Hanford will be, Hastings said. But even if they cause pain, he said it is part of the price of fiscal responsibility.

"I can't tell you how many people over time have come to me and said we have to have a balanced budget for the sake of the next generation. I have people saying they don't mind taking a cut, 'as long as I'm not the only one.' It isn't something unique to the 4th District of the state of Washington. It's across the country. We have to look out for the interests of the next generation. All of the things that are of importance in our budget decisions this year are meaningless if we don't have a future for our country."

Defense Board to discuss Hanford's waste tank program

By the Herald staff

The Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board plans a public hearing at 6 p.m. March 29 at the Federal Building auditorium in Richland.

The purpose is to discuss issues related to sampling and identifying high-level liquid radioactive wastes stored in aging underground tanks at Hanford.

Defense materials were produced at Hanford for the nation's nuclear

weapons arsenal for four decades, resulting in the accumulation of large amounts of radioactive wastes.

Fifty-six million gallons of wastes are stored in underground tanks.

In July 1993, the Defense Board, which John Conway serves as chairman, recommended to the Energy Secretary that DOE accelerate efforts to identify wastes in those tanks.

To date, DOE's efforts have been

disappointing, said board members.

During the March 29 hearing, the board will be briefed by members of its technical staff, various technical experts, and by Westinghouse Hanford Co., and DOE officials.

The briefings will address risks to public health and safety associated with the delay in the sampling and characterization.

It will also address DOE's plans to speed up the program.

DOE may cut Corps of Engineers' slice of Hanford work

By WANDA BRIGGS

Herald staff writer

The Army Corps of Engineers wants a bigger slice of cleanup work at Hanford. But that's not likely to happen.

In fact, the corps got a letter last week from John Zirschky, acting assistant secretary of the Army for civil works, suggesting the corps will be gone from Hanford by Oct. 1 if it has no major construction work to do at Hanford.

"The point is, right now this is all really examination, discussion and consideration ... there are no decisions," said corps spokesman Dutch Meier.

What happened was:

John Wagoner, the Department of Energy's Hanford manager, wrote Lt. Col. James Weller, the corps' Walla Walla District commander, with some good news and bad news.

The good news, Wagoner said, was the Corps can continue to "provide a key supporting role to DOE in areas such as activity-based cost estimating, and other support ser-

vices ... and also continue as the design agent for the HAMMER and liquid treatment and disposal projects."

The bad news, however, was the value of that Hanford work will be "significantly" less than \$30 million annually — the amount corps officials say they must have to remain cost-effective at Hanford.

In addition, Wagoner dashed the corps hopes of building the Hazardous Material Training Center (HAMMER), saying instead, that task will be responsibility of Westinghouse Hanford Co., DOE's prime contractor.

Although the corps was never told it had the inside track to build HAMMER, Meier said they "were anticipating, hoping," for the project since they designed it.

Currently, 29 corps workers are at Hanford, with another handful of employees in Walla Walla assigned to Hanford tasks, Meier said.

This fiscal year, the corps' work at Hanford ranges from \$20 million to \$25 million.

The corps' main responsibilities at Hanford since late in 1990 have been to clean up the North Slope and the Fitzner-Eberhardt Arid Lands Ecology reserve, which together

represent 45 percent of Hanford's total lands.

Tom Foley, former U.S. House Speaker, is credited with getting Hanford work for the corps.

Guy Schein, of DOE's Richland office, said the agency wants the corps to remain at Hanford.

"When times were good, there wasn't such a question in terms of money. But when times are lean, we have to say to the corps that we can't give them \$30 million worth of work," he said.

March 22, 1995 Tri-City Herald

Miracle

Continued from Page A1

One such company, based elsewhere in the Northwest, will sign a contract in a few weeks to begin an operation in the Tri-Cities to marry yttrium 90 with the man-made protein, said James Mayeda, principal engineer for the Economic Transition Center for Westinghouse Hanford.

Hanford has an almost unlimited supply of strontium 90 from which to produce yttrium 90.

"You get yttrium 90 from strontium 90 — that's the only way to get it," said Robert Schenter, group leader of the Isotope Production Office for Westinghouse Hanford and one of the major forces behind the 2-year-old drive to produce isotopes at Hanford.

"Sitting on the Hanford site is a national treasure," said Ron Kathren, a professor of health physics at Washington State University Tri-Cities.

Hanford also has the expertise and equipment, Schenter said.

"We've got hot cells and the people who know how to use them,"

Schenter said, speaking of the boxes in which radioactive materials are manipulated by remote control.

Right now the yttrium 90-protein combination is going through trials for Hodgkin's disease treatment by the federal Food and Drug Administration. Its ability to heal the sickest of cancer sufferers astounds some researchers; they suspect they'll get even better results from those cancer patients who are not so far gone.

Officials expect the yttrium 90 combination to be certified and in general use in three or four years.

Then researchers will use the drug on other cancers.

"There's good reason to hope it will be effective on all forms of cancer," Schenter said. He also said there is hope the yttrium 90 can be matched with other man-made proteins to attack afflictions as diverse as heart disease, arthritis and AIDS.

For example, if the arthritis therapy works out, one out of every three women over the age of 50 would be a potential customer, Golladay said.

Hanford scientists also are looking beyond yttrium 90. Fisher wants to combine radium 223 with a man-made protein. Comparing yttrium 90 with radium 223, Fisher said, "It's

the difference between hitting a house with a pellet gun and a wrecking ball."

Developing Hanford's relatively limited isotope research and production further will take regulatory change, money and outside help, several speakers said. They asked Tri-

City leaders attending the workshop for their help in making those changes.

"What we haven't accomplished on our side yet is to meet with the Indian nations and discuss whether they want to participate and if they do, in what format," Plahuta said. "I'm hopeful we'll have some discussions fairly soon."

Wagoner last month said he was impressed with the proposal.

Benton County already has hired two planners to devise an intricate land-use master plan to outline how post-cleanup Hanford will develop alongside the Tri-Cities. Informal talks about the land-use plan have been taking place for about a year between the county, Richland and DOE.

— Compiled by the Herald staff

Deadline passes on Hanford pact

A deadline for signing an agreement in principle for future development of Hanford expired last week with signatures from Benton County and Richland officials — but without the Department of Energy.

Maynard Plahuta, DOE spokesman, said stalled talks with regional Indian tribes prevented Hanford DOE Manager John Wagoner from signing the agreement on schedule.

New dose estimates expected by mid-'96

By JOHN STANG

Herald staff writer

Individual radiation dose estimates for Hanford downwinders are expected to be ready by midsummer 1996.

The Technical Steering Panel of the Hanford Dose Reconstruction Project discussed that July 1996 target Tuesday in Richland.

The nine-member panel told Washington Department of Health representatives their department should provide dose information on airborne and riverborne particles to individuals by that date.

Previously, the state was aiming to disseminate individualized information just for airborne doses, while adding river doses later.

But the state should be able to combine the air and river data by mid-1996, said Terry Strong, director of the state health department's division of radiation protection.

The scientific panel already supervised efforts to calculate how much radiation went through the air and river from Hanford between 1944 and 1970. Those figures were unveiled last spring.

Since then, the panel has supervised development of a system to determine individual exposure.

The federally funded steering panel is scheduled to officially finish its work by Dec. 31, although its final reports won't be ready until spring 1996.

Consequently, the federal Centers for Disease Control contracted the state health department to complete the individualized dose program.

When the program is ready, a downwinder can call the state, answer a few questions and be

MID-COLUMBIA SYMPHONY

Key senator yanks cleanup cap plan

By LES BLUMENTHAL
Herald Washington, D.C., bureau

WASHINGTON — Sen. J. Bennett Johnston on Wednesday backed off a proposal to cap funding for Hanford cleanup at about half current levels.

But the Louisiana Democrat and other members of the Senate Energy Committee made it clear they want to slash spending for cleanup and junk the Tri-Party Agreement with the state and Environmental Protection Agency.

■ **HANFORD:** An "unusual occurrence" was declared at Hanford late Monday when the Waste Encapsulation and Storage Facility ventilation system shut down after a loss of air in the system. **Page A17.**

Washington Gov. Mike Lowry and Attorney General Christine Gregoire, however, said it would be a mistake to scrap the agreement, which oversees the cleanup of Hanford. In separate letters to the committee, they defended the agreement, but admitted improvements could be made.

Two weeks ago, Johnston reportedly was considering introducing legislation that would cap Hanford spending at about \$800 million.

But Wednesday, Johnston said he doesn't expect the legislation to include any specific mention of funding except for perhaps a reference to "whatever sums are necessary" to carry out the cleanup.

"We don't know what it will cost," Johnston said during a hearing on a new critical report on the Hanford cleanup.

Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., said she talked Tuesday with Johnston and he assured her

no cap would be included in his legislation. However, such a cap could be imposed later in the Appropriations Committee.

Johnston serves on the Energy and Water Development Appropriations Subcommittee, which has jurisdiction over the Department of Energy's cleanup program. The chairman of that subcommittee, New Mexico Republican Sen. Pete Domenici, said he doesn't think money will be available to sustain Hanford cleanup at anywhere near current levels.

Domenici also is chairman of the Senate Budget Committee and will have enormous

influence in setting funding priorities for the next fiscal year.

In promising not to move forward immediately with a cap, Johnston undercut one of the key recommendations of a report prepared for the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee by Steve Blush, a former Department of Energy official and an outspoken critic of Hanford cleanup.

The Blush report states costs need to be controlled and one way would be through a

Please see CAP, Page A2 ►

House battles over welfare

By The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Shouting erupted Wednesday in the House as Democrats bitterly accused majority Republicans of trying to ram through a mean-spirited welfare overhaul bill, in the harshest floor fight yet over the GOP's "Contract With America."

INSIDE:

■ **IT'S YOUR CALL:** Will Republican welfare reforms increase the

Democrats

Mat masters from McLoughlin



Official outlines road to new jobs

DOE to seek recovery with privatization

By WANDA BRIGGS
Herald staff writer

The Department of Energy's efforts this year and next to hire private firms to help clean up Hanford could create about 3,200 new jobs.

Hanford declares unusual event

By the Herald staff

An "unusual occurrence" was declared at Hanford late Monday when the Waste Encapsulation and Storage Facility ventilation system shut down after a loss of air in the system.

An unusual occurrence is the middle of three occurrence reporting categories at Hanford.

There was no contamination release to the environment, nor were there any injuries, according to Westinghouse Hanford Co. spokesman Craig Kuhlman.

Some contamination was found in a radiologically controlled buffer after the incident. The buffer area was decontaminated and cleared for operations.

The loss of what's called instrument air occurred when a pipe fitter opened the wrong pipe. Instrument air is a regulated supply of air used as a signal to various dampers and controls.

When there is a loss of air the system automatically shuts down to prevent the flow of air from contaminated to noncontaminated areas, Kuhlman explained.

Analytical device helps with cleanup

From Herald news services

Dutch optician Zacharias Janssen opened new worlds when he created the first compound microscope in 1590.

The innovation enabled scientists to view microscopic objects for the first time and ultimately led to advances in medicine, biology and criminology.

Now, researchers at the Department of Energy's Pacific Northwest Laboratory are using an analytical device thousands of times more powerful than Janssen's microscope with the hope it too will lead to major scientific advances.

Researchers are using a suite of nuclear magnetic resonance spectrometers — including the world's most powerful commercial NMR — to find answers to biological and molecular problems related to human health and environmental cleanup.

A NMR spectrometer is a large, battery-shaped analytical tool that can provide molecular-level information about a variety of materials in their natural state, including inside the human body.

Instead of using glass lenses, NMRs create images of objects by

using superconducting magnets and radio waves.

The research is taking place at DOE's interim Environmental Molecular Sciences Laboratory in Richland — a temporary laboratory housing a variety of research while the new \$230 million EMSL is being built.

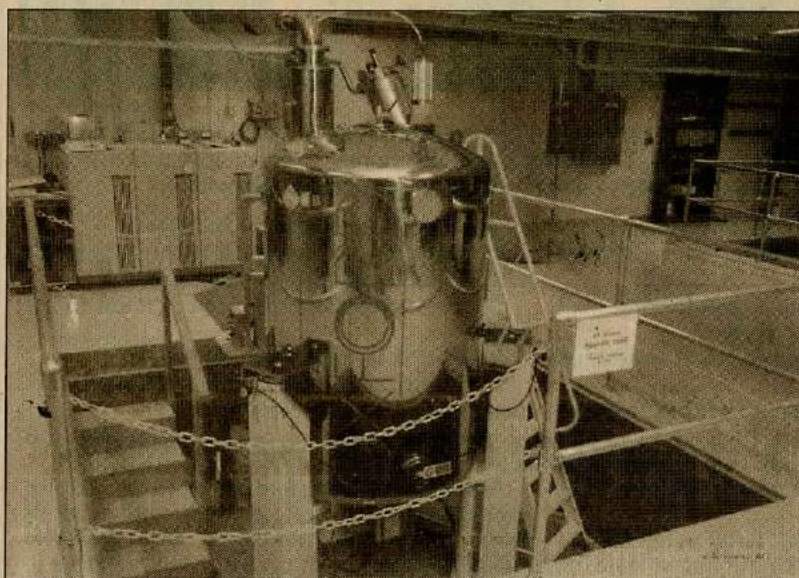
In health effects research, EMSL scientists are using NMR spectrometers to examine possible biological effects resulting from exposure to chemicals or radiation.

Researchers hope to understand how proteins recognize DNA damage in cells, which is important because the function of many proteins inside cells depends on their ability to bind to specific sequences of DNA.

"When DNA damage goes unrepaired, the proteins may act differently when they encounter the DNA," said EMSL researcher Michael Kennedy.

"The knowledge gained from this study will help us better understand DNA-protein interactions and how damaged DNA affects human health," Kennedy said.

Thom Dunning, EMSL director, said "results from this research will aid in the design of exposure stan-



Courtesy Battelle-Northwest

Researchers at the interim Environmental Molecular Sciences Laboratory are using a suite of nuclear magnetic resonance spectrometers — including the world's most powerful commercial model shown here — to find answers to biological and molecular problems related to environmental cleanup.

dards for environmental cleanup workers and the general public."

In environmental research, the NMRs are being used to examine catalytic conversion of environmental toxins, to determine the structure of enzymes that might be used in bioremediation and to study the physical integrity of materials used for waste storage.

In one project, EMSL researchers are using the NMRs to determine how carbon tetrachloride is destroyed when it is converted to

methane gas during cleanup. This knowledge could lead to better catalysts that can destroy a wider range of contaminants.

In late 1996 or early 1997, the EMSL will take delivery of the world's first 900-1000 megahertz NMR, which is being designed and built by the University of Washington and Oxford Instruments.

The \$10 million research tool will be used to study more complex problems and to study them faster and in greater detail, Kennedy said.

New sensors simplify test for radioactivity

From Herald news services

A new sensor developed at the Department of Energy's Pacific Northwest Laboratory in Richland can detect immediately two of the most prevalent contaminants left over from nuclear power generation and nuclear-weapon production.

The BetaScint sensor relies on tiny fiber-optic strands to detect radioactive byproducts — mostly uranium 238 and strontium 90 — and has been tested successfully at Hanford and in Ohio.

"The sensor provides immediate, inexpensive results in the field," said Alan Schilk, who leads PNL's development team.

"It's lightweight and portable, which gives it an advantage over current soil characterization methods."

Generally, contaminated soil samples are sent to an off-site laboratory, where a full range of radiochemical analyses are done.

This normally can take many weeks and cost hundreds to thousands of dollars per sample.

"We can take the sensor out in the field, lay it on the ground and within moments have an indica-

tion of the soil's radioactivity level," Schilk said.

The brains behind this sensor are plastic fibers mixed with fluorescent compounds. These half-millimeter-thick and one-millimeter-thick fibers glow when they contact highly energized beta particles produced by radionuclide decay.

"We look at the intensity of that light to quantify the level of strontium and uranium in the surface of the soil," Schilk said.

The light is translated into electrical current, which is transmitted to a portable computer, where the data is read and stored. The sensor is at work in a variety of areas at Hanford. Newer models will be used in the field and in mobile laboratories at Hanford to help in cleanup.

The International Atomic Energy Agency, which is responsible for investigating potential nuclear proliferation throughout the world, plans to use a BetaScint sensor to monitor nuclear processing activities in countries such as Iraq and North Korea.

And, Ukrainian and Russian scientists have expressed an interest in using the sensor to detect contaminants in and around Chernobyl.

3-27-95

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Hanford cuts trim intern jobs

By JOHN STANG

Herald staff writer

Other victims of Hanford's budget cuts will be the hundreds of student interns who have found the reservation a good source of summer jobs.

Only Battelle-Northwest appears ready to hire interns at Hanford this summer, and Battelle plans to trim its internships.

Westinghouse Hanford Co., ICF Kaiser Engineers Hanford Co., Boeing Computer Services and Bechtel Hanford Co. do not plan to hire summer interns because of the budget cuts.

Traditionally, Westinghouse and its subcontractors Kaiser and Boeing hire about 650 college students in the summer for internships ranging

from clerical work to analytical work.

As budget cuts threatened, that number was trimmed to 250. Then it was trimmed to zero, said Westinghouse spokesman Craig Kuhlman.

Bechtel — with its Hanford contract starting July 1, 1994 — did not hire interns last summer and will not hire any this summer, said Bechtel spokesman John Schlatter.

Last summer, Battelle hired about 200 interns. This year, it expects to hire 100 to 120 — depending on what researchers request, said Battelle spokesman Greg Koller.

"The scientists here are hesitant about committing funds (to hiring interns). They don't know what the future will hold," Koller said.

Battelle also plans to hire fewer

high school students in its clerical and business programs. That number is expected to drop from 70 this year to 40 next year, Koller said.

Westinghouse currently has about 230 interns on its payroll in slots ranging from a few weeks to one year, Kuhlman said.

All of those interns will be released no later than June 30, he said.

Those 230 will count toward about 4,700 job cuts expected this year at Hanford. It isn't known yet how the summer jobs will count in tabulating overall job cuts, Kuhlman said.

Neither Battelle nor Westinghouse have calculated yet how much money would be saved by not hiring interns.

A typical Battelle 10-week internship pays \$3,700 to \$4,600.

Privatization will grow new jobs, says DOE's Wagoner

By WANDA BRIGGS
Herald staff writer

The Department of Energy's efforts to turn over work at Hanford to private firms won't provide near-term relief to workers now getting pink slips.

By the end of December, DOE Hanford manager John Wagoner repeated Tuesday, there will be 4,800 fewer jobs on the federal site than in December 1994, a total that includes about 2,000 people who have already retired or left under a work force reduction program.

In the long term, DOE privatization efforts can provide a base to grow new jobs and industries in the Tri-Cities, Wagoner told Tri-City Herald editors.

His deputy, Ron Izatt, said last week that privatization efforts this year and next could create about 3,200 jobs.

That's only an estimate, Wagoner said, based on the assumption Congress will support President Clinton's fiscal 1996 budget for Hanford of \$1.4 billion. The Republican-dominated Congress, bent on further cuts, has already said Clinton's proposed budget is "dead on arrival."

"If what we're doing (to cut the work force) isn't enough, we would face tougher choices," he said. It could come down to deciding, for example, to spend money next year on only one of two imperative projects — either treating wastes in underground tanks or removing

spent fuel from storage basins near the Columbia River — but not both.

If Wagoner had to make that call, he'd said he would prefer to clean out the K Basins, which hold about 2,100 metric tons of used nuclear reactor fuel left over from Hanford's production years.



Wagoner

Wagoner hopes he won't have to make that decision. He also said there is no way to know the number of jobs that could be created by pushing work outside Hanford's boundary. DOE will, however, encourage companies doing Hanford work to locate here and to give hiring preference to Hanford workers.

"On the side we control, we know about 4,800 jobs are going away by the end of this year," Wagoner said. "That's not a ceiling and it's not a floor. The real trick is to figure how much restructuring we can achieve to reduce costs."

For example, he explained, DOE will decide next month whether to select private contractors to treat radioactive wastes stored in underground storage tanks.

If that happens, as Wagoner expects, proposals for such work will be offered to private industry by the end of this year, with a contract

expected to be awarded in May 1996.

But some firms already interested in doing that work have engineering laboratories in France or England. So, if contracts went to such companies, some engineering work could be done in foreign labs and create no jobs here, he said.

In addition to turning over treatment of tank wastes to commercial firms, other private efforts DOE is considering are:

- Hiring a private firm to begin construction next year on a storage facility into which spent fuel from the K Basins will be placed, beginning in 1997, five years ahead of the Tri-Party Agreement milestone. A contract for that work is expected to be awarded in 1996. The project would require about 300 construction workers for 14 months to 18 months.

- Awarding an "energy savings performance" contract to replace Hanford's aging steam plants in the 200 and 300 Areas, a program that could save \$150 million over 10 years.

- Contracting with a private firm for computer services now provided by Boeing Computer Services Richland.

- Awarding a contract to treat mixed wastes using a heat system to stabilize the wastes. Negotiations are under way for that work with a contract likely to be awarded this summer.

- Privatizing Hanford's mail system.

- Privatizing fabrication work at Hanford, which costs \$15 million to \$30 million annually.

3 million square feet of surface cleaned up last year at Hanford

By WANDA BRIGGS
Herald staff writer

Radioactive surface contamination at Hanford on areas equal in size to about 52 football fields is now cleaned up, according to the Westinghouse Hanford Co. official in charge of the program.

"Over the past 12 months, our aggressive surface contamination reduction team has cleaned more than 3 million square feet of radioactive contamination," said Bob Gustavson, environmental engineering manager for Westinghouse.

One area was a 43-year-old pipeline corridor 3.6 miles long by 100 feet wide.

"The cleanup of surface contamination improves safety in several ways," Gustavson said. "It reduces the potential of exposure to workers, reduces exposure to the environment and prevents the spread of contamination by wind, animals, birds and vegetation."

The cleanup also saves money. About \$240,000 will be saved annually because workers won't need protective clothing to work in the cleaned areas. Also, it will decrease the number of support personnel routinely needed when working in contaminated areas.

Gustavson said cost savings will increase as the program, funded for \$800,000 in the 1995 fiscal year, con-

"Our goal is to stabilize all of the tank farm ditches by (Sept. 30) and to complete cleaning up of tank farm surfaces by 1997."

— Bob Gustavson,
environmental engineering manager

tinues. The cleaned areas contained a variety of radioactive particles from four decades of nuclear weapons production, Gustavson said.

The surface work is being done jointly by Westinghouse and ICF Kaiser employees. Large earth-movers remove contaminated vegetation and at least the top three inches of soil. Deeper soils remain contaminated and will eventually be cleaned.

Contaminated soil is then consolidated into smaller areas and covered with clean backfill and gravel.

Once an area is cleaned, shallow-rooted grasses are planted to replace the natural deep-rooted plants, which could bring contamination to the surface again if they were allowed to grow. Another technique involves sterilization of the soil to prevent plant growth.

To prevent the spread of contamination before cleanup work can

begin, Westinghouse applies a dust control compound to hold contaminated soil in place.

About 2 million gallons of the "environmentally-friendly" sealer derived from pine pitch have been applied to tank farm surfaces in the past two years.

Gustavson said progress also continues in stabilizing surface contamination in obsolete basins and open disposal trenches. Although these sites continue to have underground radioactive materials, the surface has been cleaned to prevent spreading contamination.

After surface cleanup, the contaminated basins and ditches are turned over to Bechtel Hanford Co. for final cleanup. Bechtel is Hanford's environmental restoration contractor.

"Our goal is to stabilize all of the tank farm ditches by (Sept. 30) and to complete cleaning up of tank farm surfaces by 1997," Gustavson said.

Four tank farm ditches are scheduled for cleaning this year; two others were done in 1994. The ditches once held liquid waste water.

"We chose to do those areas first because they were spreading contamination," Gustavson said. In one area between the 200 East and 200 West areas, contamination was spreading at a rate of 25 feet a year — spread mostly by burrowing animals and birds.

DOE seeks options for savings at museums

By WANDA BRIGGS
Herald staff writer

The Department of Energy expects to solicit proposals to operate the Hanford Museum of Science and History, perhaps later this year.

That could include turning management over to a private contractor or perhaps to the Washington State Historical Society.

"We are concerned about the long-term future of the museum," said Karen Randolph, DOE's chief spokeswoman in Richland. "We want to ensure that Hanford's legacy is preserved."

Currently, the annual \$1 million cost of operating the museum — in rented space next to the Federal Building — is shared by DOE and its contractors at Hanford.

About 60 percent of the cost is for fixed fees, Randolph said. Those fees include salaries for three full- and part-time employees and to the General Services Administration to rent space in the building, which also houses the post office.

The effort is part of the ongoing effort to cut Hanford operating costs because of the shrinking federal budget, Randolph said.

The Environmental Science and Technology Foundation, a Kennewick-based nonprofit organization, is preparing a privatization offer for DOE, according to spokeswoman Jan Sass.

Last year, the Environmental Science and Technology Foundation became a regional nonprofit organization, Sass said.

She hopes to collect support from throughout the Mid-Columbia for the group's privatization attempt. She said the proposal will include relocating the museum to a site not yet determined.

Randolph also noted the Washington State Historical Society has expressed some interest in the museum, but has not offered a formal proposal.

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TRIDEC stumps to cut Hanford red tape

By WANDA BRIGGS

Herald staff writer

Hanford should be a demonstration site for rapid cleanup, with the freedom to cut through burdensome regulations that bog down the work.

That's the central theme of a Tri-City Industrial Development Council plan being promoted to congressional and Department of Energy leaders today in Washington, D.C.

The broad-based plan, adopted last week by TRIDEC board members, intends to take advantage of the winds of change in Congress to build a stronger economy and maximize taxpayer dollars.

"The reception so far has been tremendous," said TRIDEC Executive Vice President Sam Volpentest in a telephone interview from Washington, D.C.

The framework of the plan already has been embraced by Hanford manager John Wagoner.

"I'd be very supportive," Wagoner said this week. Showing Hanford as a demonstration site "has real potential," he said.

Sen. Frank Murkowski, R-Alaska, who chairs the Senate Energy Committee, has voiced support for a similar set of ideas. On March 22, he said he agrees with those who believe Hanford could become a demonstration site, with a special team assigned to cut through red tape and keep it from slowing cleanup.

Volpentest is asking Congress to establish Hanford as a cleanup demonstration site. That would include legislation allowing Hanford to use its "reinventing government" status — given by Vice President Al Gore — as a demonstration site for cutting through burdensome regulations that slow cleanup.

Volpentest also plans to ask Congress and Tom Grumbly, DOE's assistant secretary for environmental management, to bless a plan that wants to:

■ Increase commercialization — or privatization — of prominent parts of Hanford operations and convert unused parts of the site's infrastructure to benefit economic growth. Such efforts must be done quickly, yet safely.

■ Ask Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary to form a "swat team" with authority to cut through bureaucratic red tape and get things done. Members of that team should include representatives from Washington state and the Environmental Protection Agency.

■ Set some deadlines and make Grumbly and Mary Riveland, Washington state Department of Ecology director, responsible for meeting them.

■ Keep the funding at the Energy Department-requested level for 1996 to give the plan a chance.

"Several of our goals are aimed at cleanup progress with a great bias toward business," TRIDEC board chairman Bud Russell said. "TRIDEC wants to see local businesses get preference for Hanford procurements."

However, he cautioned, trying to develop

private businesses from the ground up is a slow process. Volpentest said a new Republican-dominated Congress bent on balancing the national budget, coupled with some new congressional leaders less informed about the cleanup task, makes implementation of this plan a priority.

He said the results of this plan could:

■ Allow Washington state to keep the Tri-Party Agreement. The state signed the pact in 1989 with EPA and DOE to establish milestones for cleaning Hanford.

The agreement is being renegotiated. However, a recent congressional report suggested TPA be eliminated — an effort opposed by Washington Gov. Mike Lowry.

■ Ensure the federal government doesn't get sued by Washington state for violating the conditions of that agreement.

■ Give DOE an argument to keep the federal agency intact. The abolishment of DOE is now being considered.

■ Give the Tri-Cities the people needed to

clean up Hanford in a quick, economical way and exposes Hanford to private firms that can help spur economic development.

"This is a broader effort than TRIDEC has taken on before," explained Bob Ferguson, the group's vice chairman for Hanford programs.

Ferguson was part of a TRIDEC team that met recently in Washington, D.C. with congressional and DOE leaders.

"We came to the realization that our destiny here will be community driven, or driven by people outside this area. These forces of change are rapidly occurring and we have to guide those changes — or be trampled," Ferguson said.

If Congress blesses the plan, TRIDEC will assign teams to implement pieces of the plan.

"The devil is in the details and we have a lot to work out," Ferguson said. "But if this works, we will have stability of cleanup funding and stability in this community."

Hanford's waste tanks sink on DOE worry list

By WANDA BRIGGS

Herald staff writer

Safety problems at Hanford's underground nuclear waste storage tanks have been substantially solved, top Department of Energy and Westinghouse Hanford Co. officials agree.

Tara O'Toole, DOE's assistant secretary for environment, safety and health, told a House subcommittee recently conditions at Hanford are far better than when she took office in 1993.

John Lee, who leads Westinghouse's tank waste remediation system operations group, agrees.

Hanford's 177 aging underground tanks hold 56 million gallons of radioactive liquids left over from four decades of nuclear weapons material production. Just a year ago, the tanks were at the top of DOE's risk list.

Now the tanks have been replaced on the worry scale by the K Basins, giant ponds of water next to the Columbia River filled with decaying nuclear fuel rods.

Lee's team is responsible for stabilization of tank safety issues.

"We have made significant progress," Lee said. "We haven't solved all of our safety issues yet, but we have come a long way from where we were 18 months ago. Our top priority is to make sure tanks are safe, clean and stable."

Early on, six problems with the tanks were earmarked for urgent attention:

■ "The tank of greatest concern was 101-SV, which used to burn large vol-

umes of hydrogen gas," Lee said. "Since we installed the mixer pump, the gas buildup is no longer a problem."

The tank was once considered the most dangerous waste tank in the country, he said. After two years of operation, the pump has proved to be highly reliable, he added.

"And so long as the pump operates properly, we know we have that issue under control," Lee said. Also, Westinghouse now has a back-up pump.

In addition, monitors are being installed in 24 other tanks to determine if there is a problem in those tanks with flammable gases.

■ Also under control, according to Lee, is tank 106-C which produces high levels of heat. Adding water keeps the waste cool and prevents heat from damaging the tank.

"We are controlling the situation, but the only real solution is to remove the waste, and we have moved up the schedule to begin that process next year," he added.

■ Lee said concern over a potentially explosive chain reaction also has eased. "We don't believe the fissionable material is concentrated enough in the tanks to cause a chain reaction, and we believe there is enough other material in the tank to absorb any neutrons that would cause a reaction." Westinghouse has prepared a safety analysis of that issue that DOE is now reviewing.

■ Another concern was noxious vapors produced by some of the tanks. As the result of an extensive field sampling effort, Lee said, "We now know that most of the vapors are not harmful to our people. When necessary, we have instituted a number of controls around these tanks to make sure workers are protected."

■ Closer to resolution is the issue of the chemical ferrocyanide in some waste tanks. If temperatures were to get too hot in those tanks, the chemical could ignite. "We've done a lot of technical work this year and we believe the ferrocyanide has degraded to the point that it is no longer a concern," Lee said. He said samples are to be taken from half a dozen tanks believed to have the highest concentrations of ferrocyanide.

■ Still troublesome is the problem of organic chemicals in some tanks. These chemicals float on top of the liquid waste like oil on water and are flammable.

Lee praised his team of workers. "We used every means available to gain the data we need to answer safety questions and resolve potential problems. We have made great strides in the last year in both safety and performance."

He noted that "conduct of operations" errors — those human caused — have decreased from seven such incidents monthly down to two.

"The bottom line is this: We are two-thirds of the way through our journey," he said. "We're ahead of other DOE sites. ... We feel good about some of these things."



Photo courtesy Westinghouse Hanford

Westinghouse Hanford Co. workers install hydrogen monitoring equipment in several of Hanford's underground nuclear waste storage tanks to determine if they produce dangerous amounts of the potentially explosive gas.

Cleanup estimate at \$48.7 billion

By LES BLUMENTHAL

Herald Washington, D.C., bureau

WASHINGTON — Without changes in its agreement with Washington state, cleanup of Hanford would cost almost \$48.7 billion over the next 75 years, the Department of Energy estimated Monday.

Previous estimates for cleaning Hanford have ranged from \$50 billion up to \$100 billion. Congress has made no secret it thinks those costs are out of hand, and even DOE

has called for major changes in the cleanup agreement with the state.

Hanford also may no longer be far and away the department's largest cleanup project, as DOE estimated the cost to clean up Savannah River at virtually the same amount.

In a study entitled "Estimating the Cold War Mortgage," the department estimated the cost of cleaning up all its 132 defense production sites in 30 states at \$230 billion in 1995 dollars.

But DOE conceded even after spending

that amount, hundreds of acres would remain off-limits because of radioactive contamination. In all, cleanup would cover 120 million square feet of buildings and 2.3 million acres of land.

The report states to reach a so-called "green fields" level in which unlimited uses would be allowed at every site would cost about \$500 billion. Just stabilizing the wastes and walking away, the "iron fence" solution, would cost about \$170 billion.

Tom Grumbly, DOE's assistant secretary for environmental restoration and waste

management, said the study should provide an important baseline to Congress as it decides how much to cut the department's cleanup budget. He also warned dropping below the \$170 billion figure would be a mistake.

"The risk of not appropriating the minimal amount of \$170 million is substantial," Grumbly said, but added he thought when Congress understands the hazards involved a "goodly amount" would be forthcoming.

Sam Volpentest, executive vice president for the Tri-City Industrial Development

Council, pointed out Hanford is in the hands of Congress, not DOE.

"DOE might sound that way, but Congress may have another idea. Congress controls the spending. ... Congress is in a real cost-cutting mood right now," Volpentest said.

Grumbly said the study is the first ever "analytical, bottoms up" review based on estimates provided by each site.

"You are seeing the unvarnished truth as

Please see **CLEANUP**, Page A2 ▶

GOP pushes end of agenda

By The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Driving for a final triumph on the "Contract With



Isaacson pushes Benton control of ALE

By DOUG CAMPBELL

Herald Valley bureau

PROSSER — Concerned the federal government soon will turn over the Arid Land Ecology Reserve to the Yakama Indian Nation, Benton County Commission Chairman Ray Isaacson on Monday proposed the county ask to take interim custody of the 120-square-mile biological study area.

"If people are not willing to say yet what the final (land use for ALE) should be, I think the board would be willing to take over as a trustee," Isaacson said.

"I don't want the public to misconstrue what our intent is. Protecting (the site) as an Arid Land Ecology Reserve is paramount. It probably would best serve as a scientific study area and should be protected for that purpose."

Isaacson's comments came as com-

missioners discussed who would represent the county in planning for a May 10 public meeting organized by the Department of Energy to discuss the site on Rattlesnake Ridge.

ALE's almost pristine shrub-steppe habitat is the site of biological research on 32 species of birds and animals, including 18 sensitive species.

If DOE decides to deed ALE to the Yakama Indian Nation as the tribe has requested, a competing land swap between the Bureau of Land Management and DOE would be scuttled.

Hanford is a checkerboard of DOE and BLM property currently under DOE's control. The land swap would eliminate the checkerboard by making BLM owner of the reserve and DOE the sole owner of property between Highway 240 and the Columbia River.

Isaacson is worried the county's economic diversification plans for

surplus Hanford lands would be jeopardized if ALE goes to the Yakamas and Hanford's checkerboard ownership remains.

County commissioners already endorsed the land swap, but if DOE decides to release the property before the swap happens, Isaacson said, the county should become trustees of ALE until a Hanford land use plan is completed.

"We're very concerned that the whole Hanford project should be considered a whole, with respect to land use decisions," Isaacson said.

Commissioners, who have yet to come to a consensus on Isaacson's suggestion, are to further discuss the issue during a workshop Wednesday at the county annex in Kennewick.

In other business Monday, commissioners:

■ Postponed until Wednesday a decision whether to proceed with a Hanford comprehensive land use plan without participation by DOE.

DOE has yet to sign an agreement in principle — already approved by the county and Richland — to draft a master plan for the development of post-cleanup Hanford. DOE is waiting to hear from the Yakama Indian Nation whether the tribe will participate in the planning effort. The tribal council meets tonight, and a decision whether to participate is expected.

■ Pledged to no longer finance unfunded state mandates. Commissioners signed a resolution and accompanying letter to Gov. Mike Lowry stating the county no longer will "accept the added cost of government."

Commissioners said the resolution is intended as a message, and enforcing it will be difficult because certain county programs are essential.

Funding for local implementation of the state Growth Management Act, criminal justice and health districts has been slashed this year by the state, Isaacson said.

PNL gets awards for education programs

The Department of Energy's Pacific Northwest Laboratory earned two awards for helping improve science education for Washington state kindergartners through 12th-graders.

■ The Washington Science Teachers Association gave the "Outstanding contributions and service to the profession of science education" special recognition award to PNL.

Reasons for the award include giving laboratory research experience to teachers and students, sponsoring teacher training, supporting curriculum reform and providing classroom equipment.

■ The Washington State Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development gave PNL the "Team award for excellence at the state level" for its work in the Wise-Step Prep Project.

PNL works with the University of Washington, Washington State University, Western Washington University and the Pacific Science Center in Wise-Step. The project aims to improve elementary science teaching.

The PNL in Richland and in Sequim are operated for DOE by Battelle Memorial Institute.

Groups at odds over chances for Hanford Reach

By DOUG CAMPBELL

Herald staff writer

A proposal to make the Hanford Reach a wildlife refuge is languishing in a federal agency while a competing plan to establish local control is gaining momentum, said a Washington, D.C.-based attorney on retainer to Benton, Franklin and Grant counties.

The recommendation to classify the Hanford Reach as a wild and scenic river is "effectively frozen," attorney Bill Horn told Mid-Columbia county commissioners in a recent letter.

"The Department of Interior is now giving serious consideration to the counties' position."

Horn was hired last fall to block a National Park Service recommendation to make the reach a national wildlife refuge, with the Columbia River shoreline designated a wild and scenic river. The proposal is winding its way through the Department of Interior before a vote in Congress.

The three counties are crusading to form a local partnership — including county, state and federal governments — to plan for the use and management of the 105,000-acre reach, where Cold War restrictions to keep humans out have allowed wildlife to thrive. The 51-mile strip of land and water stretches from Richland through Hanford to Priest Rapids Dam.

Commissioners think the Columbia River corridor is vital to economic diversification once DOE pulls its 18,000 jobs out of Hanford. Commissioners want to open the reach for access to water and limited development, though they say much of the riverfront should be protected for wildlife and recreation.

In Horn's latest report to commissioners, he announced progress in winning congressional support for the counties' plan and indicated the influence of Washington lawmakers will be instrumental in a final decision.

"It is safe to say that even if the Department of Interior ultimately proposes a refuge/wild river designation, the committee leadership intends to defer to Sen. (Slade) Gorton and Rep. (Doc) Hastings,"

Horn wrote. "It appears that the prospects for favorable action are good."

Hastings lobbied Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt and Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary on behalf of the counties, Horn wrote.

Rick Leaumont, conservation committee chairman of the Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society, said the report didn't match his group's information about federal reception of the wild and scenic recommendation.

"We haven't had any indication from the Department of Energy or the Department of Interior that they are favorably considering the (counties') partnership plan," Leaumont said.

"Our position is the county does not have the resources to manage the river," he said.

"They have no biologists, the sheriff's department is stretched

beyond the breaking point, the county is just not equipped to do the job."

The three counties paid Horn \$15,000 last year, and Benton County has set aside as much as

\$25,000 for continued legal services this year. A half-dozen Eastern Washington counties have endorsed the counties' proposal.

Much of the reach's shrub-steppe habitat is Hanford's North Slope, also known as the Wahluke Slope, which has become a battle ground between conservationists and farmers over whether agriculture should be allowed there.

Grant County Commissioner LeRoy Allison said Horn's report contained favorable signs the counties' agenda is getting a serious look from the federal government.

"I'm encouraged that we've been able to get as far as we have," Allison said. "I think we've still got a long way to go, and we have to prove that we can and will and are determined to protect the reach itself, even (if) development happens on some of the properties to the north."

A wild and scenic designation would outlaw dams and dredging and require case-by-case review of other potentially disruptive activities — effectively prohibiting any farming and industrial development, the counties believe.

Rocky Flats will have few new jobs, contractors say

By DON McMANMAN

Herald staff writer

A new operations contractor at the Department of Energy's Rocky Flats site near Denver will present few job opportunities to Hanford workers.

DOE announced Tuesday a consortium to be led by CH2M Hill and ICF Kaiser International Inc. will take over Rocky Flats during the next few months and operate it for five years as Kaiser-Hill.

Kaiser is a major subcontractor at Hanford. CH2M Hill maintains offices in the Tri-Cities.

Major subcontractors at Rocky Flats with operations at Hanford will include a subsidiary of Westinghouse Corp., Quanterra Environmental Services and BNFL Inc. — originally known as British Nuclear Fuels.

These companies said few, if any, jobs will be available at Rocky Flats for workers facing layoffs at Hanford because of DOE budget reductions. They said Rocky Flats will be laying off workers as well.

Rocky Flats now has 6,200 workers. DOE has told it to cut 1,700 this year. ICF Kaiser Engineers Hanford will send three or four "key individuals"

to Rocky Flats, said Robert Benedetti, deputy general manager for the company at Hanford. "The first task of the team will be to help downsize the work force at Rocky," Benedetti said.

Westinghouse will not move employees because the firm "will inherit an existing work force," said Jean McKenna, a spokeswoman for Westinghouse Hanford Co.

BNFL has no plans to move people from its 50-employee Richland office, said Stan Reid, company

spokesman. "But if the work gets busy there (Rocky Flats), we may have to relocate some folks."

CH2M Hill has about 130 employees in its Tri-City offices. But the company has a full work force in Denver and intends to use it, said Andre Armstrong, CH2M Hill spokesman.

Quanterra has about 60 people at its Richland laboratory, which currently handles some analytical work from Rocky Flats under existing contracts, said Jim Bentley, vice president for federal services for the com-

pany. "But we intend to keep as much work here (in Denver) as possible," he said.

The U.S. produced triggers for hydrogen bombs at Rocky Flats. The plant was closed after an FBI raid in 1990 following reports of shoddy operating standards.

Rocky Flats, in a suburb of Denver, is a badly contaminated site. DOE announced Monday it intends to spend about 10 percent of its cleanup funds at Rocky Flats in the years to come.

7-5-95

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Basin/Northwest

Benton to begin Hanford land plan

By DOUG CAMPBELL

Herald staff writer

Planning for future development of Hanford lands will continue — for now — without official participation by the federal government.

Hanford Manager John Wagoner in a Wednesday conference call gave Benton County commissioners his blessing to launch a land-use master plan for the development of post-cleanup Hanford.

But he declined to sign an agreement in principle — already signed by Benton County and Richland — over the multi-agency planning effort until regional Indian tribes indicate whether

they want to become partners.

"I think we're prepared to begin cooperating right now any way that you would like," Wagoner said. "Basically, we'd be acting as we would if we signed this, and we'll still proceed toward signing it" as we correspond with the tribes.

Benton County commissioners already have said they would proceed with the plan without the Department of Energy.

"Our decision is we're going to have to start this up under the direction of the Benton County Planning Commission and then, as these other factors are brought to the table, we'll look at how we can include input from other participants," Commission Chairman Ray Isaacson said.

As envisioned, the land-use plan would outline how 21st century Hanford would develop alongside the Tri-Cities, suggesting varying degrees of decontamination depending on the intended future use. Industrial, commercial, and recreational land classifications also would be established.

Benton County has hired two planners to begin the process. Richland is planning for the Hanford lands inside its 20-year urban growth boundaries.

Wagoner said it might take weeks before the Yakama Indian Nation and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation notify DOE officials about their intended involvement in the plan.

Battelle, DOE give \$500,000 to endow WSU professorship

By the Herald staff

Battelle Memorial Institute and the Pacific Northwest Laboratory in Richland donated \$500,000 to endow a professorship at Washington State University.

The announcement Wednesday came on the eve of today's kickoff for the last phase of a fund-raising drive for WSU Tri-Cities. Officials have quietly raised \$2.36 million since 1990. Now, they are asking for \$1.4 million to reach their goal.

The WSU endowment comes equally from the parent agency of Battelle-Northwest, which runs the Pacific Northwest Laboratory for the Department of Energy, and from the DOE.

The proceeds from the endowment will be used to fund a new professorship to be shared by WSU's College of Engineering and Agriculture and its College of Sciences.

The professorship is designed to help meld microbiology and biopro-

cessing, said Doug Olesen, president of Battelle.

Knowledge arising out of the marriage of disciplines could be applied to such diverse fields as pollution prevention technology, production of antibiotics and vitamins, or mining technology.

Jim Cochrane, dean of WSU Tri-Cities, said, "The professor probably will end up in Pullman. ... We're not doing a lot of bioengineering at the Tri-Cities — yet."

The WSU Tri-Cities public fund-raising drive is designed to address six needs: equipment for the Consolidated Information Center, laboratory equipment, the proposed Center for Entrepreneurship and Technology Transfer, an endowment for an education professorship, fellowships and special programs to increase diversity.

A committee of Mid-Columbia volunteers has formed to lead the fund-raising drive.

Call WSU Tri-Cities at 375-9285 for more information.

4-6-95



Senate bill revises plan for cleanup

By LES BLUMENTHAL

Herald Washington, D.C., bureau

WASHINGTON — Several federal environmental laws and the Tri-Party Agreement governing Hanford cleanup would be pre-empted and the Department of Energy granted broad, new powers under legislation a key senator plans to introduce today.

■ IT'S YOUR CALL: Should DOE be allowed to scrap the Tri-Party Agreement and to write its own cleanup rules? Page A2.

The Hanford Land Management Act would direct DOE to set new health and environmental protection standards and present to Congress within two years a new Hanford management plan, based on the revised standards.

DOE's new standards would be designed to provide "adequate protection to health and safety of the public" and the "common defense and security of the nation."

In developing its plan, the department also would be required to take into account the risks presented by various contaminated areas, the cost of cleaning up such areas and future land use.

The secretary of DOE would not be allowed to sell, exchange or convey any part of the reservation unless specifically authorized by legislation.

The bill would not place a cap on Hanford funding and simply authorize spending "such sums as may be necessary" to implement the plan. The department also would be directed to reduce the Hanford work force to the level needed to carry out the plan.

Sen. J. Bennett Johnston, D-La., has been promising legislation since a scathing report on Hanford cleanup was released almost three weeks ago. Even though he is in the minority, as the ranking Democrat on the the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, Johnston con-

Ecology official warns against self-regulation

By the Herald staff

A Washington Department of Ecology official sees a return to the bad old days of over-regulation and serendipitous rules at Hanford if a proposal by U.S. Sen. J. Bennett Johnston becomes law.

"We've been down this path already — the self-regulatory path. It put us in the fix we're in. I don't want to go down that path again," said Dan Silver, assistant director of Ecology's Office of Waste Management.

Silver praised Washington Sens. Slade Gorton and Patty Murray for their stance against the Johnston proposal.

"I think Sen. Johnston's bill reflects a wholesale misunderstanding of the Tri-Party Agreement," Silver said.

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tinues to play an influential role on issues involving DOE.

Johnston has been especially critical of the Tri-Party Agreement between DOE, the state and the federal Environmental Protection Agency. He blames the TPA for mushrooming cleanup costs.

In a report released earlier this week, the department estimated that unless the agreement was changed, it would cost an additional \$48.7 billion over the next 75 years to complete the cleanup.

Originally, Johnston planned to cap cleanup funding for Hanford at about \$800 million annually, about half of current levels. But Johnston backed off under pressure from

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Herald photos/Dorothy Adcock
W: A computerized fertilizer sprayer in Farms field between Prosser and Port Munn.

jects with an accuracy of about 10 feet anywhere in the world.

The satellites transmit coordinates and time signals to receivers. The receivers select four of the most favorably located satellites, lock onto their signals and compute the user's position.

The technology was developed solely for military use but has become available to the public in the past decade. Now, units even are available for use by hikers and boaters.

The system is the only one of its kind in the southern portion of the Columbia Basin, and is being used on farms as far south as Hermiston and as far west as the Yakima Valley. Cenex operates a similar machine in the Quincy area, Nipper said.

Please see **SPRAYERS**, Page A2 ▶

vote came after a compromise was reached among Majority Leader Bob Dole, R-Kan., Minority Leader Tom Daschle, D-S.D., and the Clinton administration.

The vote permitted leaders of both parties to declare they achieved their priorities: deficit reduction for Republicans, and protection of some social programs for Democrats.

Dole called the package "an important down payment on deficit reduction."

Barbara Mikulski, D-Md., was the only senator who did not vote on final passage.

Under the deal, \$835 million would be restored to programs for children, housing and jobs that Republicans wanted to cut. In addition, at least \$1.6 billion would be trimmed from airport improvements, rental assistance, federal administrative and travel costs and other programs. The changes boost the measure's deficit reduction by \$812 million to about \$16 billion.

The House already approved a bill slashing \$17 billion from home-heating aid, education, public broadcasting and other programs.

President Clinton supported the measure, which contained two irresistible nuggets for him. One was \$275 million in debt forgiveness for Jordan, which he has sought to encourage the Middle Eastern peace process. The other was \$6.7 billion in disaster aid for states — most of it for earthquake-damaged California, a key state in the 1996 election.

Meanwhile, Congress sent Clinton a \$3.1 billion measure replenishing Pentagon coffers drained by peace-keeping operations in Haiti, Somalia and elsewhere. The Senate approved the measure by voice after the House adopted it by 343-80. Clinton is expected to sign the bill.

Privatizing tank farms worries Hanford board

By DON McMANMAN

Herald staff writer

■ IT'S YOUR CALL: Should work on Hanford waste tank cleanup be privatized? Page A2.

The Hanford Advisory Board has serious doubts about a Department of Energy suggestion to turn cleanup of Hanford's tank farm over to private industry.

The board, meeting Thursday in Richland, heard a distinctly negative committee report on the plan.

Although there was a limited number of questions from members of the full board, most were negative.

During a break in the meeting, board Chairman Marilyn Reeves said she doubted the full board

Please see **BOARD**, Page A2 ▶

4-7-95

Battelle announces reorganization

By DOUG CAMPBELL
and KIM BRADFORD

Herald staff writers

Fewer top managers will report directly to Battelle-Northwest Director Bill Madia under a reorganization to be announced today.

And Thursday, Battelle notified its employees it has asked the Department of Energy for permission to begin a voluntary reduction of force, the second phase of its job cuts. If DOE approves, the program would overlap with an early retirement program already under way.

Specifics of the management shakeup were not available Thursday, and it was unclear whether some of the Pacific Northwest Laboratory's more than 30 senior man-

agers would be laid off because of the change.

"It's not being done to cut people either way," said Jerry Holloway, Battelle spokesman. "There could be fewer people as a result of it, but that's not the driving purpose."

Holloway said the reorganization was motivated by Madia's effort to "organize the lab so it can better meet client and marketplace demands, now and for the long term."

Madia is "looking to create an organization that fits his own personal management style, and he has said he wants fewer direct reports because he can do a better job of managing that way," Holloway said.

Battelle-Northwest operates the Pacific Northwest Laboratory for DOE. The company carries out a wide variety of scientific

research, including developing technology for Hanford cleanup work.

Madia took over the lab's top post last summer, succeeding Bill Wiley, who became senior vice president for science and technology policy with the parent firm, Battelle Memorial Institute.

Upon assuming leadership, Madia said he planned no changes at the lab — neither the "structure, people or processes" needed changing, he said.

But the new leadership in Washington, D.C., prompted Madia to rethink his managerial approach with an eye toward attracting other clients and streamlining operations.

The goal is to focus laboratory efforts on working on national problems and become more efficient at doing that. "If we are working on national problems, we'll always be necessary," Holloway said.

The exact names and number of managers to be shuffled is to be outlined today, Holloway said. Madia notified a handful of the senior managers of the change Wednesday.

As part of DOE's cutbacks, the lab has begun paring its 4,500-employee work force through an early retirement program.

About 900 lab jobs are expected to be trimmed by the end of the calendar year to compensate for DOE budget cuts aimed at reducing overall Hanford employment by 4,800.

If DOE approves the voluntary reduction of force, Battelle plans to begin sign-ups April 17, Holloway said. The 3,000 eligible employees will have until April 28 to submit their name for consideration.

About 300 of the 3,000 eligible employees are expected to take the voluntary reduction of force.

Employees who participate in the program will be offered three options:

■ Option one would offer the employee separation pay equal to up to 26 weeks of salary, depending on the length of service. It also would allow education assistance up to \$10,000, relocation expenses up to \$3,000 and continuation of medical insurance benefits.

■ Option two would offer a lump sum payment of \$15,000 in lieu of separation pay or other benefits. The option would be available to staff members hired on or before Sept. 27, 1991, or those employed at another DOE nuclear facility before that date and hired at Battelle before Feb. 14, 1994.

■ Option three would offer a lump sum payment of \$7,500 in lieu of other benefits. The option would be available to staff members hired after Sept. 27, 1991, who have no prior DOE nuclear facility employment.

Battelle trims 13 managerial jobs

By DOUG CAMPBELL

Herald staff writer

Battelle-Northwest on Friday pared its senior management team from 30 to 17 members, consolidating its departments into six "mission-focused" units and creating an economic development office to promote local commercial growth.

The move is as much a cost-cutting effort to deal with Hanford cutbacks as it is a method to make the Pacific Northwest Laboratory (PNL) the leader in science and technology markets in the Tri-Cities and nationwide, said Battelle Director Bill Madia.

"My vision has been to make the laboratory

the preferred provider of science and technology in the wide variety of government and industrial markets we serve," Madia said in a prepared statement. "The changes we are making will structure our resources to reach that vision."

The management shakeup coincided with Thursday's request to the Department of Energy for permission to begin a voluntary work force reduction, the second phase of the lab's job cuts.

The program would overlap with an early retirement program already under way.

If approved, Battelle would follow Westinghouse Inc. as the only Hanford contractor to begin the voluntary reduction program.

Under the management reorganization, six associate directors will take over newly created mission-focused units on Monday.

The new units and their directors are: Environmental and Energy Sciences, headed by Mike Knotek; Environmental Technologies, headed by Bill Shipp; Health, headed by Ron Walters; Energy, headed by Jerry Work; National Security, headed by Tom Fox, and; Emerging Technologies, headed by Gerry Stokes.

The new economic development office will be led by Adrian Roberts. Its function is to work with lab staff, DOE, other Hanford contractors and community development organizations to expand existing businesses,

spark new businesses and attract outside industries to the Tri-Cities, Madia said.

Two associate directorships will be formed. Walt Apley will become associate director for operations, while Erik Pearson will be director of strategic planning.

Administrative functions — finance, human resources, communications and legal — will retain their directors and continue operating as independent organizations.

Senior managers not appointed as heads to the newly created units will be shifted into other corporate functions.

Others will be integrated into the new organization at Hanford, and some may decide to leave the corporation, said Battelle

spokesman Jerry Holloway.

Battelle-Northwest carries out an array of scientific research at PNL, including developing technology for Hanford cleanup work.

About 900 lab jobs out of 4,500 in existence at the beginning of the year are to be trimmed by the end of 1995 — part of Battelle's effort to compensate for the planned reduction of 4,800 from Hanford's total work force.

Some 3,000 employees will be eligible as of April 17 for the voluntary reduction of force program, if DOE approves the request. About 300 workers are expected to take advantage of the offer.

WPPSS plants eyed for nuclear waste

By DON McMANMAN
Herald staff writer

Members of the Hanford Advisory Board endorsed Friday a preliminary study to see if solid nuclear waste should be temporarily stored in unfinished WPPSS plants.

The proposal, suggested by member Gordon Rogers of Pasco, recommended an evaluation of Washington Public Power Supply System plants 1 and 4 as potential treatment

centers or warehouses that could be used until a national waste dump is opened.

In other action, the board urged the Department of Energy to increase efficiency at Hanford in an attempt to control overhead expenses, and the board backed away from endorsing a DOE proposal to privatize Hanford tank farm cleanup.

■ **WPPSS:** The board didn't endorse the warehousing concept, but did approve a study of the issue.

Rogers asked why DOE would build new

■ **IT'S YOUR CALL:** Should WPPSS No. 1 be used to temporarily store solid radioactive waste from Hanford? **Page A2.**

the Pacific Northwest would benefit when WPPSS finds a use for the structures.

"We could save money for the taxpayers and save money for the ratepayers," Rogers said. He noted the WPPSS structures were

plants for built to nuclear standards.

cleanup when WPPSS No. 1 was mothballed, and construction was abandoned on WPPSS No. 4 when WPPSS went through the biggest bond default in Wall Street history in the early 1980s. WPPSS is pursuing plans to tear down both structures.

"We could purchase those plants for pennies on the dollar," said board member Gerald Sorensen, who represents Battelle-Northwest.

But Sorensen also mentioned what could

be a major stumbling block in any plan to use the plants in Hanford cleanup: Both structures are about 1 mile from the Columbia River.

And John Wagoner, DOE's head of Hanford, said the location of WPPSS has troubled his agency.

"It has certainly affected our thinking. We put a certain weight against that (alternative)

Please see **WPPSS**, Page A2▶

More home construction in Ken



Pasco, Kennewick, Richland, Wash.

DOE cleans up cleanup directives

By the Herald staff

In a housecleaning effort designed to increase efficiency, the Department of Energy has eliminated about 90 percent of the rules governing cleanup contractors.

Following the purge last week, only 16 of 140 operating directives remain on DOE books. The action came in response to an order issued by Tom Grumbly, assistant secretary for environmental management, and is part of a White House strategy to streamline government.

By eliminating unnecessary and duplicated orders, the agency expects to save between \$18

million and \$30 million a year, said John Wagoner, DOE's Richland operations manager.

Wagoner said the changes will have no effect on safety or health standards.

"There was a lot of worthless paperwork," said DOE spokesman Guy Schein, likening many of the regulations to archaic ordinances in some towns that forbid the riding of a white horse through town on Sunday.

The system was overburdened by stacks of directives that served no purpose other than to explain earlier orders, Schein said. In most cases, he said, the additions only muddled the directives' intent.

In other instances, DOE rules duplicated those issued by the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration. The measures were subjected to four levels of review, starting with the author of the order, passing through the Office of Environmental, Health and Safety and forwarded to assistant agency managers. The final decision whether to retain a rule rested with Wagoner.

"Rather than throwing everything out the window and starting from scratch, we decided to focus on identifying only those orders absolutely necessary to accomplish our mission," said Walter Scott, director of DOE quality, safety and health programs.

A soft spot for s



Nation supports Hanford, Doc says

By DON McMANMAN
Herald staff writer

After the first 100 days of Republican rule in Congress, Rep. Doc Hastings sees nationwide support to clean Hanford.

But he's uncertain how that support will translate into money for the site.

"We haven't started our own budget yet," he said Monday in Kennewick. The Pasco businessman is home in the 4th District during Congress' Easter recess. The budget process begins after Congress reconvenes in May.

He said House Speaker Newt Gingrich will make good on a promise he made while campaigning for Hastings in October, that Gingrich would "fight to protect current levels of Hanford funding."

In October, Hanford had about 17,500 jobs with contractors.

Yet Hastings on Monday refused to say if Gingrich would fight for that level of employment, and Hastings left open the possibility Gingrich would support Hanford jobs only after about 4,700 workers are removed from the payroll by the end of this year.

Hastings has two keystones in his vision of Hanford cleanup: deregulation and privatization.

Deregulation translates into greater efficiency by eliminating regulatory gridlock, Hastings said.

"We have regulations that conflict — and a regulation that says you must comply with all of them. My

April 11, 1995

Scientists begin cautious cleanup of K basin rods

By DON McMANMAN
Herald staff writer

The first steps in the long journey to clean up the K basin east at Hanford are being taken today as scientists examine three fuel rods scooped from the nuclear reservation's most troublesome site.

The rods — about 2 feet long and about as big around as a tennis ball — were irradiated at Hanford's N Reactor to produce the guts of nuclear bombs.

But the federal government never got around to extracting plutonium from the radioactive metallic uranium that fills the rods. The feds sank about 25,500 rods held in open containers into the water of K basin east.

Now many of those rods are scattered across the bottom of the basin, some chipped and reacting chemically with the water, creating new chemicals and a lethal radioactive sludge.

Because the rods have been stored in water for so long — up to 25 years — no one knows what new chemicals have been created or how dangerous they are.

"We have to know what we're dealing with," said John Britton, a spokesman for Westinghouse Hanford Co.

One of the first things scientists examined: What happens when the rods are exposed to the air for the first time in more than a decade?

"It could ignite, or it could just fall apart," said Kevin Whattam, a spokesman for Battelle-Northwest.

Most scientists believed there was

"It could ignite, or it could just fall apart."

— Kevin Whattam,
Battelle-Northwest spokesman

only a small chance the rods would explode into flame, but they had to be prepared, said Paul Turner. He's the manager of the Spent Fuel Project at Pacific Northwest Laboratory, run by Battelle-Northwest for the Department of Energy.

"We had inert chambers that could be filled with argon if something happened," Turner said.

"We took some (rod material) out and it didn't catch fire."

The rod material is "gray-black, kind of an ugly looking color," Turner said. All work on the highly radioactive rods is being done in a "hot cell" lab.

Three rods were removed from K basin east — about 35 miles upstream from Richland on the Columbia — on March 31 and delivered to Battelle.

The goal is to find the nature of the material before a building is designed to treat and store it.

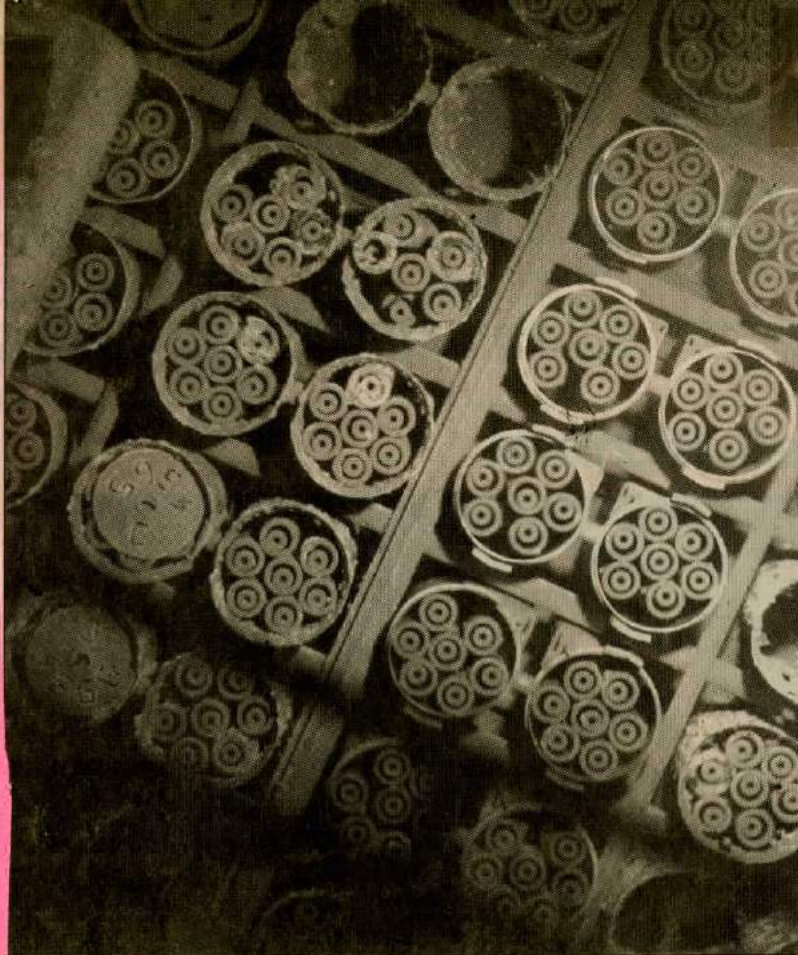
"This fuel was not designed for long-term storage. It was designed to produce plutonium," Britton said.

The long storage, coupled with exposure to water and chemical reactions, has produced many uncertainties.

"Before we can design a facility, we have to do some basic analysis

Please see **RODS**, Page A2 ▶

4-12-95



File photo courtesy Westinghouse Hanford Co.

Irradiated fuel rods fill some open-ended containers in the water of K basin east. Some rods have fallen out of the containers. Hanford officials say this is the greatest cleanup challenge they face.

Rods

Continued from Page A1

work," Britton said.

Engineers hope to remove all rods from K basin east — then from K basin west, which is less of a safety concern — and "dry them out," Britton said. The rods will then be packaged and stored dry in inert gas somewhere in Hanford's 200 areas.

Officials are preparing an environmental impact statement for the project. There will be two "scoping" sessions from 1:430 and from 6:30 p.m. Tuesday at the Hanford Hotel in Richland. Scoping sessions are designed to set the boundaries of

environmental impact statement.

Current plans call for Westinghouse to begin moving rods out of the K basins in 1998, with all fuel removed by 2000. DOE has asked Westinghouse to cut a year off that schedule.

The repackaged rods aren't supposed to be held indefinitely at Hanford. They're ultimately to be stored at a repository at Yucca Flats, Nev. But the federal government has yet to open the facility.

Hanford layoffs trigger threats

By the Herald staff

Layoffs at Hanford are being blamed for anonymous threats against some managers at the site, a Department of Energy spokesman said Wednesday.

Because the seriousness of the threats is unknown, contingency safety and security plans are in place, said DOE's Terry Brown.

He would not elaborate on the nature of the threats, when they were received and through what means. In addition, he would not disclose how DOE has changed security.

"Those (contingency) plans anticipate unusual circumstances, and if they were to become known, it could be potentially useful to people carrying out those threats," Brown said.

John Wagoner, DOE's Hanford manager, said Wednesday evening: "Yes, there have been threats against several people, and we have made suitable security arrangements."

Benton County Sheriff Jim Kennedy said DOE officials notified his agency of the threats last week. His office plans to beef up the number of deputies on duty when Hanford employees receive pink slips, he said.

4-13-95

Paper fights for Hanford critic's report

By The Associated Press

SPOKANE — A Spokane newspaper will appeal a federal judge's decision to keep secret a report critical of studies estimating radiation exposure from the Hanford nuclear reservation.

U.S. District Judge Alan McDonald in Yakima denied a motion by The Spokesman-Review to make public the report by nuclear engineer Thomas Pigford.

The newspaper will appeal the decision to the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco because of "significant interest" in the Hanford downwinders' case, Duane Swinton, the newspaper's attorney, said in an article published Thursday.

The report by Pigford, a nationally known nuclear engineer, criticizes the \$27 million taxpayer-funded Hanford Environmental Dose Reconstruction Study.

The newspaper published an article Jan. 20 based on Pigford's conclusions the dose study is flawed and may underestimate exposure of people living near Hanford.

The report was leaked to the newspaper "in clear and intentional violation of the court's order," McDonald wrote.

In his ruling, McDonald said he is considering disciplinary action

against the attorney or attorneys he suspects of violating his order not to discuss or divulge the report.

The judge must use the dose study, the first of its kind at a U.S. weapons site, to assess whether Hanford downwinders deserve compensation.

Pigford's report was ordered sealed in 1994. He was hired by the court last year as a scientific expert.

12,000 trout at home in water plant

By the Herald staff

About 12,000 rainbow trout have taken up residence near Hanford's K Reactor.

The fish, each about 3 inches long, were given to the Yakama Indian Nation by Pacific Northwest Laboratory, operated for the Department of Energy by Battelle-Northwest.

They will be raised at a water treatment plant that once purified water before it entered K Reactor.

The fish will be kept at the plant for about a year until they are 12 to 14 inches long. The Yakamas will then plant the fish in six different lakes on the reservation, half of which are open to public fishing.

Battelle turned the fish over to the tribe because "the fish were surplus to our research needs," said Dennis Dauble, technical group manager for the Aquatic Ecology Group.

The Yakamas grew about 500,000 salmon at Hanford last year. They were put directly into the Columbia River. The tribe plans to raise more salmon this year.

4-14-95

Hanford to delay contracts

By DON McMANMAN

Herald staff writer

Hanford managers are preparing to cut their current budget by \$30 million to \$40 million this budget year, Hanford Manager John Wagoner said Thursday.

But any cuts at Hanford probably won't mean job losses beyond what have been predicted. Instead, Wagoner said he probably would delay the start or completion of contracts to balance the budget.

Hanford managers have been told to eliminate about 4,700 jobs by the end of 1995. Wagoner, the Department of Energy's Richland manager, said about 2,000 already have been cut through early retirements, voluntary resignations and layoffs.

By comparison, about 17,300 jobs were at Hanford in January.

The \$30 million to \$40 million reduction would be Hanford's share of a \$200 million DOE-wide reduction that is being ordered by Congress, Wagoner told the Tri-City Industrial Development Council.

Such a financial hit is difficult to handle because it comes in the middle of the federal fiscal year, Wagoner said. It's like signing a contract to buy a car over time, then finding your salary has been cut.

Wagoner said further jobs probably won't be touched if the current budget is cut because regulations requiring severance pay and other benefits mean layoffs late in the federal fiscal year save little money. The fiscal year begins Oct. 1.

Congress has considered two bills that cut current budgets at plants that once produced nuclear material for the military, including Hanford.

One bill would provide extra money for U.S. troops overseas, but would cut \$100 million from defense nuclear waste sites. The bill has passed both houses of Congress.

The other bill offers, among other things, \$5 billion in disaster relief for California. It, too, would cut \$100 million from defense nuclear waste sites. That bill is in a House-Senate conference committee.

Both bills must go to the White House for consideration by President Clinton.

K basin cleanup on fast track

By DON McMANMAN

Herald staff writer

Hanford officials want to use a partially constructed building, abandoned since 1993, to speed cleanup of the K basin east by about a year, Hanford Manager John Wagoner said Thursday.

If the plan clears all environmental hurdles — and Wagoner thinks it will — all irradiated fuel rods should be removed from Hanford's K basin east by December 1999.

Fuel rods in the K basins — originally irradiated to produce plutonium for hydrogen bombs but cast aside when the plutonium wasn't needed — will be plucked from the water, dried and packed into airtight containers.

The containers will be stored in the new \$60 million to \$70 million building.

Many of the 25,500 rods submerged in the basin are chipped and reacting with water to create new chemicals — producing a deadly, radioactive stew.

K basin east has been called Hanford's worst environmental problem. It has leaked in the past and continues to crumble.

The plan Wagoner announced Thursday to the Tri-City Industrial Development Council would use the massive foundation once intended for a structure to hold glassified waste from Hanford's underground tanks.

The underground tanks have been called Hanford's second-worst environmental problem.

Contractors had just finished the 5-foot-deep reinforced concrete foundation when the Department of Energy canceled the project in 1993, said John Britton, a spokesman for Westinghouse Hanford Co.

The structure was intended to hold treated waste from Hanford's 28 double-shell tanks.

When the Tri-Party Agreement between Washington state and federal agencies was renegotiated, it called for waste from Hanford's 149 single-shell tanks to be treated and turned into glass logs, Britton said.

The envisioned building was too small. To cut losses, DOE canceled further construction, Britton said.

Now, construction will go ahead after an environmental impact study is completed, Wagoner said. Using the existing foundation will take a year less than starting from scratch, Wagoner said.

"It was designed to store highly radioactive, heat-producing materials, and that's what we'll have coming out of the K basin," Wagoner said.

Further construction on the building generally will follow the original design, Wagoner said.

Gregoire to battle for Tri-Party pact

By LES BLUMENTHAL

Herald Washington, D.C., bureau

WASHINGTON — Washington state Attorney General Christine Gregoire says she's not about to let Congress or the Department of Energy gut the Tri-Party Agreement for cleaning up Hanford.

"They're not going to do it without a fight," Gregoire said in an interview. "There are several avenues we can use. It will be a political as well as a legal battle."

Gregoire, who was involved in the 14 months of sometimes "brutal" negotiations that led to the signing of the agreement in 1989, has been talking with colleagues from 10 other states with DOE facilities about the challenge Hanford's cleanup faces and its implications for other sites. "If they turn their back on us, they turn their back on all these states,"

she said. "The other DOE states understood."

Gregoire said she has weekly phone calls with the attorneys general in other states and the environmental directors of those states have begun participating in conference calls.

Critics of the Tri-Party Agreement insist it has created a bureaucratic nightmare, that Hanford cleanup is out of control and costs have escalated beyond what the federal Treasury can afford.

But Gregoire said while the agreement has its flaws, it has given the state a critical voice in the cleanup and for the first time forced DOE to follow environmental laws and end 50 years of secrecy about Hanford.

Since it was signed, the agreement has undergone four major renegotiations and the state has accepted

Please see TRI-PARTY, Page A2



Herald/Dorothy Adcock
A shows friends his golden prize egg during an Easter egg hunt Friday at Jennewick. The YMCA sponsored the early Easter party for 36 students. a Loosveldt.

4-15-95

A3Monday, April 17, 1995 **Tri-City Herald**

s to Tri-Cities

In the movie *Schindler's List*, Kedem is one of the holocaust survivors who appears in the final scene to pay tribute to Schindler by placing a stone on his grave, a gesture of respect and veneration.

The movie also reflected Kedem's experiences as a child trying to make himself invisible in a concentration camp. In one scene, a young boy flees the Nazis by hiding in a latrine.

"Each day was much worse than jumping into a latrine," Kedem said. But since the holocaust he has lived a rich and full life. He studied at Oxford, worked as an engineer in

Jerusalem and raised six children.

Kedem's lecture is being sponsored by the Associated Students of Columbia Basin College and Washington State University Tri-Cities.

Tickets will be sold in advance at the CBC Student Activities Office 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. weekdays or at the CBC Bookstore 4:30 to 8 p.m. Monday through Thursday.

Tickets also are available from 8 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday at the WSU Tri-Cities Student Services Department.

Remaining tickets will be sold at the door.

Hanford pact alluring target for Congress

By **LES BLUMENTHAL**

Herald Washington, D.C., bureau

WASHINGTON — Six years after a comprehensive Hanford nuclear reservation cleanup agreement was signed, Congress is considering tossing it out, pre-empting federal, state and local environmental laws and turning the effort over to the agency that created the mess to begin with.

Critics say the Tri-Party Agreement between Washington state, the Department of Energy and the federal Environmental Protection Agency has created a bureaucratic nightmare, the cleanup is out of control, and costs have escalated beyond what the federal Treasury can afford.

State officials vow to fight any effort to gut the agreement and fear turning control of the cleanup over to the Department of Energy would be a step backward and allow the agency to use the strong-arm tactics of the past.

"They are not going to let the citi-

chairman of the committee.

Supporters concede the agreement has flaws, but insist it has given the state a critical voice in the cleanup, forced the Energy Department to abide by the law and follow a schedule. It also helped restore public confidence in the department after 50 years of secrecy.

Over the past six years, the Tri-Party Agreement has undergone four major renegotiations and about 170 other changes as it became clear some of the milestones it contained would be impossible to meet because the technology they required hadn't been developed, or easier, cheaper ways might be available.

"The state has always been flexible," said Gregoire, who was involved in the 14 months of sometimes "brutal" negotiations that led up to the signing of the agreement.

Gregoire said the agreement represented the first time the Energy Department was required to share previously secret information with a

Kaiser plans outside jobs for workers

By **WANDA BRIGGS**

Herald staff writer

ICF Kaiser Hanford Co. aims to employ a private-side work force at Hanford of 100 to 150 workers and generate sales of \$8 million to \$10 million annually under an agreement being ironed out with the Department of Energy.

The agreement, which must be blessed by Kaiser's partner, Westinghouse Hanford Co., would give Kaiser authority to use its Hanford workers and equipment to do work for private firms.

"This hasn't happened yet, but we think it will," Jim Edwards, corporate president of ICF Kaiser, said Monday.

"We're not sure how long it will take, but our plan is to use our staff here to work on private contracts in other places," he said. "When we've got that authority, it will give us a broad basis to market Kaiser in the private sector."

John Wagoner, DOE's Hanford manager, said DOE agreements are being refined that would authorize Westinghouse Hanford and ICF Kaiser to use contractor employees and government equipment to seek private jobs.

"We are open to a variety of possibilities," Wagoner said.

What that means for ICF Kaiser, Edwards said, is clout "to use our talent and our skills" and DOE facilities to look for private business opportunities.

Those opportunities, he predicts, could bring ICF Kaiser additional annual minimum revenues of \$8 million to \$10 million, or enough "for a work force of 100 to 150 dedicated to private work."

"And in this current environment, it's important to maintain as many jobs as we can in this area," said Edwards, who Monday was in the Tri-Cities from ICF Kaiser.

Please see **KAISER**, Page A2▶

Justices question species' future

4-18-95

Hearings set on mixed-waste plan

By JOHN STANG

Herald staff writer

Public hearings are set in May on a proposal to treat out-of-state mixed radioactive wastes at Hanford.

Hanford would start taking the waste in 1999.

The proposal calls for 13 federal sites to send about 130 cubic yards of wastes — enough to fill 470 55-gallon drums — to Hanford to be treated and then shipped back.

The public hearings are scheduled at 7 p.m. May 3 at the Washington Department of Ecology's office in Kennewick and at 7 p.m. May 9 at the Bremerton School District board room.

Ecology and the Department of Energy are holding the hearings. The agencies are accepting written comments through July 5, with a decision to be made by October, said Ecology spokesman Jerry Gilliland.

Mixed wastes are a combination of hazardous chemicals and radioactive materials.

Since 1992, a federal law requires federal facilities to plan how to treat their mixed wastes.

Originally, a 22-state task force called for the wastes to be treated at their home sites, then found that appeared unfeasible.

Consequently, the states and federal government agreed the mixed wastes would be stored at their home sites until central treatment plants could be built. Then the wastes would be shipped for treatment and returned.

Only 44 cubic yards of the 130 cubic yards of possible Hanford-bound waste have been produced so far. The other expected waste is predicted to be produced over the next five years, according to the Ecology department.

The 13 proposed sites that would send waste to Hanford are in Puget Sound, California, Connecticut, Hawaii, Missouri, New York, Ohio, Iowa and Maine.

All 13 are DOE or Navy facilities.

California is expected to send 43 cubic yards and Puget Sound is expected to send 34 cubic

yards. The other states are expected to send small amounts.

"Before accepting any off-site wastes under the site treatment plans, Washington will consult with local Indian nations, the Hanford Advisory Board and the public," Dan Silver, Ecology's assistant director for waste management, said in a written statement.

"In any case, the state will oppose shipment of off-site wastes to Hanford if they jeopardize timely cleanup of Hanford's waste, or if (DOE) is not in full compliance with the Tri-Party Agreement and other permits and orders," Silver said.

The state also will oppose any long-term storage of waste after treatment, he added.

The outside wastes would be treated at Hanford's proposed Waste Receiving and Processing Facility Module 2A (WRAP 2A).

That plant's design work was put on hold in January as Hanford officials began studying whether the work planned there should be contracted out to a private company.

Pollution expert set to talk in Tri-Cities

By the Herald staff

A researcher who studied links between airborne pollution particles and human health is to discuss her work at 2 p.m. April 26 at Washington State University Tri-Cities auditorium.

Dr. Mary Ellen Gordian, city medical officer for Anchorage, Alaska, and an air-quality researcher, is the speaker. Admission is free.

Gordian's research includes looking at volcanic ash, which has

similar properties to blowing dust, said Mike O'Haver, PM-10 program manager for the Benton County Clean Air Authority. PM-10 is the term for particulate pollution of a certain size that can be harmful to human health.

The discussion is sponsored by the authority's citizens advisory committee, the American Lung Association of Washington, the Washington Department of Ecology and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

For information, call 943-3396, or 800-424-4372, ext. 8578.

DOE gains trust, WSU survey finds

By the Herald staff

A survey done last year by Washington State University shows Department of Energy efforts to decrease secrecy and increase public participation are paying off in greater public trust and confidence.

WSU first did the "trust and confidence" survey in 1992 at the request of DOE. The attitudes among people who deal most frequently with the agency showed improvement in all categories in the latest survey.

About 300 people were ques-

tioned, all with a stake in DOE's defense programs, radioactive waste and environmental cleanup efforts.

"These measurements of our progress are encouraging and validate the time and effort we've put into building partnerships with our customers," Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary said in a telephone conference.

"What is clear, however, is that we have a long way to go to develop the open, honest and productive relationship with the public that we want and need," she added.

School digest

Tapteal chili feed, bingo night Friday

Tapteal Elementary in West Richland plans a chili feed and bingo night Friday.

Dinner is from 5:30 to 7 p.m. Bingo is from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Entertainment will be provided by the school's student conga group, and there will be a silent auction.

Dinner costs \$12 for a family, \$4 for adults and \$2 for children under 12. Bingo costs 50 cents per card. The school is at 705 N. 62nd Ave.

Special Olympics track meet Saturday

MILTON-FREEWATER — About 160 people from Northeast Oregon and Southwest Washington will participate Saturday in the eighth annual Oregon Trail Special Olympics Sectional Track Meet.

The meet is at Shockman Field in Milton-Freewater from 8:45 a.m. to 4 p.m., with a dance and social starting at 2:30 p.m.

Participants are age 8 to 42 and include three athletes from Team Oregon USA and the 1995 International Special Olympian of the Year.

For more information, call 503-938-5504.

Exchange Club picks Kamiakin student

The Pasco/Kennewick Exchange Club honored a Kamiakin High senior as the April Youth of the Month.

Alexander Robinson Kerkow won \$50 and a plaque. He has a 4.0 grade-

Hanford's biggest job cuts near end

By WANDA BRIGGS

Herald staff writer

A major round of Hanford job cuts likely to begin today will nearly complete reductions targeted by Westinghouse Hanford Co. and its partners for fiscal 1995, officials say.

The firms plan to tell about 700 workers today or Thursday that their jobs have been eliminated.

Those notices will represent nearly all of the work force reductions by Westinghouse Hanford Co., ICF Kaiser Hanford Co. and

Boeing Computer Services Richland through Sept. 30.

This will bring total job reductions to date at the three contractors to 3,300, or 69 percent of 4,800 job cuts planned at Hanford this year.

The Department of Energy approved the layoff program late Tuesday. Those workers who get "pink slips" will be paid for 60 days, but most will be gone from the site within two days of notification.

"It is essential that we at Westinghouse Hanford Co. get on with conducting our programs and meeting our milestones. But it is

also essential that people leaving our payroll be given the opportunity to get out and find work as fast as they can," said to LaMar Trego, president of Westinghouse Hanford Co.

Leaving almost immediately "gives those employees an opportunity to get on with the next phase of their lives. To help with that, we have provided a networking system to assist them with new jobs and resumes," Trego said.

In addition, Westinghouse today will announce a new voluntary reduction of force

program for the 20 percent of its work force whose job categories were excluded from the previous program.

Between the layoff notices and voluntary reductions, the total job losses over the next few days will be about 700, he said. Officials hope employees in that category will recognize the risk and take advantage of the voluntary reduction offer.

The 1,500 difference between the 3,300 job losses for Westinghouse and its partners and the 4,800 that DOE has said must be eliminated by Sept. 30 will come from Battelle-

Northwest, Bechtel Hanford Co., the Hanford Environmental Health Foundation and subcontractors.

Battelle employees have until Friday to accept an early retirement program. Its voluntary reduction program will end April 30. If those two programs combined don't total 900, layoffs will start at Battelle, said spokesman Greg Koller.

The target for Battelle's early retirement is 250; another 350 are expected to quit

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Senate passes

Kite flying's a breeze for 2

Odor sickens

Westinghouse aims to retain Hanford contract

By WANDA BRIGGS

Herald staff writer

Westinghouse Electric Corp. will spend nearly \$5 million in the next 15 to 18 months trying to win a new contract as the Department of Energy's prime contractor at Hanford, a top company official said Tuesday.

"The question only is what's the appropriate structure for such a contract," James S. Moore said Tuesday during a visit to the Tri-Cities.

He was named president of the Westinghouse Government and Environmental Services Co. in March and is Westinghouse Hanford President LaMar Trego's new boss.

Moore, of Pittsburgh, was in the Tri-Cities for a quarterly meeting of the Westinghouse Hanford Co. board of directors.

Westinghouse's current DOE contract, which was recently extended by one year, ends in March 1997. But Moore said another extension is unlikely because of DOE's contract reform.

That leaves Westinghouse and whoever its partners might be to rebid on the environmental management work at Hanford. ICF Kaiser is expected to join Westinghouse in the bid effort.

"I am convinced we can continue to play a major role at Hanford and in the Tri-Cities," Moore said. Westinghouse has done business at Hanford for about 25 years.

The bid process will formally begin this fall when DOE asks private firms nationwide to bid on the Hanford work. At that time, Westinghouse will form a team of executives to work on the bid, separate from Trego and

his managers at Hanford.

The game plan to earn a new contract is simple, but not easy, Moore said: "Westinghouse has to understand its customer's (DOE's) needs and wants and what our strengths are. Here at Hanford, our customer wants us to take care of safety issues that have been identified and to work with our stakeholders to get the cleanup done, given constraints of the federal budget."

A new Republican-dominated Congress swept into office in November, intent on balancing the federal budget. Part of that process has been to reduce 1996 budget requests and cut current spending at Hanford by some \$30 million to \$40 million.

How much of that money will come out of Westinghouse's budget isn't yet known, Trego said Tuesday.

Those cuts, coupled with DOE efforts to set aside money to hire private firms to do work now being done by Hanford contractors will result in about 4,800 job losses at Hanford by Sept. 30. About half of those already have been cut.

Westinghouse is looking at hiring private firms to use their Hanford base to grow new jobs. In addition, Westinghouse, like its partner, ICF Kaiser Hanford Co., is working out details with DOE to use its workers and DOE equipment to do nongovernment work.

Privatization can work, Moore said, and can create a private work base not dependent on DOE for a paycheck.

"But this is a real learning process, it takes time," he said. "As a corporation, Westinghouse has already outsourced its benefits program ... It wasn't easy, but it's working."



Herald photos/Bob Brawdy

Westinghouse's James S. Moore says he is convinced the company can continue to play a major role at Hanford and the Tri-Cities.

Abby/C5 Classified/C11 Comics/B5 Deaths/C10 Horoscope/D2 Movies/B6 Opinion/A6 Sports/B1 Stocks/C8 TV/B4 Weather/A5

500 lose jobs at Hanford

By WANDA BRIGGS

Herald staff writer

It was a somber Wednesday at Hanford.

Some cried as 500 workers learned their jobs had ended. Those who remained were heart sick and several said they had no appetite for work. Nerves were frayed.

Many cleaned out their desks and were gone by noon.

One, a 49-year-old from Kennewick, worked at Westinghouse Hanford Co. for 15 years.

"I knew my job was at risk. I knew there was this possibility. Still, I wasn't prepared," said the man, who asked not to be identified. "My kids would be embarrassed if they see my name in the paper, and besides, we haven't even told our friends."

His first stop when he left the federal site was the Tri-City Industrial Development Council (TRIDEC) office in Kennewick.

"I wanted to see what sort of help is available, and it's out there. You just have to ask. Although I didn't want this to happen, it gives me the opportunity to do what I've been thinking of doing, and that's to start my own business consulting firm."

"If I can make this business idea of mine work, I can have clients around the country and stay based right here," he said. "There are a lot more 49-year-olds making a good living as business consultants than there are 29-year-olds. Experience has to count for something."

LaMar Trego, president of Westinghouse Hanford, said he was sick at heart.

"Neither I nor members of my management team are taking this reduction of force lightly," he said. "I personally wish we could avoid implementing any involuntary layoffs. I also know that the managers having to deliver layoff notices to their employees are doing one of the most difficult tasks of their careers. But business realities leave us no option."

The layoff is phase three of the work force restructuring for Westinghouse and its partners at Hanford — ICF Kaiser Hanford Co. and Boeing Computer Services Richland.

In addition to about 500 layoff notices given Wednesday to workers, Westinghouse and its partners said they'll cut another 160 through a second voluntary program.

That program, available on a first-come, first-served basis, is open to job categories excluded from a previous voluntary reduction program, including a range of jobs from chemists to security. That program ends April 25.

Employees who got laid off Wednesday will be paid through June 30.

As part of its overall reductions, Westinghouse and its partners have eliminated about 350 management jobs, with some of those people getting layoff notices Wednesday.

4-19-95

City halls keep cautious eye on Hanford

By DAVE SCHAFER

Herald staff writer

Cautious steps could be heard in area city halls Wednesday as 500 pink slips were handed to Hanford workers.

As workers are sent packing by Westinghouse Hanford Co. and its partners, cities are taking a harder look at the future.

Kennewick told department heads to rein in expenses and delay hiring six new employees as the city braces for the economic ripples that could follow Hanford layoffs.

Richland officials will meet Monday to talk about their finances, and decide whether that city should take additional cost-saving precautions.

Pasco, meanwhile, hopes its conservative budget will be enough to withstand the economic ripples caused by thousands of job losses statewide.

In Kennewick, the future appears less prosperous than the city council anticipated,

if first-quarter sales tax revenue is a reliable indicator.

For the past five years, Kennewick has relished 16 percent annual growth in sales tax revenue.

In 1994, the city received about \$4.7 million from retail sales, and anticipated the growth rate to continue through this year and next.

However, the city's share of sales tax revenue rose only slightly in January, February and March — up 1.5 percent from the first quarter of 1994.

If the trend continues, the city could find itself almost \$2 million short of its projected revenue over the next two years.

City Manager Bob Kelly said that's why Kennewick has put off hiring six new employees, even though money was set aside for them this year.

Those positions were two office assistants, an associate planner and three park employees.

Kelly said he has instituted about \$1.6 million in spending freezes, cutting back on

“People out there don't know who has a job and who doesn't.”

—Bob Kelly,

Kennewick city manager

travel, training and some purchases.

The city also suspended some of its money management practices, such as squirreling away dollars to replace specific vehicles as the city's fleet grows older.

Although it was clear at a workshop Tuesday some Kennewick council members are worried about the shakedowns at Hanford, the panic button has not yet been pushed.

Kelly said the city's just “exercising some judicious control of expenditures.

“I think what we're seeing now is just a lack of discretionary purchases,” Kelly said, referring to the slow growth of sale tax revenue. “If

you don't have to buy it right now, people aren't because there's a lot of uncertainty.”

Kelly said he believed sales will pick up, but added, “Until we have a little more certainty for the remaining 16,000 people at Hanford ... it's a crap shoot.

“People out there don't know who has a job and who doesn't.”

While Kennewick capped expenses to save money, Pasco is relying on more conservative planning.

Pasco planned for no more money in 1995 than it collected in 1994, despite the years of growth leading up to this spring.

Pasco City Manager Gary Crutchfield said by anticipating a flattening out in revenue, the city should be able to absorb the effects of the 4,800 jobs to be lost at Hanford this year.

If Congress makes deeper cuts at Hanford, the city may have to take a closer look.

“The city's grown dramatically, and we know it's not going to keep growing that way,” he said.

“Quite frankly, we're very hopeful that

what we have anticipated will be sufficient to absorb the impacts,” he said.

Richland officials will evaluate their position at a workshop Monday.

Although Richland City Manager Joe King said the city has not yet felt any dramatic effects, sales tax revenue is coming in slower and the city has seen new home construction drop off.

So far, the city has not frozen hires or spending, King said.

Like Pasco, West Richland also budgeted conservatively and other than holding off on hiring one new position that had been budgeted, officials plan to ride things out for now, said City Administrator Paul Chasco.

City officials plan to ask Hanford officials how many of the people who have lost jobs live in West Richland.

They are concerned about losing population-based state revenue if ex-Hanford workers move away from the city, Chasco said.

Hastings hears on Hanford Reach

By JOHN STANG

Herald staff writer

On a day of 500 Hanford pink slips, only one question to U.S. Rep. Doc Hastings on Wednesday evening zeroed in on the Westinghouse Hanford Co. layoffs.

A man who had just lost his Westinghouse job said he feared he would lose unemployment benefits if he went back to school for retraining.

What could the Pasco Republican do about the layoffs — right now?

“I wish I could definitely say I have a program in place. I wish I could. ... I don't have that answered,” Hastings told about 150 people at a town hall meeting at Richland City Hall.

Unemployment benefits are covered by state law, not federal, Hastings noted.

However, Hastings pointed to two bills he proposed that he says should streamline Hanford enough to stop the work force from shrinking.

One bill has just begun its way through the House. It would privatize many Hanford functions, making them independent of the federal government.

The other bill would trim cleanup regulations. It is still being drafted and has not been introduced, Hastings said. Hastings said deregulation will increase efficiency.

Hastings' office is monitoring a



Herald/John Stang

Audubon Society member Kathy Criddle talks Wednesday with U.S. Rep. Doc Hastings about the Hanford Reach after a town hall meeting in Richland. Discussions also touched on Hastings' proposals for Hanford cleanup.

Hanford effort to identify a project or a technological innovation in May to see if it can be sped up on a “fast track” under existing federal laws. That “fast track” project is supposed to begin in July, he said.

Sixteen people spoke to Hastings on at least a dozen subjects.

The debate over future federal or local control of the Hanford Reach drew the most interest.

Three members of the Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society pressed Hastings to change his stance on the issue.

The Audubon Society favors federal control of Columbia River's shore and the North Slope after the U.S. Department of Energy releases the reach.

Hastings wants Grant, Benton and Franklin county governments to be in charge.

Audubon Society member Rick Leaumont said the counties have poor records of caring for riverside parks.

“The counties have no fisheries biologists, no wildlife biologists. The Benton County Sheriff's Department is stretched thin. ... How can you say they can manage it?” Leaumont asked.

Audubon Society President Mike Lilga and Hastings agreed the county governments want to preserve much of the wildlife aspects of the reach.

But Lilga asked Hastings if he would change his mind if the

Audubon Society could show the federal government has better habitat management expertise.

Hastings said, “I'm open to anything.”

Hastings said county governments would be much more responsive than the federal government to local wishes for the reach — including responding to environmentalists' concerns.

An Audubon Society suggestion Congress give control of the reach to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service drew applause from slightly more than half the crowd.

A suggestion that favored the counties assuming control drew applause from about 20 percent of the crowd.

tract law when it began work on the community center.

Mull said the city, acting as its own general contractor on the construction projects, prevented him from bidding on a contract to supply ventilation equipment.

Mull said he approached building official Hank McDonald several times between December and March, telling McDonald he was interested in supplying the heating and air-conditioning equipment.

When Mull saw McDonald on March 9, he asked when a bid request notice would be issued. He was told the city already purchased the equipment directly and no bid solicitation was planned.

Under Oregon law, contracts exceeding \$2,500 issued by public agencies must be based on competitive bids or proposals.

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CALL: Would the Oklahoma City bombers face the death penalty? **Page A2.**

■ **BOMB BUFFS:** Those who enjoy explosives make up a strange subculture. **Page A17.**

■ **DONATIONS:** Groups accept money to help victims. **Page A7.**

truck that blew apart the federal building with a half-ton of home-brewed explosives.

The death toll rose to 52, making the attack the deadliest bombing in U.S. history. About 150 people remained unaccounted for.

Less than a day and a half after the bombing at the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building, FBI Agent Weldon Kennedy said agents are seeking two white men suspected of using aliases to rent the truck. The men's identities are unknown, he said.

Please see **BLAST**, Page A2 ▶

ied baby photographed in a photograph arms was identified Thursday as a girl who had turned a year old just the day before the bombing.

Baylee Almon's picture brought home the horror of the scene to millions who saw it on the front pages of newspapers, including Thursday's Tri-City Herald.

On Thursday, her mother, Aren Almon, 22, met with a TV reporter to talk about her grief then had a tearful meeting with the police officer and firefighter who tried to rescue her daughter.

"Thank you for getting her out of there as fast as you could," Almon told Police Sgt. John Avera as she hugged him on the front lawn of the home where she is staying with relatives.

Her apartment in the downtown

said firefighter Chris Fields, whose attempt to rescue the baby was captured by an amateur photographer and transmitted worldwide by The Associated Press.

Baylee was believed to be in a government day-care center on the second floor of the downtown federal office building when it was devastated by the bomb.

It was unclear whether Baylee was already dead when Avera handed her to Fields, who in turn rushed her to the paramedics.

"At least I know, they're really nice people," Almon said in the interview. "That one fireman has a 2-year-old little boy, so I feel a lot better knowing they were that nice to help her."

"If they do catch these criminals, maybe they'll see this and see how much they've

tures, bank clerk Charles H. Porter IV, figured when he first heard the explosion that demolition crews were tearing down a building and he'd have a chance to snap some neat photos with his camera.

Instead, five minutes later, he came upon Avera carrying Baylee up from the smoking ruins of the federal building.

As Avera handed the baby to Fields, Porter snapped away.

"Its little face was covered in insulation and dust," Fields said. "I couldn't tell if the skull was cracked — the head was cut open."

Fields and his unit worked 13 straight hours pulling people from the rubble. Each time he stopped to catch his breath, Fields said, "the first thing that would come into my mind was that baby."



Herald/Bob Brawdy

Construction crew members work on attaching roof beams to the \$230 million Environmental Molecular Science Laboratory on Thursday in Richland.

Molecular lab on track to open in 1997

By **WANDA BRIGGS**

Herald staff writer

The Environmental Molecular Science Laboratory under construction in Richland can play a major role in cutting the estimated \$1 trillion price tag to clean up America's contaminated soils and ground waters.

And the \$230 million laboratory — commonly called EMSL — is on schedule to do just that, its director, Thom Dunning, said Thursday. That cost includes construction and equipment.

EMSL is part of the Pacific Northwest Laboratory operated for the U.S. Department of Energy by Battelle-Northwest. It is scheduled for completion in late 1996 and is to open by mid-1997, though the center has been operating in temporary facilities at Battelle.

Its construction was delayed by discovery of a American Indian burial site at the original site next to the Columbia River. A new site was selected farther inland.

"With that, it's remarkable we're right on construction schedule," said Dunning, who was named director of the high-tech laboratory last year.

EMSL's combined construction and equipment budget this fiscal year is \$50 million, and Congress has been asked by DOE to approve \$65 million for the 1996 fiscal year beginning Oct. 1. That includes \$21 million for continued construction and \$44 million for equipment and research.

So far, Dunning said, EMSL's current year budget has not been reduced despite Congress' order for DOE to cut \$30 million to \$40 million from its overall Hanford spending.

"But based on what I know, I would tell you this

is a project that is very important to the Office of Energy Research that supplies the funds. That office sees this laboratory as a cornerstone of its ability to respond to the needs of DOE's Office of Environmental Management," Dunning said. "We believe we have a very favored position in the upcoming budget cut scenarios."

That's the same message Dunning gave to Rep. Doc Hastings, R-Wash., who toured the EMSL site Thursday. Hastings' 4th District District includes Hanford.

"I came away from that briefing feeling Doc understood this laboratory has the real potential to help DOE with its environmental restoration and that scientific technologies developed here will be unsurpassed in the world," Dunning said.

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Fast Flux fuel removed early, under budget

By **JOHN STANG**

Herald staff writer

Westinghouse Hanford Co. completed removing fuel from the Fast Flux Test Facility — 4½ months ahead of schedule and \$475,000 under budget.

That earns Westinghouse a \$500,000 bonus for exceeding goals under its contract with the Department of Energy.

DOE ordered the shutdown of FFTF

because there were too few missions to justify operating it.

The removal of 120 fuel assemblies — each 12 feet long and containing 217 pencil-like fuel rods — was originally scheduled for September.

The original estimated price tag was almost \$1.7 million.

Even though Westinghouse's bonus is \$25,000 more than the immediate savings, the sped-up project will save money in the long

run, explained Ed Loika, Westinghouse's director of the FFTF transition project.

Completing the fuel removal early, frees up people to work on the next phases of FFTF's deactivation, Loika said. And that trims some time off the five-year timetable for deactivating the plant.

It will cost about \$55 million a year to shut down the reactor. But just \$1 million a year will be needed to maintain the site after it's deactivated, Loika said.

"FFTF's reputation around the world has been as one of the best operated reactors. In defueling, we're maintaining the same reputation," Loika said.

The 120 fuel assemblies join another 240 assemblies already in storage. All 360 assemblies — about 13 tons of fuel — will be cleaned and stored in the FFTF area until a final disposal solution is found, Loika said.

The next major step is draining 260,000 gallons of liquid sodium out of the reactor's pipe

system. That is expected to take until 1997 or 1998. The liquid sodium was used as the main coolant for the reactor.

Hanford scientists plan to study if the drained liquid sodium could be used in the chemical pretreatment of radioactive wastes at Hanford's tank farms before those tank wastes are turned into glass.

A decision on whether FFTF's sodium will be used for that purpose is scheduled for 1998.

Richland adjusting to economic slowdown

By WILL SWARTS
Herald staff writer

The effects of Hanford cuts are starting to show in Richland's economy, but the city isn't going to panic.

Rather, city staff will keep a watchful eye on Hanford's fortunes — which provide 43 percent of Richland's jobs — and pay attention to the changes as they occur, rather than respond to things that haven't happened.

Officials told the Richland City Council in a late-night Monday workshop the city is not suffering dramatic financial consequences from the latest round of layoffs. But some traditional indicators show city revenue for the last financial quarter is starting to decline:

■ Retail sales tax receipts from January through March were \$943,503 this year, down about \$58,000 from \$1,001,444 for the same period in 1994.

■ The total value of building permits issued in the first three months of the year \$54,739, was down from \$167,410 in the first quarter of 1994.

■ The real estate excise tax has earned the city \$58,968 for the same period this year, down from \$72,788 in the first quarter of 1994.

But Jill Monley, assistant city manager for administrative and community services, said a conservative budgeting process and a close look at what's really happening with city revenues leaves the city in a better position than people might expect.

"With the exception of permit-

related and real estate-related revenue, we're pretty much on budget," she told the council.

The relatively stable financial picture caused some council members to wonder why Kennewick has delayed hiring new employees and why Benton County commissioners spoke Monday of their worst fears being realized sooner than expected.

"It's not the dire message being handed out by other government entities," said Councilman Larry Haler. "People will look at how we respond to that. If we show any sign of overreacting, that will show signs we're not serious about the future of the community."

The city will probably reduce its staff through attrition, especially in the building department, where one vacant position is going unfilled because of a drop in the demand for services, said Bill King, assistant city manager.

"To some extent, we were able to prepare ourselves for (Hanford layoffs)," he said. "Undoubtedly, losing 5,000 jobs is going to have an impact, but some of the doomsayers are saying there's going to be a three- or fourfold effect."

"Our past history doesn't seem to bear that out."

Councilman Clark Crouch said he was satisfied with the assessments from Monley, King and City Finance Director Ron Musson.

"What we have done as a council is to recognize that staff is in a position ... to consider cost effective measures in management of the city," he said. "What we're really doing I think is recognizing the professionalism of our staff."

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Target

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DOE eyes Hanford for plutonium

By LES BLUMENTHAL

Herald Washington, D.C., bureau

WASHINGTON — Hanford is one of a handful of sites the Department of Energy will study as the site for possible long-term storage of the nation's supply of excess weapons-grade plutonium.

The department also will look at using existing commercial light-water reactors or partially completed light-water reactors to burn the plutonium after mixing it with other fuel. The Washington Public Power Supply System has already suggested two of its reactors at Hanford, the operating No. 2 plant and the moth-balled No. 1 plant, could be used.

In addition, the department will evaluate the possibility of constructing a new fuel fabrication facility if it decides to pursue the possibility of using a reactor to burn plutonium. Such a facility, the 10-year-old Fuel Materials Examination Facility (FMEF) already sits vacant at the reservation. FMEF could also be used as a storage facility.

The studies are all part of the so-called programmatic environmental impact statement DOE will prepare

as it moves toward a decision on what to do with plutonium no longer needed for nuclear weapons.

"The program directs technical, schedule, cost and environmental analysis, as well as research and development necessary to support and then implement long-term storage and disposition decisions," according to a DOE document obtained Thursday. The document is a plan outlining the scope of the proposed environmental impact

Conflicts may delay DOE report on changes

By WANDA BRIGGS

Herald staff writer

Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary's scheduled announcement Wednesday of a wholesale reorganization of the U.S. Department of Energy likely will be postponed.

"We think there will be conflicts with other events happening, and we expect a delay," DOE spokeswoman Jane Brady said Thursday from Washington, D.C. DOE officials did not know when the announcement would be rescheduled.

What realignment will mean for DOE's Richland Operations Office or for federal employees at Hanford is unknown.

"Could be a little, could be a lot," said one DOE official at Hanford.

One recommendation reportedly is that DOE cut the work force at its field offices by 20 percent and at its D.C. headquarters by 25 percent. DOE employs about 20,000 nationwide and 560 at Hanford.

O'Leary announced in December the formation of teams to begin a four-month effort to look at the federal agency from top to bottom and recommend ways to make it cheaper and more cost

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Hanford VanPool requests on rise

By CARRIE SCHAFER

Herald staff writer

The Ben Franklin Transit Authority has been deluged with requests for car-pool vehicles since the Department of Energy officially stopped bus service for Hanford workers Wednesday.

Transit officials say they plan to boost their fleet of VanPool vehicles from the present 70 to 120 by September, noting they'd signed lease agreements with other transit authorities for 34 extra VanPool vans this month.

"We've had a significant request for VanPools," said Ed Frost, the transit authority's director for specialized transportation and planning. "We're trying to get our hands on every empty VanPool vehicle in the state."

Frost said the authority has set up 22 new VanPool vans since DOE told ICF Kaiser in February the service would be eliminated. ICF Kaiser ran the program for the federal government.

Eliminating the service would save taxpayers an estimated \$4.5 million a year. Riders paid \$1.50 a day to ride the bus, but it cost DOE about \$4,000 per rider per year.

Bus service from downtown Richland and the 1100 Area to the Hanford site stopped Wednesday, displacing about 1,200 passengers who used the service regularly. It also displaced bus drivers, although officials Thursday did not have the total number of those laid off.

ICF spokeswoman Lucy Love said there are 35 fewer drivers than last October, adding that some of those jobs were lost to early retirements. Similar to other layoffs at Hanford, drivers were given pink slips and 60 days pay a week ago.

About 36 buses transported Hanford workers to various portions of the site, Love said. Only 10 will still be in use for tours.

Meanwhile, Ben Franklin Transit will continue to organize VanPool rides until the extra vehicles in the fleet are reserved.

The 14-passenger vans, including the driver, cost riders between \$50 and \$60 per month. Half of that fee is based on a fixed rate for insurance and maintenance costs. The rest is based on mileage, Frost said.

■ IT'S YOUR CALL: Should Hanford be used for weapons plutonium storage? Page A2.

Japanese media study Hanford

By YUKO MAEDA
Herald staff writer

Hanford is becoming a regular stop for Japanese journalists covering the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II.

In the past two months, Westinghouse Hanford Co. guided three teams of Japanese reporters.

"Foreign press visits are quite common," said Westinghouse spokesman Mike Berriochoa.

Media interest in Hanford climbed in 1986 when the Chernobyl nuclear accident spewed a radioactive cloud that circled the globe. Design similarities between N Reactor, Hanford's last remaining plutonium reactor, and the ill-fated Soviet plant drew journalists from around the world.

Since then, the media's focus shifted to environmental cleanup, health-effects studies of downwinders and Hanford's former role in nuclear weapons production.

"This year, they are primarily focusing on the anniversary of the atomic bombing," Berriochoa said.

On Aug. 9, 1945, the bomber Bock's Car dropped the Fat Man bomb, carrying plutonium produced at Hanford, over Nagasaki, Japan.

The blast destroyed about 44 percent of the city, killed 35,000 people and injured another 60,000. Within two days, the Japanese government began negotiating a surrender, bringing about the end of the war.

Earlier this month, a crew from NHK, Japan's national public television, was in the Tri-Cities working on a documentary about the past and future of the nuclear age.

Nobuhisa Yamashita, a producer at NHK's Hiroshima affiliate, said, "This year is the 50th anniversary of the atomic bombing of Japan as well as the start of the nuclear age. We want to examine the first half century of the nuclear age and look forward at the future."

NHK Hiroshima sent crews to the United States, the Marshall Islands

and nuclear sites in the former Soviet Union. Yamashita's crew is focusing on Hanford.

"Hanford is where the Nagasaki atomic bomb's plutonium was produced. And the Tri-Cities has been tied to Hanford and the nuclear industry since the Manhattan Project. This place is symbolic to look back at the nuclear age," Yamashita said.

Yamashita and his crew spent a day on the Hanford site, filmed an American Nuclear Society meeting in Richland and interviewed Westinghouse historian Michele Gerber.

"From my point of view as a Japanese who has a negative impression about the nuclear industry and atomic bomb, this town is unique," Yamashita said.

Yamashita said he was struck by the casual references to the nuclear bomb — such as Pasco's Atomic Foods grocery store and Richland High School's mushroom cloud logo.

Yamashita said he also was struck by the pride in Hanford and the nuclear industry expressed by Tri-Citians during spot interviews at local stores and churches.

"People regard themselves as leaders in the nation's defense. I came to realize this is truly a nuclear town. People's attitudes toward nuclear issues are very positive.

"Scientists, especially, keep looking to the future, at ways they can apply nuclear technology to peace, instead of looking to the past, or the legacy of nuclear age. This is very interesting for me."

Yamashita and the NHK Hiroshima crew plan to leave the Tri-Cities on Sunday for visits to New Mexico, Nevada and Washington, D.C.

Their documentary film will be broadcast nationwide Aug. 6 in Japan, on the 50th anniversary of the Hiroshima atomic bomb.

Because of budget cuts at Hanford, Westinghouse won't be able to accommodate as many foreign journalists as in the past, Berriochoa said. "Our first obligation is to U.S. journalists."

Lawmakers don't want foreign fuel at Hanford

By The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Four Oregon members of Congress urged President Clinton on Monday to oppose any effort to import spent nuclear fuel from foreign research reactors for storage at Hanford.

■ IT'S YOUR CALL: Should Hanford accept North Korea's spent nuclear fuel? Page A2.

The lawmakers said in a letter to Clinton they supported the Energy Department's goal of reducing the potential for proliferation of nuclear weapons.

"However, it makes no sense for DOE to propose to import spent nuclear fuel from North Korea and other foreign countries when the United States has not

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Hanford

Continued from Page A1

determined how to manage the spent nuclear fuel generated in this country," they wrote.

Rep. Ron Wyden, D-Ore., spearheaded the letter also signed by Sen. Bob Packwood, R-Ore., and Reps. Elizabeth Furse, D-Ore., and Jim Bunn, R-Ore.

They said they were opposed to the options examined in a draft environmental impact statement the Energy Department issued last month.

That EIS listed in its first management alternative 10 potential ports of entry, including Portland and Tacoma, and five potential fuel management sites, including Hanford and the Idaho National Engineering Laboratory.

DOE officials had not had a chance to review the letter and had no immediate comment Monday, said DOE spokeswoman Jayne Brady.

Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary said last month many foreign research reactors use nuclear fuel containing highly enriched uranium, which could be extracted from spent fuel and used to produce nuclear weapons.

"We have an obligation to the American public and the world community to adopt a policy minimizing the threat of this material falling into the wrong hands," she said.

The Oregon lawmakers said in the letter to Clinton the sites DOE is considering for storing the foreign nuclear fuel — including Hanford and the Idaho lab — "are ill-suited to handle this material."

Hanford and the Idaho lab "already have major environmental problems with storage of nuclear wastes"

"With budget pressures challenging DOE's ability to comply with cleanup schedules the Department is legally obligated to meet, we are concerned about DOE undertaking additional waste management responsibilities that could impede current cleanup activities," they said.

The lawmakers also raised concerns about the costs of storage of foreign fuels, estimated to total \$1.4 billion to \$1.65 billion, and the potential risks to U.S. workers and the general public.

"Because much of the spent fuel can be directly used in nuclear weapons, terrorist groups may try to

hijack or sabotage shipments of this material," they wrote.

"DOE is proposing to off-load foreign nuclear fuel at public ports in Portland, Tacoma and other large cities and to transport the fuel using commercial rail or truck carriers," they said.

Sen. Mark Hatfield, R-Ore., decided against signing the letter because he is not clear about DOE's plans, his press secretary Julie McGregor said Monday.

"We have conflicting information from DOE as to what their intentions are. We heard from DOE it was not an option to bring it to the Northwest. Congressman Wyden is concerned that is going to happen," she said.

Rep. Doc Hastings, R-Wash., whose district houses Hanford, was traveling Monday to Washington, D.C., and was not immediately available for comment, said his press secretary Sheila Riggs.

Sens. Patty Murray, D-Wash., and Slade Gorton, R-Wash., had no immediate comment on the letter, their press secretaries said.

300 Battelle layoffs to start this month

By the Herald staff

The first round of about 300 total layoffs from Battelle-Northwest will start later this month and be complete by Sept. 30.

In full, Battelle's work force will be reduced by about 1,000 — or 100 more than earlier estimates, said Bill Madia, director of the Pacific Northwest Laboratory operated for the Department of Energy at Hanford by Battelle.

The increase does not change the number of people to be laid off; the

increase occurred because nearly 100 more people voluntarily quit than first projected.

Those reductions are part of about 4,800 from Hanford this year, about 4,000 of which have or will soon occur.

About 250 of Battelle's 4,500-member work force took early retirement.

Another 432 voluntarily resigned with layoffs making up the difference to 1,000.

Madia said layoffs will occur between this month and the beginning of the new fiscal year Oct. 1.

Top Hanford expert nominated to join aquifer study panel

By the Herald staff

A coalition of Eastern Washington governments has nominated a Hanford scientist for a six-member panel of experts to evaluate whether a sole-source aquifer should be declared for Eastern Washington.

The Northwest Council of Governments and Associations — which includes the Franklin and Adams county governments — nominated Vern Johnson, a senior principal scientist at Westinghouse Hanford Co.

He is an expert on ground water contaminants and analysis, and basalt hydrogeology and ground water analysis.

The Environmental Protection Agency is setting up the panel to study technical questions raised about the sole-source aquifer designation.

The sole-source aquifer proposal would give EPA review of any federally funded project within the aquifer's boundaries to ensure water quality isn't harmed.

The proposed designation is fiercely opposed by most elected officials in the seven affected Washington counties — many in the Northwest Council — as well as by the state Department of Ecology and members of the state's congressional delegation.

The six scientists are to be selected from nominations made by parties on both sides of the issue. The EPA will make the final decision, which is expected late this summer.

If the EPA does not accept Johnson's nomination, the Northwest Council has submitted Westinghouse geologist Steve Reidel and Yakima College geologist Newell Campbell as backup nominations.

Hanford waste disposal permit OK'd

By the Herald staff

Washington's Ecology Department has approved a state permit for a \$20 million Hanford liquid waste disposal facility.

The permit is the first issued by the state to control a major liquid waste discharge at the former defense production site.

"The permit represents a major step to end Hanford's discharges of untreated liquid to the soil and groundwater," Dan Silver, Ecology assistant director for waste manage-

ment, said in a prepared statement.

Silver said aggressive DOE efforts to meet Tri-Party Agreement goals have reduced yearly untreated liquid waste stream discharges at Hanford from 6.2 billion gallons in 1989 to about 1.7 billion last year.

The state and federal agreement directs Hanford cleanup.

The new permit allows the discharge of treated water to the soil from two rock-lined infiltration ponds. The water in the ponds is from seven facilities in Hanford's 200 Area, which is about 24 miles northwest of Richland.

A new 11-mile pipeline will carry about 550 gallons per minute to the ponds, which lie about 1½ miles east of the 200 East Area. The liquid discharge is equivalent to 792,000 gallons per day or 289 million gallons a year.

The waste water comes from water uses that do not involve direct contact with chemical or radiological processes. Generating uses include building ventilation, heating and cooling systems, system condensate, drinking water overflow, rainwater and Columbia River water.

DOE's Grumbly urges common-sense cleanup

By WANDA BRIGGS
Herald staff writer

Hanford cleanup costs can be driven down by better management by the Department of Energy and its contractors and willingness by state and federal regulators to take a more common-sense approach.

That was the agreement reached last week by about 30 state and federal officials who met at the St. Louis airport with DOE cleanup chief Thomas Grumbly to discuss Hanford's next three years.

Those officials are to issue a summary of their two-day session today.

"I went into the meeting with guarded expectations," said Dan Silver, Washington state Department of Ecology assistant director for waste management. "I came out

believing it was the most successful meeting I've had with DOE in the decade I've worked with them on Hanford issues.

"But the proof is in the pudding. If we don't act, we won't make progress."

Ron Izatt, DOE's deputy manager in Richland, agreed. "This will take changes from headquarters and understanding by regulators," he said.

Silver said when Ecology Department officials were invited to the meeting, they feared Grumbly would attempt to make wholesale changes in the state and federal Tri-Party Agreement, which governs cleanup. "We made it clear renegotiation of the TPA was not an agenda item," he said.

Instead, Silver said, "Grumbly acknowledged that he wanted management improvements within the framework of TPA, and we agree."

Silver said Grumbly reiterated he's not satisfied with the progress of cleanup at Hanford, and said DOE shares the blame.

"What was most surprising and gratifying to Ecology was to have DOE acknowledge that it hasn't done nearly a good enough job of managing costs at Hanford," Silver continued.

LaMar Trego, president of Westinghouse Hanford Co., DOE's prime contractor at Hanford, said he was "highly encouraged by what came out of that meeting."

He said ideas were discussed that will "get cleanup done safely, faster and cheaper," and added, "If everyone is practical then something good will happen."

The focus of the sessions was how to cut costs in the face of anticipated reductions in Hanford cleanup spending through 1998.

The site's work force is being reduced by 4,800 workers this year because of those cuts, and further cuts are feared possible.

Efforts to commercialize work as one way to cut costs and spur new private sector jobs dominated part of the session.

Those at the meeting agreed:

■ That there must be improved management on site. That's done, Silver said, "by managing for results instead of managing for process."

■ That a "project approach" to cleanup is preferred. That means the work is defined into specific projects with project managers held accountable for producing results quicker and cheaper.

■ More work at Hanford must be awarded to private firms, which in turn can use their Hanford contract to expand. "There has to

be more competition on-site," Silver said. "And there must be more incentives to control costs."

■ That regulators must make certain the rules they apply add value to cleanup.

"It is our feeling that for whatever reason on the reservation, people have made choices that are far too expensive just to satisfy regulators. Money has been no object," Silver said.

He said part of the problem is Hanford decision makers sometimes have tried to second-guess regulators and selected a more expensive cleanup method to avoid risk.

Silver said the state is willing to be flexible. "We don't think the laws of the land need to be changed. We just need to apply those laws in a cost-conscious way," he said.

Hanford report proposes smaller prime contractors

By DON McMANMAN
Herald staff writer

Agencies running and regulating Hanford cleanup now say the job should be split into smaller, more easily managed tasks, according to a report from the nuclear reservation's deputy federal manager.

In a report issued late Wednesday afternoon, Ron Izatt spun a picture of much smaller prime contractors, managers held accountable for every project they are ramrodding, and an arrangement in which only one regulatory agency would be responsible for one project.

Izatt's report summarized the consensus reached during a meeting last week between the Department of Energy, the federal Environmental Protection Agency and the state Department of Ecology, signatories of the Tri-Party Agreement that describes how and when Hanford will be cleaned up.

The plan will save money — perhaps \$1 billion over the next three

fiscal years — but the savings will not be enough to bridge the gap between what cleanup will cost and how much will be received from the federal treasury, the report said.

Izatt's report said: "These savings will be achieved through a series of steps beginning with reductions in personnel, managed costs such as training and other measures such as finding more efficient ways of conducting activities."

Izatt wasn't available Wednesday night to comment on the nature of any further cuts in jobs at Hanford.

Izatt's report envisions major Hanford contractors with enough employees to meet "valley workload demands rather than peak demand." When the peaks arise, outside subcontractors will be hired.

The first Hanford project to be divided into smaller tasks will be tank cleanup. There are 177 waste tanks at Hanford holding 56 million gallons of radioactive waste.

The report said there will be no authority given to cleanup man-

agers without responsibility, that each project will have "a manager who is responsible and accountable for seeing that progress occurs."

A plan on how to divide up the tank farm work will be written by DOE officials by May 15. A plan for the rest of Hanford will be ready by June 15, according to Izatt's report.

EPA and Ecology will decide which will regulate which tasks, reducing duplication.

The report wants less building at Hanford and an effort to use existing structures, such as grout vaults and canyons — turning "expensive liabilities into valuable assets."

The report says construction of the Waste Receiving and Processing Facility should be delayed to "coordinate" it with a waste plan designed for the a nuclear waste repository in New Mexico, where much of Hanford's high-level waste is supposedly destined.

Plans for the New Mexico plant has been under fire, however.

O'Leary plan means cuts at Richland DOE office

By WANDA BRIGGS
Herald staff writer

The Department of Energy's Richland Operations Office would be scaled back under a reorganization plan Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary is expected to announce today.

O'Leary wasn't talking Tuesday about details of her strategic alignment proposal.

But some close to DOE say one of her recommendations will be to cut the work force at DOE field offices by 20 percent and at its Washington, D.C., headquarters by 25 percent. DOE employs about 20,000 nationwide and 560 at Hanford.

Headquarters officials said O'Leary's announcement this morning will include "substantial work force reductions and office closures that will result in a leaner, more focused DOE."

Dan Reicher, O'Leary's deputy chief of staff, confirmed Tuesday layoffs and office closures will occur. However, he said, "Richland won't feel anything unusual in that context."

DOE's Richland Operations at Hanford is "not being singled out," he said. Instead, "it will share in any cuts."

Offices that will reportedly close include DOE's branch in Seattle. And there are recommendations to close several smaller offices, some with a handful of workers. Those offices deal with a broad range of items, including such things as gas and oil exploration.

Also expected to be part of O'Leary's plan is consolidation of some DOE administrative functions. There is reportedly a plan to establish two regional procurement centers — in Oak Ridge and at Albuquerque — because buying in bulk cuts costs.

O'Leary announced in December the formation of teams to begin a four-month effort to look at ways to make DOE more businesslike, more productive and less costly.

DOE moves up contract schedule

By WANDA BRIGGS
Herald staff writer

The Department of Energy will name the next management and operations contractor at Hanford six months ahead of schedule, the agency's cleanup czar said Thursday.

"We have agreed to accelerate the competition of existing management contracts,"

Thomas Grumbly, assistant energy secretary for waste cleanup said in Washington, D.C. "Instead of December 1996, May 1996 will be the goal," Grumbly said.

DOE's decision means private firms interested in bidding for the primary cleanup contract, now held by Westinghouse Hanford Co., will have less preparation time.

And, it means a rebidding process must get under way soon, during a time of Hanford

downsizing, restructuring, re-engineering and privatization attempts.

The news of an accelerated bidding process spread quickly Thursday, causing consternation among Tri-City leaders and adding confusion at Hanford, where cuts in the work force and budget this year have already created chaos.

The news took LaMar Trego, president of Westinghouse Hanford Co., by surprise.

He had not been told DOE would accelerate the bidding process. Nor, he said, have his bosses in Pittsburgh.

Trego spent two days last week in St. Louis with Grumbly and DOE officials from Hanford. "The subject of an accelerated contract never came up," Trego said.

"This came as a major surprise because we haven't been formally notified that such a decision was made.

"I have some disappointment with this because it will increase the stress on our management team during a particularly difficult set of circumstances," he added.

John Wagoner, manager of DOE's Richland office, was out of town Thursday and unavailable to comment.

Deputy manager Ron Izatt also learned of

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Hanford advisers seek more details on cleanup agreement

By JOHN STANG
Herald staff writer

The Hanford Advisory Board tried to sink its teeth into an agreement between federal and state officials on streamlining Hanford's cleanup.

There just were not enough details yet for the board to chew on. Board members said they liked the basic agreement.

But they also wanted to be involved when the Department of Energy, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Washington Department of Ecology tackle the details.

DOE, Hanford regulators and Hanford contractors met last week in St. Louis to discuss how to streamline cleanup.

Goals include:

- Dividing EPA and Ecology oversight duties so there are fewer overlaps and delays.
- Basing payments to contractors on the results of individual projects.
- Breaking long-term programs into smaller, shorter-term projects.
- Simplifying Hanford's chains of command.
- Trimming overhead.
- Bidding out more work.
- Keeping Hanford's permanent work force at the smallest practical level, using contractors to fill temporary requirements.

Ron Izatt, DOE's Hanford deputy manager, and Dan Silver, Ecology's assistant director for waste management, said Hanford already has begun work on the actions over the past several months.

Silver said the agreement is significant because it recognizes Han-

ford management — not regulators — is the prime cause for the high price of Hanford cleanup.

Izatt, Silver and EPA regional director Randy Smith said the St. Louis talks produced a general agreement, with few specifics. A task force will be appointed to hammer out the details.

The panel's makeup and a timetable for producing details have not been set, but some progress is expected this year.

Some Hanford advisory board members voiced concern about being left out of the process and requested the board be represented on the task force.

According to an outline of the St. Louis agreement, the initiatives discussed are needed for DOE to meet its goal of reducing the Hanford cleanup budget to \$1.1 billion by 1998.

Additional waste tanks not needed, board told

By JOHN STANG
Herald staff writer

Six new radioactive waste tanks do not appear to be needed at Hanford right now, everyone agreed Thursday at a Hanford Advisory Board meeting.

But that could change easily, the same people agreed.

The board contracted a scientific team headed by Glenn Paulsen, an environmental engineering professor at the Illinois Institute of Technology, to study the Department of Energy's plan to add six double-shell tanks to Hanford's tank farms.

In late 1994, DOE proposed adding six tanks for \$435 million. By March 1995, it gradually changed that recommendation to none.

The 33-member board — representing the Hanford political spectrum — hired Paulsen's team for

\$40,000 to provide an independent scientific opinion.

Paulsen's team agreed with DOE. So do the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Washington Department of Ecology.

Paulsen's report also recommended pumping out the wastes in Tank 102-Y, the only one of three double-shelled tanks in Hanford's 200 West Area whose waste can be moved safely.

Then the 1.2 million-gallon tank would be used as extra storage for that area, the report recommended.

If that is not possible, the report recommended building one or more 50,000- to 100,000-gallon tanks for temporary storage.

The report also recommended the quickest possible completion of a new system to transfer wastes between the 200 West Area and the 200 East Area, which contains the

rest of Hanford's 49 safer, double-shelled tanks.

Hanford has 177 underground single- and double-shelled tanks, containing 56 million gallons of radioactive wastes. Sixty-eight of the single-shell tanks leak.

No financial calculations for those recommendations were done.

DOE, EPA, Ecology and advisory board representatives generally agreed with the Paulsen report.

But DOE tank program official Don Woodrich said the budgeting, design and construction of a small, interim tank would take until 1999. Cleaning out Tank 102-SY could be done by 1998, he said.

Paulsen and others also cautioned that the recommendation to build no tanks is based on current information and an optimistic future.

They said the need for new tanks must be reviewed constantly.

HEAL hired to study tank privatization

By JOHN STANG
Herald staff writer

The U.S. Department of Energy has hired a Hanford activist organization for \$50,000 to spend six weeks studying whether Hanford's tank farms should be privatized.

DOE has signed two \$25,000 contracts with the Spokane-based Hanford Education Action League to complete the study and have a report ready by June 12.

The contract was split into two parts to avoid DOE rules that require any contract exceeding \$25,000 to be put up for competitive bids and to get the job done quickly, said DOE spokesman Keith Taylor.

DOE is considering whether to seek a long-term contract with a private company that would assume control of turning the 56 million gallons of radioactive wastes in Hanford's 177 underground tanks into glass logs.

The federal government would then pay that company whenever certain milestones are met.

The tank farm privatization contract would be decades long.

But details remain unsettled. And DOE has not decided whether to go this route.

DOE approached HEAL about the study because it wanted an independent group with some technical background on Hanford that knows the stakeholders, Taylor said.

"We knew they have the technical personnel on board to do the job quickly for us and to do a quality job," Taylor said.

And DOE wanted a review independent of its chief contractor, Westinghouse Hanford Co., because Westinghouse could have a conflict of interest, since its fees would be tied to its management of the tanks, Taylor said.

Taylor said the study is to identify concerns of Hanford stakeholders and Hanford Advisory Board members. The study also is to look at technical, regulatory and budget issues, he said.

And the study is to identify what information is missing, said Todd Martin, staff researcher for HEAL.

This is the first time DOE has given a contract to HEAL.

Martin said coming up with a list of options and recommendations — to meet the consensus of the Hanford spectrum from labor to local governments to environmental groups to regulators — will be difficult.

Taylor said the HEAL report will be presented to the Hanford Advisory Board for feedback.

And it will be reviewed by DOE Richland and in Washington, D.C.

Any decision on privatization will be made at DOE headquarters in Washington, D.C., Taylor said.

A timetable for the final decision on privatization has not been set, Taylor said.

5-6-95

Madia outlines likely Battelle worker cuts

By the Herald staff

Friday was the last official workday for 424 Battelle-Northwest employees, and those remaining have been told even more drastic job cuts than announced earlier this week could be made.

The employees who walked away Friday from the federal Pacific Northwest Laboratory, operated by Battelle, quit voluntarily. They followed a first wave of 264 Battelle employees who took early retirement.

But it looks as if Battelle will cut 1,100 jobs by Sept. 30, lab Director Bill Madia said Thursday in a speech to employees.

That's 100 more than announced earlier this week.

The 688 early retirements and voluntary layoffs amounted to the equivalent of 616 full-time jobs, because some of those leaving this spring worked part time.

That means Battelle must cut 484 full-time jobs through involuntary layoffs to meet the 1,100 goal, Madia said.

However, Madia said, not all those jobs may have to be cut. If Battelle gets more business soon — "and we're aggressively selling the labo-

ratory as I speak" — cuts will not be as deep as feared.

"The laboratory is suffering right now. But this laboratory has a very bright future," Madia told employees.

An essential ingredient for that future is greater efficiency, he said. The drive for efficiency means layoffs must be made, he said.

The Richland lab will become the most efficient of the nine national laboratories operated by the Department of Energy, he said.

That efficiency in itself will attract more business to the Richland lab, Madia said.

Involuntary layoffs will be made in two or three waves, he said, with the first complete at the end of this month.

Not all targeted employees will be laid off at once because Battelle may attract new business this summer, reducing the need to cut jobs, he said.

Laid-off employees will be given a 60-day notice, and they will be asked to complete work they are engaged in, Madia said.

Workers laid off last month by other Hanford contractors were told to leave their offices immediately. The laid-off employees were paid for the 60-day notice period.

5-6-95

Savings seen for Hanford

Naming contractor early proposed

By JOHN STANG
Herald staff writer

Up to \$100 million could be saved by naming Hanford's next management and operations contractor six months ahead of schedule, the Department of Energy's cleanup czar said Friday.

The savings could be plowed back into Hanford or used to absorb more budget cuts in Washington D.C., said Thomas Grumbly, assistant energy secretary for waste cleanup.

Grumbly announced Thursday that DOE would name the next management and operations contractor in May 1996, instead of December 1996 as originally planned.

Westinghouse Hanford Co.'s contract expires March 1997. The original timeline would have allowed a three-month transition period if Westinghouse lost the contract.

If Westinghouse does not get the new five-year contract, DOE would negotiate a quicker end to the contract, Grumbly said Friday.

The final request for proposals on the new contract should go out in September, Grumbly said.

Westinghouse plans to compete for the new contract, said Westinghouse spokeswoman Penny Phelps.

Grumbly said details of the new contract still have to be ironed out. "It's too soon for specifics," he said.

The contract specifications will include measures to streamline Hanford cleanup that were agreed to last week by DOE, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the state Department of Ecology and Hanford contractors at a meeting in St. Louis.

Those measures include paying contractors based on the results of individual projects, breaking long-term programs into shorter-term projects, trimming overhead, and bidding out more work.

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Hanford

Continued from Page A1

Hanford has been tackling these measures piecemeal so far.

Grumbly said DOE officials were so enthusiastic about the agreement hammered out in St. Louis they wanted to get them incorporated into Hanford's maintenance and operations contract as soon as possible.

By bumping up the start of the new contract by six months, those measures could save up to \$100 million, Grumbly said.

"Six months is not a trivial period of time," he said.

Grumbly said part of the incentive to salvage the \$100 million is the budget-cutting mood of Congress, which has members talking about dismantling DOE.

"Hanford no longer has the advantages it has had in the past in the political process," Grumbly said.

DOE staff members talked about speeding up the new contract during the St. Louis meeting, but kept the discussion out of earshot of Westinghouse representatives.

Grumbly said it would have been inappropriate to discuss ways to design a new contract with employees of a likely bidder in the room.

He said DOE has been happy with Westinghouse, and the department's main concern is the design of the contract.

"We are not throwing out Westing-

5-7-95

A10

TRI-CITY HERALD

Arid Lands hearing set Wednesday

By the Herald staff

Public opinion on the future of the Fitzner-Eberhardt Arid Lands Ecology Reserve will be sought Wednesday at the Tower Inn in Richland.

The session — jointly sponsored by the Department of Energy and the Washington Department of Ecology — is scheduled from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

DOE plans to release the 120-square-mile reserve from its control. The reserve and the North Slope — a 134-square-mile segment of Hanford north of the Columbia River — have been cleaned up and declared surplus.

So far, the Yakama Indian Nation and the U.S. Bureau of Land Management have requested control of the ALE site. Each submitted plans outlining their proposals.

The ALE site — anchored by Rattlesnake Ridge — is considered one of the most pristine shrub-steppe areas left in the Northwest.

During a morning session Wednesday, Hanford officials will provide background on the reserve and on how the lands would be transferred from DOE control.

In the afternoon, the public will be invited to speak on the plans.

Written comments can be submitted until May 19.

For information, call 376-7501 or 360-407-7148. Send written comments to Jon Yerxa, Office of External Affairs, DOE's Richland office, P.O. Box 550, Richland, Washington, 99352, or to Jeff Breckel, Nuclear Waste Program, Washington Department of Ecology, P.O. Box 47600, Olympia, Washington, 98504-7600. His phone is 360-407-7148.

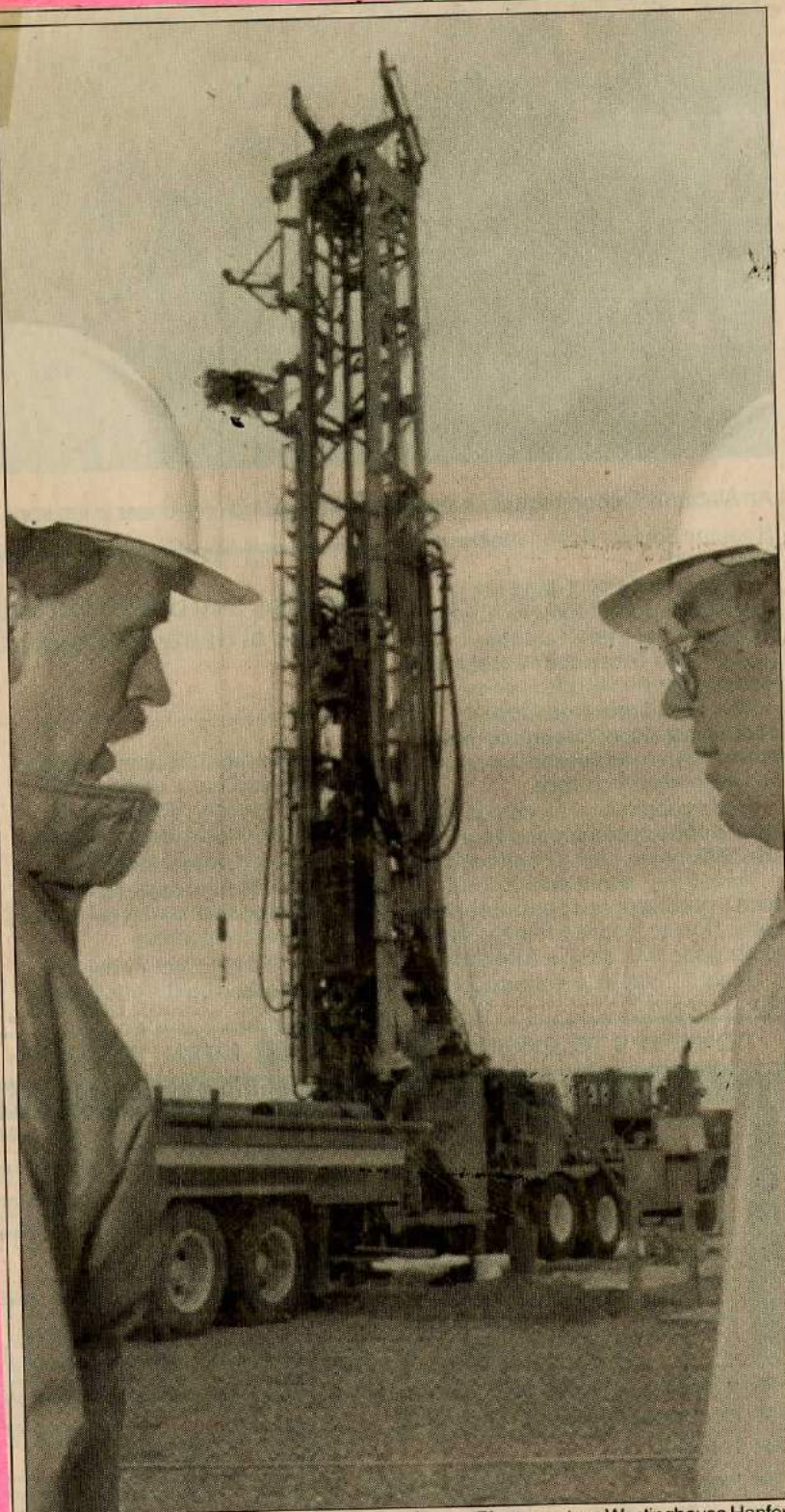


Photo courtesy Westinghouse Hanford

Greg McLellan, Westinghouse Hanford engineer, left, discusses with William Schutte, director of demonstration, testing and evaluation for the Department of Energy, how a new sonic drilling technology can save time and money in Hanford cleanup.

Sonic drilling cuts expenses in Hanford cleanup

By the Herald staff

Drilling in part of Hanford's rocky, sandy, contaminated soil can now be done three times faster and two-thirds cheaper because of an innovative drilling technique that uses resonant energy similar to sound waves.

Improvements in sonic drilling resulted from an agreement established between Water Development Corp., and the Department of Energy's Office of technology in 1993.

Technology developed through the partnership will be used at other former defense production sites, by other federal agencies and for industrial use, according to Bob Rosselli, DOE's assistant manager for technical management.

Sonic drilling was invented in the 1950s but was plagued with technical problems. When it was first tested in Hanford in 1991, equipment used in sonic drilling failed half the time. Even so, drilling was two to three times faster in many cases, so the technology seemed promising.

The method uses low-frequency, oscillating sound waves to help the drill bit cut through the earth.

"This is just what we look for in the Office of Technology," said Lance Mamiya, DOE's program engineer at Hanford.

"I attribute the success of the program to the dedicated team from Pacific Northwest Laboratory, Westinghouse Hanford Co., Water Development Corp., Bechtel Hanford, Inc., and DOE headquarters. The team knew the potential was there for a great return on investment if we could overcome the technical problems."

"We felt it was well worth the time

and money to make it reliable for DOE cleanup operations both at Hanford and across the entire complex."

Well drilling is one of the most useful techniques for understanding the nature of contamination in soil. Analyses can be done on soil retrieved from the drilling and instruments can be used in the hold to detect chemical and radioactive elements. Drilling also provides the primary access for cleanup of contaminated groundwater.

Drilling can be costly and time-consuming when going through contaminated soils such as those found at Hanford. The 560-square-mile is home of two-thirds of the nation's high-level radioactive defense waste.

"By using the improved sonic drilling system, costs can be cut significantly over conventional cable tool drilling methods," Greg McLellan, Westinghouse's lead engineer on the project said.

Based on the high cost of conventional drilling, alternative methods were identified as a high priority for technology development several years ago.

"ResonantSonic drilling is a great example of the success of the development program focused on solving real problems," said Tom Brouns, PNL's program manager for the drilling development effort. "As a result, we have a better technology, a new company in the Tri-Cities, and the potential for faster cleanup of the site."

Water Development Corp. of Woodland, Calif., is the license owner of ResonantSonic drilling, and now has opened an office in the Tri-Cities.

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5-8-95

Hanford's future will be set minus DOE, say city, county

By DOUG CAMPBELL
Herald Valley bureau

PROSSER — The federal government has been shut out of an agreement to plan the future of Hanford lands.

In a sudden reversal of policy, Benton County Commissioners joined Richland officials Monday in rescinding an invitation for the Department of Energy to become a partner in land-use planning for post-cleanup Hanford.

"This commission is not going to let them sign on," said Benton County Commissioner Max Benitz.

Joe King, Richland city manager, said, "The wedding is off."

Three months ago, Benton, Richland and DOE officials tentatively agreed to draft a regional plan for future land uses at the nuclear reservation.

But a March 17 deadline for signing the agreement in principle passed without DOE's stamp of approval.

At the time, Hanford Manager John Wagoner told county officials his agency was waiting for information from regional Indian tribes before signing on. He urged city and county officials to continue work on the plan, with the understanding DOE shortly would join in the effort.

But Monday, Benton County commissioners cited state law and declared themselves the only agency with authority to draft a comprehensive land-use plan for Hanford's currently off-limits real estate.

The county plan would adhere to the same process followed in complying with the state Growth Management Act, including use of public hearings.

Richland's authority extends to areas in the city's 20-year urban growth boundaries, which include parts of Hanford's 300 Area, officials said.

"With respect to comprehensive land-use plans, the recognized planning agency nationally is the county," said Commission Chairman Ray Isaacson. "We wanted DOE to be part of the process, but it's not essential (under law.)"

A DOE spokesman Monday night said the decision to oust the federal government from the planning effort was "somewhat surprising."

"They certainly have the authority to plan for the county," said Maynard Plahuta, government liaison program manager.

"The only thing we were hoping is we could work cooperatively with them so at the time when we transition from DOE to the private sector there would be a seamless plan, that it would move over and there would not be any difference from their plan and DOE's plan," he said.

Ensuring DOE plans follow county and city plans won't be easy, King acknowledged.

"It puts us in a less desirable position because if DOE were a partner in developing the plan we would have better assurance that they would be bound by the plan," King said. "We're going to have to use other means to get their input and buy in (on the plan.)"

At a previous meeting, Benton County planners echoed that sentiment, arguing only a cooperative planning approach would ensure conflicting land-use maps wouldn't be drawn up by different jurisdictions, thereby threatening the city's

or county's intended development of the site.

"We don't want to say one area should be industrial and then have it planned (by DOE) for something different so before they release it the land isn't cleaned properly," Benton Planning Director Terry Marden told commissioners in March.

Commissioners stressed their plan applies to land uses, not land ownership.

The county has penned several letters to federal and state officials urging endorsement of their land-use plan and asking the county be made custodian of surplus lands until the plan is complete.

One of those sites might be the Arid Land Ecology Reserve, which will be the topic of a Wednesday public meeting in Richland. Also soon-to-be-released is the Hanford Reach, which the National Park Service has recommended as a wildlife refuge.

Meanwhile, county and city planners are compiling an inventory of Hanford's existing infrastructure. It's the first stage of what's envisioned to be a three-year process.

When complete, officials hope to have identified which areas are best suited for industrial, recreational or open-space development.

Richland City Councilman Darryl Howard termed it a worthy process, with or without the federal government on board.

"If DOE is not going to be a party, I want to see the council of the city of Richland and the Port of Benton and the county all working together for an ultimate development that is to bring together business and economic development at the site," Howard said.

DOE neglects emergency planning, Mid-Columbians say

By DON McMANMAN
Herald staff writer

A group of state and county officials from the Mid-Columbia say the federal government isn't paying its share for regional emergency planning — and it's time the feds start.

"We don't want to lead the public to believe there's adequate preparedness planning when there's not. ... DOE has a responsibility to fund that preparedness," said state Agriculture Director Jim Jesernig.

State and county officials say the Department of Energy should kick in about \$1.3 million a year to help pay for emergency planning. DOE has paid between \$500,000 and \$600,000 a year since 1989. Before that, the federal agency offered nothing. Jesernig told the Tri-City Herald editorial board Wednesday.

"We don't want to lead the public to believe there's adequate preparedness planning when there's not. ... DOE has a responsibility to fund that preparedness."

— Jim Jesernig,
state Agriculture director

Emergency planning in the Mid-Columbia is funded by a variety of sources, said Robert Martin, director of Benton County Emergency Management.

For example, the Washington Public Power Supply System Plant No. 2 at Hanford pays about \$1.2 million annually for planning in the region.

But DOE has been willing to pay just half that amount for preparedness planning for land surrounding Hanford.

Lack of money led Benton County to recently lay off one emergency preparedness planner, Martin said.

Benton County's share of the current DOE allotment accounts for about 10 percent of the emergency management budget, but it should be about 20 percent, Martin said.

"DOE is saying, 'Budget cuts are coming and you have to share them,'" said Jesernig, whose agency is involved because agricultural products would be embargoed if an

emergency arose that contaminated land outside Hanford.

A DOE spokesman in Richland said the agency is doing the best it can in an era of downsizing.

"What we're trying to do is marry potential risks, so we can optimize public health and safety, given our reduced budget," said Keith Taylor.

He also said DOE should pay less than the supply system because the federal government isn't operating a nuclear reactor at Hanford.

But he couldn't explain why DOE paid about half of the supply system's contribution when, a few years ago, the federal government was operating Fast Flux Test Facility, a sodium-cooled reactor at Hanford.

Jesernig said, "They (DOE officials) have always maintained they're responsible only for what happens inside the fence."

But another Hanford spokesman, Tom Bauman, has said that while DOE's primary responsibility is the Hanford site, the agency also recognizes a responsibility to ensure minimum protection to people off the site.

Franklin County Commissioner Sue Miller told the editorial board a lack of money hurts emergency preparedness planning.

"You're charged with doing so many things, but you're without the money to do those things," Miller said.

County and state officials met with Ron Izatt, deputy Hanford manager, Wednesday morning and were encouraged that DOE might increase its allotment for Mid-Columbia emergency management planning.

But no one at the editorial board meeting expressed total confidence DOE would pay the \$1.3 million requested by state and local officials.

GOP prepares plan to scrap DOE

By LES BLUMENTHAL

Herald Washington, D.C., bureau

WASHINGTON — As House Republicans prepared legislation Wednesday to turn Department of Energy cleanup programs over to a new civilian agency, Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary warned \$1 billion in cuts suggested by some lawmakers would result in 2,000 additional Hanford layoffs.

The House Budget Committee considered a plan Republicans promised would balance the federal budget by 2002. It would, among other things, eliminate three Cabinet-level departments — Energy, Commerce and Education.

Details of the Republican plan for dismantling the Energy Department remained sketchy. But Rep. Martin Hoke, R-Ohio, has drafted legislation that would turn DOE's nuclear weapons programs and defense

■ IT'S YOUR CALL: Should Hanford cleanup be supervised by a new civilian agency? Page A2.

"national security functions, including defense, nonproliferation and defense-related environmental management programs" would be transferred to the new

cleanup programs over to a new agency under the jurisdiction of the Department of Defense.

All of DOE's defense nuclear programs, including a copy of Hoke's bill obtained by the

Defense Nuclear Programs Agency, according to a copy of Hoke's bill obtained by the Herald.

In an effort to maintain the long-standing tradition of civilian control of nuclear weapons programs, the new agency would be headed by a civilian, nominated by the president and confirmed by the Senate.

"The administrator shall, under the direction of the secretary of Defense, have primary responsibility within the government

for defense nuclear program matters," the bill states.

Four assistant administrators would be appointed, including one whose "principal duty" would be overall supervision of environmental restoration at defense production sites.

Though the Energy Department would be abolished, DOE site cleanup agreements

Please see DOE, Page A2 ►

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TRI-CITY HERALD

THURSDAY, MAY 11, 1995

Opinions vary on future of Hanford reserve

By JOHN STANG

Herald staff writer

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service should assume control of the Fitzner-Eberhardt Arid Lands Ecology reserve at Hanford, several speakers at a public meeting urged Wednesday.

Members of the Lower Columbia Audubon Society were the first to suggest that option during the Richland meeting on the ALE's future.

The society's opinion was shared by Lisa Fitzner, a state wildlife biologist and widow of one of the two Battelle-Northwest scientists the reserve is named for.

The Department of Energy and Gov. Mike Lowry's office held the meeting to get public opinion on the future of the 120-square-mile corner of Hanford, which has been cleaned

up. About 90 people attended.

DOE wants the issue resolved in 15 to 18 months, said Janet Anderson, special assistant for environmental policy to Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary. But she added the matter could take longer.

There is an administrative process to find a new owner for the ALE site, but Congress is expected to eventually get involved.

While O'Leary leans personally toward a Yakama Indian Nation plan, she is uncommitted as energy secretary, Anderson said.

The Yakamas and the U.S. Bureau of Land Management have submitted somewhat similar proposals to assume control of the reserve after DOE releases it.

The biggest differences between the two plans appear to be who would keep long-term control and supervise site access.

Audubon Society member Rick Leaumont contended the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

has more resources than the Yakamas and a better wildlife management record than BLM.

David Goeke, a fish and wildlife official, said his agency supports the BLM's plan — contingent on getting a long-term guarantee wildlife protection measures will not be changed in the decades to come.

If that guarantee does not materialize, the fish and wildlife service might consider submitting its own proposal, Goeke said.

Another wrinkle is DOE needs to keep access limited to at least the ALE site's northern half to keep costs down in the contaminated central Hanford area.

The ALE has served as a buffer to central Hanford for 52 years. Without it, safety requirements in the 200 Area will increase, said DOE Hanford Manager John Wagoner.

Extra safety requirements would mean higher costs, he said.

Wednesday's meeting also showed:

■ Most speakers supported preserving wildlife and research on the ALE, with the Indian tribes being able to use it for cultural and religious purposes.

■ The Nez Perce Tribe and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation supported the Yakama plan.

■ The Wanapum tribe does not support either plan. But it is willing to work with any party, said tribal member Richard Buck.

■ Benton County Commissioner Sandi Strawn called for not making a decision until an overall land-use plan for post-cleanup Hanford is complete.

■ Mary Lou Blazek of the Oregon Department of Energy said neither plan appears to tackle adequately how to prevent ground water contamination. Ground water in the ALE site would flow through the contami-

nated 200 Area on its way to the Columbia River.

■ Benton County Treasurer Claude Oliver said any plan should include compensating the county for ALE being off tax rolls.

■ Oliver and Don Williams, representing agricultural interests for the Tri-City Industrial Development Council, said some southern parts of the ALE near Highway 240 can be opened to farming.

■ Battelle's ALE manager Larry Cadwell and former ALE manager Burton Vaughan said removing fragments of land from the wildlife preserve would hurt the habitat and its many species.

■ Local astronomers called for preserving the observatory on top of Rattlesnake Ridge. They said remote video hookups linking classrooms to the telescope should be possible by 1996.

Heavy words from Ricki

RICKI LAKE's problem could be a topic of her talk show: fighting obesity. Though she's shrunk from size 24 to size 8, the woman who got her big break playing a chubby underdog in the movie *Hairspray* is still struggling with her weight. "It rules my life. It's like a men-

while growing up in a whorehouse in Peoria, Ill., he watched his mother sleep with men, was kissed on the lips by a priest and forced to perform oral sex on a man in an alley. "I told no one. Ever," Pryor wrote about the last incident. Excerpts of *Pryor Convictions* appeared Tuesday in the New York Daily News.

—Compiled from Herald news services

DOE

Continued from Page A1

such as the Tri-Party Agreement would remain in effect, as would existing contracts, rules, regulations and permits. Responsibility for lawsuits involving cleanup programs also would be transferred to the new agency.

Also transferred to the new agency would be the nation's nuclear weapons labs — Sandia, Los Alamos and Lawrence Livermore.

No indication was given what would become of the other DOE labs, including the Pacific Northwest Laboratory in Richland operated by Battelle-Northwest.

A special commission has suggested a private corporation be established to operate the national laboratories.

Hoke's bill also would eliminate the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board, which was established by Congress as an independent watchdog over DOE's cleanup and waste management programs.

Hoke, a second-term lawmaker who headed the Republicans' task force on eliminating DOE, planned to introduce his measure today, but has postponed it until early next week.

Rep. Doc Hastings, R-Wash., whose district includes Hanford, said he hadn't seen Hoke's bill but said, "I've been aware there have been people working on it. The important thing, as it relates to the Hanford cleanup, is that this mission will go on."

Republicans have given no indication how much they plan to reduce DOE's cleanup budget, but O'Leary said the \$1 billion in cuts some Republicans have suggested would destroy DOE's credibility.

"The bottom line is that a \$1 billion cut would create an untenable situation for the environmental management program in protecting the public health and environment of the

American people," she stated in a letter to Rep. Duncan Hunter, R-Calif.

Hunter is chairman of the House National Security Committee's military procurement subcommittee, which has jurisdiction over DOE cleanup programs.

O'Leary said a \$1 billion cut would result in a \$170 million reduction in Hanford's proposed \$1.3 billion budget for the next fiscal year.

Overall, a \$1 billion cut would result in the elimination of at least 10,000 DOE jobs — 2,000 at Hanford, O'Leary said.

She said such a sizable budget reduction also would prevent the department from meeting its obligations under various cleanup agreements with the states and result in litigation that could result in fines and penalties.

In addition, O'Leary said, such a cut would cause delays in upgrades

of fire emergency systems and radioactive waste monitoring systems.

"I cannot tell you exactly where or when a safety incident will happen, but the nature of these risks is too dangerous to test the margins," she said.

Hastings said he has been working with Hunter on DOE's cleanup programs and has had some "good discussions. The budget process has just started and we will talk with all the members to get our message out.

"Certainly the secretary (O'Leary) has an opinion. But I'm not sure where she got all the figures."

SS

Basin City

shop in the missile bunker next door.

In that project, the researchers will test part of Newton's law of gravitation. It says the force of gravity between two objects is calculated by multiplying together the masses of the two objects and multiplying that by Newton's Gravitational Constant (marked with a capital "G" in the equation). Then you divide everything by the square of the distance between the two objects.

But three groups of scientists recently did experiments that indicated "G" might be slightly different from what everyone previously thought.

That got Irvine physics professor Riley Newman curious.

results," Newman said.

The third project is Hanford's profile gravity search in the \$250 million to \$300 million Interferometer Gravitational Observatory — or LIGO.

LIGO is to be staffed by scientists from the California Institute of Technology and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Its ground-based search began last summer and is expected to begin searching for gravitational waves in 1998 or 1999.

Einstein theorized that gravity is ripples in space and time. One has "seen" one, while the LIGO is supposed to detect another.

The Hanford observatory is an underground laboratory.

Battelle-Ukraine arrangement OK'd

Partnership aims at nuclear safety in ex-Soviet land

By JOHN STANG
Herald staff writer

Battelle-Northwest is helping Ukraine set up its first national laboratory, which will tackle nuclear safety matters.

That means Battelle and Ukraine will routinely trade knowledge and swap scientists between Richland and the Ukrainian city of Slavutich.

Chernobyl, site of the world's worst nuclear accident, is a few miles from Slavutich.

The arrangement was approved Thursday by President Bill Clinton

and Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma during Clinton's visit to Kiev.

The Department of Energy's Office of Nuclear Energy asked Battelle to help Ukraine set up a national laboratory to address nuclear issues.

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is also participating.

The United States is making \$3 million available over two years to the project. And it is lobbying other nations to help out.

Some scientists and facilities are already at Slavutich, but a director and overall structure are not in place, said Bill Shipp, Battelle's associate director for environmental technology.

Battelle will help set up the Slavutich laboratory and help identify the top problems and solutions it needs to address, Shipp said.

"The center will also serve as a focal point for international environmental research in the areas of environmental contamination and site restoration."

—Hazel O'Leary,
Energy secretary

These issues will include:

- Improving nuclear safety at the two Chernobyl reactors still operating.
- Managing and disposing of spent nuclear fuel in Ukraine.
- Working on environmental problems stemming from the Chernobyl disaster of 1986.

"The center will also serve as a

focal point for international environmental research in the areas of environmental contamination and site restoration," said Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary in a written statement.

An eventual mission of the laboratory is to train engineers and scientists in international nuclear safety standards.

While Russia has a national laboratory system similar to the United States' network, the other former Soviet republics do not.

Shipp speculated other republics in the former Soviet Union might ask for help in setting up their own national laboratories, or they might use the Ukrainian laboratory.

Battelle and Ukraine have already been swapping scientists, and Battelle has helped set up scientific programs in other European nations.

Scientists get down to business

Three different gravity projects are what's up at Hanford

By JOHN STANG
Herald staff writer

Everyone's math needs double-checking at times. Even Isaac Newton's and Albert Einstein's.

Which is what three projects tucked away in a corner at Hanford will attempt to do.

Southcentral Hanford has become a mecca for physicists studying gravity. Though gravity is the common thread among the three projects, each is going its own direction.

There is a University of California at Irvine project in the southern Fitzner-Eberhardt Arid Lands Ecology Reserve (ALE) to check Newton's basic equation on gravitational attraction.

And 150 feet away will be a University of Washington experiment to see if some undiscovered gravity-like force exists.

And finally, there is the high-profile gravitational wave observatory to be built across Highway 240 from the other two. Its purpose is to verify the part of Einstein's theory of relativity that says gravity has waves.

A major reason these experiments are to take place at Hanford is its iso-

lation and lack of traffic. As a result, there are few vibrations to interfere with sensitive readings.

The readings are so sensitive a wandering coyote or Rattlesnake Ridge's bulk could skew the figures. Construction or setup work is expected to be under way on two projects this summer. The third is about two years from being set up.

In the search for the gravity-like force, which may or may not exist, the problem is to get gravity out of the equation. This would allow testing to identify this other force.

UW physics professor Paul

Boynton thinks he knows how to do that.

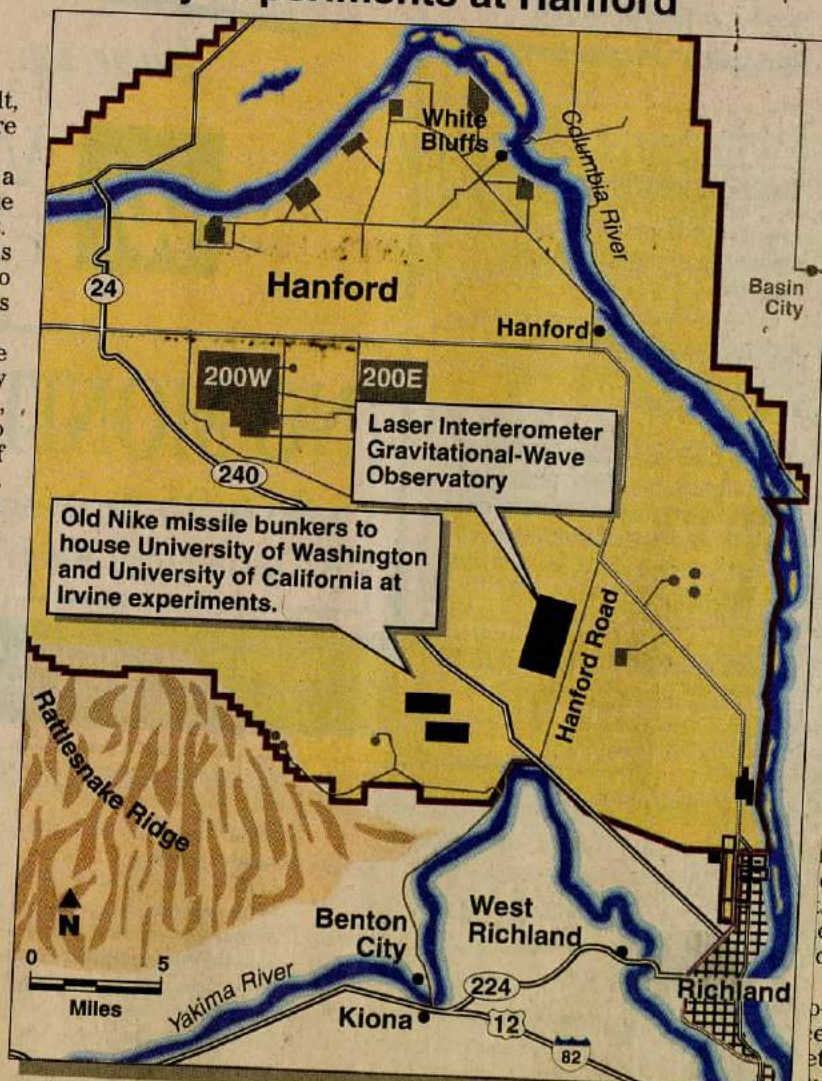
Theories in physics say a force or forces — vaguely resembling gravity but with different properties — could exist.

No one has "seen" this force before. But measuring instruments are more probing and precise than before, Boynton said.

His experiment's ultrasensitive automated measuring devices are to be set up inside an old Nike missile bunker at the foot of Rattlesnake Ridge. The bunker will provide a stable temperature and eliminate wind

Please see GRAVITY, Page A2

Gravity experiments at Hanford



shop in the missile bunker next door.

In that project, the researchers will test part of Newton's law of gravitation. It says the force of gravity between two objects is calculated by multiplying together the masses of the two objects and multiplying that by Newton's Gravitational Constant (marked with a capital "G" in the equation). Then you divide everything by the square of the distance between the two objects.

But three groups of scientists recently did experiments that indicated "G" might be slightly different from what everyone previously thought.

That got Irvine physics professor Riley Newman curious.

In the old missile bunker at ALE, Newman will install something that looks like a skinny 10-foot thermos bottle that is a super-cold helium chamber inside a vacuum chamber.

Two rings connected with some glass will hang inside the helium chamber. Newman will move another ring around the whole setup to measure how the inside rings move.

A couple of years of preparation are still needed for the possibly \$500,000 experiment, which might last a year.

One bit of preparation is checking out the coyotes and deer in the immediate area.

"If a coyote chooses to sit on the north wall ... for a half hour and then strolls over to the east wall for a half hour, he could affect the

results," Newman said.

The third project is Hanford's high-profile gravity search in outer space, the \$250 million to \$300 million Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory — or LIGO.

LIGO is to be staffed by scientists from the California Institute of Technology and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Its groundbreaking was last summer and it is expected to begin searching for gravitational waves in 1998 or 1999.

Einstein theorized gravity waves are ripples in space and time. But no one has "seen" one, which is what the LIGO is supposed to do.

The Hanford observatory will be an underground L-shaped vacuum tube, with each leg about 2½ miles long. Test masses will be suspended at the end of each leg.

Gravity waves are expected to move those masses by infinitesimal amounts — one-thousandth of the diameter of an atom's nucleus — that can be measured by lasers.

A second LIGO is being built in Louisiana to factor out false readings from earthly vibrations.

Scientists believe one source of gravity waves may be black holes. Or they could be ripples from the Big Bang, the cosmic explosion theorized to have created the universe.

The Hanford site of the two LIGO legs has been graded, and the soil is settling. Work on LIGO's foundation is expected to begin this summer, said Cal Tech spokesman Hall Daily.

DOE likes EMSL site

Report wants re-evaluation

By JOHN STANG

Herald staff writer

The location of the partly built Environmental Molecular Sciences Laboratory should be reconsidered, an audit by the U.S. Department of Energy's Inspector General's Office contends.

But other DOE officials disagree — including Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary and DOE Hanford Manager John Wagoner.

The just-released inspector general's report recommends DOE re-evaluate the \$230 million EMSL to see if cheaper alternatives are available.

It contends three DOE laboratories — Sandia, Los Alamos and Lawrence Livermore — could be candidates for the EMSL, but were not considered. The Sandia and Livermore labs have huge amounts of unused lab space.

The report also states high-level radioactive waste from Hanford would not be used at the EMSL. "Because scientists will not use the high-level wastes at Hanford, there is no unique or compelling reason to locate the laboratory at Hanford," the report states.

The report also questions Battelle-Northwest's involvement in locating the EMSL at Richland, where Battelle will operate it.

DOE's Office of Energy Research defended the Richland site in the audit report, contending the auditors lacked the scientific expertise to make the judgment calls.

Most importantly, EMSL defenders pointed out, the Richland site is the only one with an existing core of the scientists needed to operate the lab.

Wagoner said Monday the audit's conclusions were "oversimplified."

He said former Energy Secretary James Watkins, current Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary, Assistant Energy Secretary Tom Grumbly, Congress and he reviewed the EMSL plans and strongly supported the Richland site.

The Tri-Cities' U.S. Representative opposes an environmental laboratory being sited in Richland will not be affected by an annual U.S. Department of Energy audit re-evaluating its location.

The Environmental Molecular Sciences Laboratory will be long on its way to completion.

"It would take a lot of unraveling of those decisions for (the EMSL's location) to change," Wagoner said.

But Wagoner said the audit report concerns him because it will be around when the White House and Congress make appropriation decisions for the EMSL in the future.

Actually, the EMSL building is on track to be completed by the fall of 1996, before the next budget-crunching cycle is completed, said Thom Dunning, Battelle's EMSL project director.

By 1996, the EMSL will need appropriations for equipment — \$50 million in 1996 and \$34 million in 1997, Dunning said.

Dunning said he's confident the audit report will not halt the EMSL.

Wagoner and Dunning both said the audit looked at the EMSL as a building, not as a team of scientists. If the EMSL is moved, DOE cannot force all the EMSL scientists to move with it, Wagoner said.

The two agreed high-level Hanford wastes would not be analyzed in the EMSL complex, which is just south of Hanford's 300 Area. That's because high-level wastes are already analyzed in labs in the 200 Area and 300 Area, and the EMSL did not want to duplicate that work. Dunning said EMSL scientists will travel to the 200 and 300 areas to study the wastes.

Battelle proposed the EMSL to DOE in the late 1980s. The proposal and the Richland site went through several DOE and scientific peer reviews before it got the green light, Wagoner and Dunning said.

"It was DOE that made the decisions," Wagoner said.

Hanford was the only site that received serious consideration because the core of appropriate scientists is there, they said.

The 200,000-square-foot lab will employ about 270 permanent staff and visiting scientists. It is expected to have an annual research and operating budget of about \$70 million.

think Congress will stop the project and building it somewhere else," Hastings said.

DOE's inspector general's office recently issued an audit report that recommended DOE reevaluate the \$230 million EMSL to

Invest

DOE contends EMSL site choice

see if cheaper alternatives are available.

It contended other sites in California and New Mexico were not considered.

But DOE officials — including Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary and former Energy Secretary James Watkins — have backed putting the EMSL in Richland.

Hastings said O'Leary's support of the site should offset the audit's conclusions.

DOE Hanford Manager John Wagoner and

Hanford set to send nitric acid to England

By the Herald staff

About 183,000 gallons of slightly radioactive nitric acid is to be shipped from Hanford to England beginning Monday.

The acid is to be trucked cross country to Portsmouth, Va.

From there, it will be shipped to a chemical separations plant operated by British Nuclear Fuels Ltd. in Sellafield, England.

Actually, the acid is second hand. It was used in the chemical separations process at Hanford's Plutonium-Uranium Extraction Plant, or PUREX, and is stored there.

BNFL plans to use the nitric acid in a chemical separations plant similar to PUREX, said Terry Brown, a Department of Energy spokesman.

Packaging and shipping the acid to England is expected to cost about \$3 million, Brown said. But that is

less than the estimated \$38 million to \$40 million needed to safely dispose of the acid at Hanford, he said.

The acid is to be shipped in specially marked tanker trucks capable of holding 4,000 gallons each. Two trucks a week will head out of Hanford for 26 weeks, Brown said.

Several weeks ago, DOE shipped one gallon of the nitric acid by air freight to England so BNFL could calibrate its equipment.

The air freight flight stopped in Amsterdam in the Netherlands, where the shipment's ferry trip to England was delayed for three days by bad weather.

The delay was the subject of a British tabloid news story claiming the shipment was lost.

At that time, DOE said the shipment was never lost, the shipper knew where the acid was and it was safely stored in controlled area in Amsterdam.

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Wednesday, May 17, 1995 Tri-City Herald

Hanford studied for temporary a-waste storage site

By The Associated Press and Herald staff

WASHINGTON — Sites in South Carolina and Washington may join Nevada as candidates for a temporary nuclear waste facility, a key senator says.

Sen. Frank Murkowski, R-Alaska, chairman of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, says the Savannah River nuclear complex in Aiken, S.C., and Hanford should be considered.

Congress is studying possible sites for a temporary repository to handle tons of radioactive waste now collect-

ing at the nation's nuclear power plants.

Yucca Mountain, 100 miles northwest of Las Vegas, is the lone site being studied for a permanent dump and that site, if approved, is not likely to be operational until well after the turn of the century.

Murkowski said he is not excluding Yucca Mountain as a candidate for the interim storage. But placement of the waste in Nevada would require new legislation since current law prohibits a temporary and permanent site in the same state.

"With the realization that we would have to change the law to proceed

with (temporary storage) at Yucca, we are wondering if there is more immediate relief," Murkowski said Tuesday at a committee hearing.

He said the Savannah and Hanford sites are available government sites, and are at each end of the country, which would ease shipping concerns. In addition, both already are receiving nuclear waste.

Murkowski has promised his com-

mittee will detail its proposal by Memorial Day.

U.S. Rep. 'Doc' Hastings, R-Wash., said the proposal has not formally surfaced in the U.S. House. It anything happens, it will occur only after lots of discussion, especially on how such a move would affect Hanford cleanup money, he said.

"I think this is a trial balloon to see what sort of reaction it gets," Hastings

said. "I don't think Washington state will be receptive to that sort of thing."

Hastings also said: "I think it's interesting on how Hanford is criticized for not being cleaned up, yet they want to send more nuclear materials there."

Meanwhile, Sen. Bennett Johnston, D-La., is suggesting a rail line be built across the Air Force's top secret Groom Lake base north of Las Vegas

to transport the nuclear waste to Yucca Mountain. And he is pushing for temporary storage at Yucca Mountain, saying it would eliminate the need to ship the waste twice.

Ivan Selin, chairman of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, testified at the committee hearing that it would probably take five or six years to open a temporary facility at Yucca Mountain.

Attorneys general rally behind DOE

By LES BLUMENTHAL
Herald Washington, D.C., bureau

"As Hanford goes, so goes the rest of the DOE sites. We are looking at a bill that covers everything, plus specific demonstration projects. We need a piece of legislation we can all support."

— Christine Gregoire,
Washington state attorney general

WASHINGTON — Washington state Attorney General Christine Gregoire and her counterparts from at least a dozen states are considering writing a bill to counter congressional efforts to radically overhaul the Department of Energy's cleanup program.

The attorneys general will meet today in a suburban Washington, D.C., hotel to discuss possible legislation, Gregoire said after briefing members of the state's congressional delegation late Wednesday.

"We don't want to make it an Eiffel Tower," Gregoire said of a possible bill. "We want to make it impact on the ground."

Gregoire said the measure would include provisions designed to speed privatization of the cleanup and sort out conflicting federal environmental regulations which are complicating the program. Privatization and streamlining federal regulations are the foundation of bills earlier introduced by Sen. Slade Gordon, R-Wash., and Rep. Doc Hastings, R-Wash.

Gregoire said her bill would go further, but offered no specifics except it might include several demonstration projects at the Hanford reservation.

"As Hanford goes, so goes the rest of the DOE sites," Gregoire said. "We are looking at a bill that covers everything, plus specific demonstration projects. We need a piece of legislation we can all support."

Gregoire's meeting with her colleagues comes as congressional criticism of the DOE cleanup program mounts and some on Capitol Hill have suggested cutting up to \$1 billion in funding.

One senator, J. Bennett Johnston, D-La., has drafted but not introduced legislation which would throw out the Tri-Party Agreement covering the Hanford cleanup, pre-empt federal environmental laws and allow the DOE to write its cleanup plan. At one point, Johnston was considering a proposal to cap Hanford cleanup spending at \$800 million, about half of current levels.

Gregoire has said she was prepared to sue if Congress unilaterally gutted the Tri-Party Agreement, but she and others hope they may be able to head off some of the harshest

congressional proposals by offering a plan for getting the cleanup at Hanford and other sites on track.

Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., has expressed an interest in supporting Gregoire and her colleagues.

"They are working on something and are trying to reach a consensus," Murray said after the meeting with Gregoire.

Hastings was taking a wait-and-see attitude.

"It can only help our efforts here," Hastings said.

Earlier Wednesday, members of TRIDEC, the Tri-City Industrial Development Council, met with members of the congressional delegation to present their plan for improving the Hanford cleanup.

The meeting also was designed to impress on the members the statewide effects of Hanford spending.

"There is a health and safety impact of cutting the Hanford program, but there is also an economic impact," said John Lindsay, TRIDEC president. "It's more than just the 4th Congressional District and the 5th Congressional District."

Lindsay said of the \$1 billion sent on procurement annually for Hanford, one-third, or \$340 million, is spent in Washington state.

Of the \$340 million, about \$240 million is spent in Eastern Washington and almost \$93 million in Western Washington, Lindsay said.

Outside of the Tri-Cities, Bellevue comes next with \$39.5 million in Hanford procurement spending, Seattle with \$27 million, Redmond with \$20 million and Spokane with \$10 million.

Lindsay provided city-by-city breakdowns for each congressional district.

"We need to make sure all of us stand together," Lindsay said of the delegation.

Attending the meeting were Murray, Hastings and Republican Reps. Linda Smith and Jack Metcalf and Democratic Rep. Norm Dicks.

Gregoire pulls for Hanford backing

By LES BLUMENTHAL
Herald Washington, D.C., bureau

WASHINGTON — The attorneys general from 17 other states will join Washington state in pressuring Congress to keep the agreements that govern cleanup at Department of Energy sites, Washington state Attorney General Christine Gregoire said Friday.

But Gregoire also said the attorneys general will tell Congress they are committed to ensuring the agreements are flexible enough to deal with

any new problems or new cleanup technology.

"The consensus is these agreements should remain on the books, remain in force but with enough flexibility to handle any disagreements which arise," she said.

Gregoire's comments came after a day-long meeting of the attorneys general to discuss the future of cleanup at Hanford and other DOE sites. The department has been moving rapidly to trim costs, while some in Congress have suggested the cleanup agreements and certain federal environmental laws be pre-empted in an effort to design a cheaper environmental program.

Gregoire had earlier said she and her colleagues might consider writing their own bill, but had decided to wait.

"We talked about the basics of a bill, but then decided we would each work with our own (congressional) delegations," she said.

Gregoire said she was pleased with the meeting and the group was expected to produce a letter next week outlining its thoughts.

The letter would be sent to relevant members of Congress and officials of others states with DOE sites.



Gregoire

Hanford firm fights jobless benefits

By JOHN STANG

Herald staff writer

Westinghouse Hanford Co. is appealing the state paying unemployment benefits to 255 people who participated in a voluntary reduction in force.

Each case will be heard individually, with the first four scheduled to begin Thursday, said Dennis Mason, supervisor of Washington Employment Security's non-monetary review unit.

The dispute is whether state unemployment regulations and state law allow someone who volunteers to quit as part of a larger mandated reduction in force to

Westinghouse's 255 marked for cuts if they stayed. Mason said. Westinghouse argued the 255 voluntarily quit, were not necessarily considered on a waiver. Such a waiver could waive that case. Westinghouse lost. It appealed that case. One of Westinghouse's appeals was heard in mid-February, and Westinghouse's attitude in being able to choose who would be cut involuntarily, and at the voluntary departures being part of a massive cutback. He said both factors contribute to the 255 being eligible for unemployment benefits.

But Mason said the state looked at Westinghouse's attitude in being able to choose who would be cut involuntarily, and at the voluntary departures being part of a massive cutback. He said both factors contribute to the 255 being eligible for unemployment benefits.

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Westinghouse seeks DOE review of tank farm safety question

By the Herald staff

Questions about how best to sample radioactive wastes in Hanford's tanks has led Westinghouse Hanford Co. to seek a review by the Department of Energy.

Westinghouse recently requested a tank farm situation be declared an "unreviewed safety question" — meaning scientists and engineers need to analyze it for safety concerns.

Westinghouse hopes to get the issue resolved within a month, said Westinghouse spokesman John Britton.

The procedure in question is how to use a rotary drill to collect samples from inside the tanks.

The drill bit needs to be kept at a temperature below 150 degrees centigrade to prevent a chemical reaction with the wastes.

Until last November, a nitrogen gas system cooled the bit.

But the nitrogen gas caused other problems in gathering samples, so engineers decided to drill in 35-second increments with a 45-second cooling period between each increment.

But a revision in the procedure eliminated the 45-second delay until it was reviewed again in January. Then the nitrogen gas cooling was reinstated.

A Westinghouse news release said the practice did endanger the public.

Westinghouse shut down tank sampling in mid-April because of some minor problems. And while reviewing those problems, it was decided to re-examine the drill-and-heat situation, Britton said.

Some tank sampling — minus this particular procedure — has resumed.

behind home plate, you can see the bridge down the left field line, in straight-away right field the Tri-Cities Coliseum. Just right of the foul pole in

glitches — some minor, some not. Some fans bought tickets in Row 14 behind home plate only to discover the seating stopped at Row 13.

changed from 18 inches to 22 inches, and somehow there wasn't a Row 14 any more. Of course we'll

Please see POSSE, Page A2

Murdock met with mediators in an attempt resolve their differences.

But board Vice President Aaron Beasley, who succeeds her, was the

Please see PASCO, Page A2



Associated Press

The Alfalfa Federal Building falls in a cloud of dust Tuesday.

from polirricades, rooftops and parking

Gov. Freating said the demolition era from Oklahoma City's skyline a trows reminder of the tragedy. "eally wanted to kick the rubble say, 'There, you're out of here,'" lng said.

At least 1ople died because of the bombi he bodies of two of them — Ch Rosas, 22, and Vir-

ginia Thompson, 56, both credit union employees — remain entombed in the rubble, and police believe a third person also may be there.

He is 54-year-old Alvin Justes, who lived nearby and frequented the credit union. He hasn't been seen since the day of the bombing. If his death is confirmed, the death toll will be 168.

Republicans take ax to DOE bureaucracy

By LES BLUMENTHAL

Herald Washington, D.C., bureau

WASHINGTON — Republicans took their first whack at the Department of Energy's cleanup budget Tuesday as a House subcommittee cut \$742 million from the administration's proposed spending plan.

The cuts should have no impact on cleanup at Hanford and other sites and are aimed at "inside-the-Beltway bureaucrats and contractors" and reducing so-called "unspent funds" within the environmental management budget, said Rep. Duncan Hunter, R-Calif. He is chairman of the military procurement subcommittee of the House National Security Committee.

"Frankly, they have a fairly large slush fund laying there, and we

decided to pull that out," Hunter said.

Hunter provided few additional details after a closed-door session of his subcommittee. The full committee was scheduled to meet today to consider the defense authorization bill for the coming year. DOE cleanup programs are part of that legislation.

The subcommittee agreed to reduce headquarters costs of the environmental management program by about 5 percent, or \$367 million.

"We've made cuts in the bureaucracy, not people in the field," Hunter said.

The rest of the savings come from a \$375 million reduction in unspent funds.

DOE officials were not available for comment on the

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Hanford

Continued from Page A1

Many also applied for unemployment benefits.

But as the number of a company's former workers receiving unemployment benefits grows, so does that company's federal unemployment tax payments.

Westinghouse would have to pay \$3 in extra taxes for every \$1 paid in unemployment benefits, said Westinghouse spokesman Craig Kuhlman.

A worst-case scenario would be Westinghouse could pay an extra \$14 million in taxes over six years, Kuhlman said. That \$14 million would have to come out of the federal appropriations to Hanford, he said.

On the other hand, Mason said, if Westinghouse wins an appeal on any of the 255 cases, the loser in that case could be required to return his or her unemployment benefit payments.

But the state could waive that repayment, he said. Such a waiver would have to be considered on a case-by-case basis, Mason said.

Each of Westinghouse's 255

appeals will go before an administrative judge. Mason said most of the cases likely will be heard through telephone conference calls.

The loser in each case can appeal to a review board of commissioners in the state's Office of Administrative Hearings. The next appeals step would be Superior Court.

One of Westinghouse's appeals was heard in mid-February, and Westinghouse lost. It appealed that case.

Westinghouse argues the 255 volunteers to quit, were not pressured and their jobs were not necessarily marked for cuts if they stayed.

Kuhlman said they substantial severance pay.

"We want the employer to have everything tied to," he said. "Employment Security Commission to grant unemployment benefits were supported by state statute."

But Mason said the Westinghouse's late able to choose who involuntarily, and a departures being paid cutback. He said both contribute to the 255 being unemployment benefits.

Battelle to lay off 50 workers; notices going out next week

By JOHN STANG

Herald staff writer

Battelle-Northwest plans to notify about 50 staff members next week they will be laid off in 60 days; the laboratory is entering an uncertain summer, wondering how much it will cut staff overall.

The worst-case scenario would have 500 workers laid off involuntarily this summer, Battelle director Bill Madia said on Tuesday.

Madia added Battelle won't know until July if more than 50 layoffs would be necessary, or when they would take place.

He expected any cuts to occur before Sept. 30 so Battelle will have a stable work force in the 1995-96 fiscal year beginning Oct. 1.

"The lab has been in the midst of difficult and painful downsizing because of federal budget cuts," Madia said.

The extent of cuts will depend on the federal budget, he said.

Cuts also will depend on how much extra private research business Battelle can drum up, he added.

This year, Battelle has \$550 million to \$600 million in federal and private contracts for research projects. The Department of Energy is the biggest customer.

Madia speculated Congress could trim \$60 million to \$100 million worth of contracts from Battelle.

Battelle began the 1994-95 fiscal year with about 4,700 employees, and about 4,300 full-time-equivalent slots.

So far, Battelle has trimmed 688 people — the equivalent of 616 full-time positions — through early retirements and voluntary reduction in force.

Madia expects the 50 people notified next week to equal roughly 50 full-time job slots.

If the worst-case scenario of 500 involuntary layoffs occurs, Battelle could find itself reduced to the equivalent of 3,200 full-time positions by Sept. 30.

Battelle will spend the next several days identifying projected layoffs and training managers to handle them, Madia said.

The 50 employees will be scattered throughout Battelle.

Those employees will receive varying packages of separation pay, insurance, educational assistance, relocation benefits and placement assistance depending on eligibility and seniority.

The separation pay would roughly equal one week's pay for each full year of service, Madia said.

The laid-off employees will be

eligible for unemployment benefits.

Battelle does not plan to appeal unemployment benefits going to people who participated in the voluntary reduction in force, Madia said.

Westinghouse Hanford Co. — and two subcontractors, ICF Kaiser Hanford Co. and Boeing Computer Services — are appealing unemployment benefits going to 255 people who participated in their voluntary reduction programs.

Westinghouse contends the increased unemployment taxes would be drawn out of already-tight DOE budget money.

Battelle hopes to increase its contracts with private corporations to offset DOE cuts, Madia said.

"We've been really aggressive in that marketplace and will continue to be aggressive in that marketplace," Madia said.

Battelle is not calculating the Environmental Molecular Sciences Laboratory, now under construction, into its short-term plans to deal with federal cuts.

The EMSL — with its 270 jobs — is not expected to be functional until 1997. That is too far in the future to affect this summer's cuts, Madia said.

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TRI-CITY HERALD

THURSDAY, MAY 25, 1995

Yakamas turn into a salmon

By JOHN STANG

Herald staff writer

About 700,000 fall chinook fingerlings — the biggest batch ever — has found a temporary home in the water retention basins at Hanford's K Reactor.

There, the young fish will grow for about 1½ months before being sent through a tube into the Columbia River's Hanford Reach.

The idea is that the fish will return to the reach as adults to spawn, said Mike Eagle, a Yakama Indian Nation fish expert.

The fish will be 8 to 9 months old when a 4,200-foot long, 4-inch tube will be inserted in the pools to suck the fish into the river in the same way gasoline gets siphoned from cars.

That ride will last 13 minutes.

The reach is the best remaining spawning area along the main Columbia River.

The Yakamas brought the 2-inch-long fingerlings to Hanford from a hatchery near White Salmon.

This is the second year the Yakamas have grown fingerlings in net pens in two of the outdoor basins,

which used to feed water to cool the K Reactor when it was operating.

The 12 pools, which are each about an acre in size and 17 feet deep, never contained water coming from the reactor.

Last year, the Yakamas released 500,000 fingerlings into the reach. The few adults who survive the river and ocean are expected to return in three to five years.

Eagle said the tribe had hoped to grow up to 1 million fingerlings in the basins this year, but did not have enough money.

Since 1992, Westinghouse Hanford Co. has been experimenting with growing fish in the pools.

Nick Anderson, manager of field development projects for Westinghouse, and Dan Herborn, assistant director of the program, hope to expand use of the basins for growing fish.

Westinghouse and the Yakamas have had preliminary talks about using part of the basins as a hatchery, Anderson said.

Eventually, the plan is for the U.S. Department of Energy to phase out of the program and for the Yakamas or a fisheries agency to take over.

Fish-growing projects in the pools have included:

■ About 150,000 fall chinook fingerlings were brought from the Priest Rapids hatchery to grow in the K basins and then returned to Priest Rapids before being released into the river.

■ The Yakamas' 500,000 fall chinook fingerlings that were released in 1993.

■ About 550 young sturgeon were placed in the basins in 1993. About 150 were recently sent to a Nez Perce Tribe project.

The remaining 400 are expected to mature in two to three years.

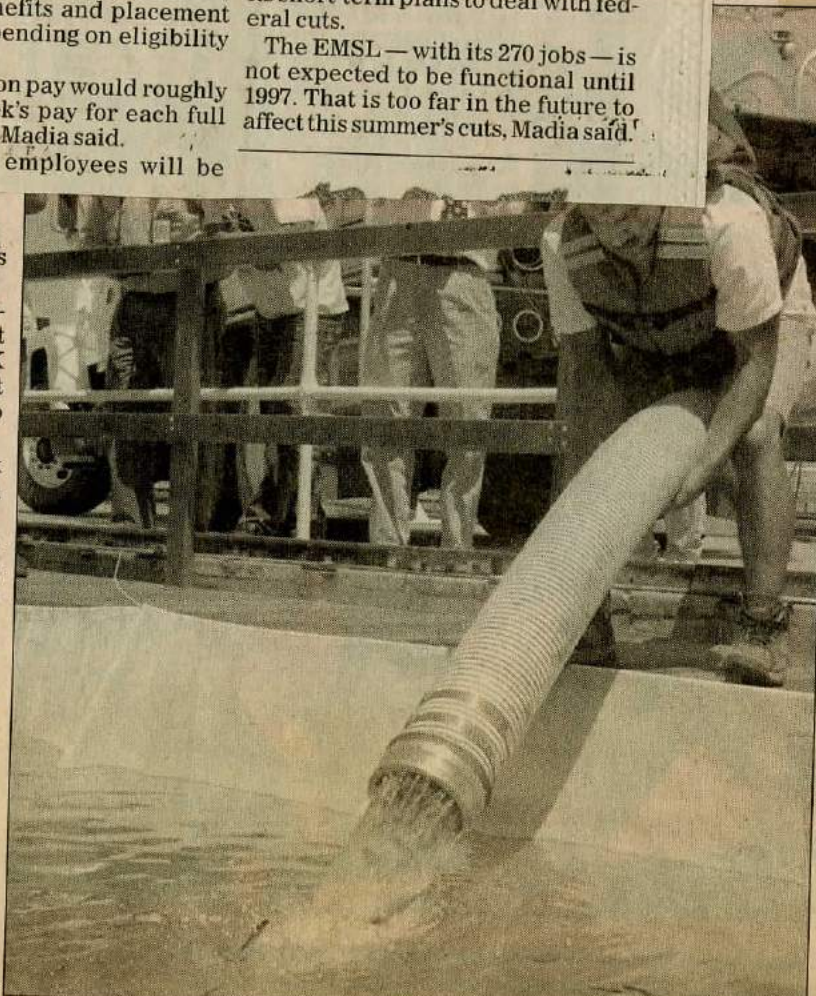
Anderson said a sturgeon hatchery in the pool is being considered.

■ About 10,000 channel catfish were grown in the pools in 1994 as a pilot project for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.

The fish were released in lakes near Spokane and in Yakima County.

■ Battelle-Northwest sent about 12,000 rainbow trout to the pool about a month ago.

Those fish will grow for about a year before being put in lakes on the Yakama reservation.



Herald/John Stang

Chester Adams, a member of the Yakama Indian Nation, holds a tube sending fall chinook fingerlings into a net pen in a pool at Hanford's K Reactor.

Engineers to transfer waste to 200 East

By JOHN STANG
Herald staff writer

Hanford engineers expect to begin transferring radioactive wastes from the 200 West Area to the 200 East Area in early to mid-June.

This will be the first time wastes have been transferred from one area to another since 1989. It begins a move to consolidate all the liquid wastes in the 200 East Area by 1998 to eventually have the water removed from the wastes.

On Thursday, engineers finished testing the underground pipeline that can move the wastes from 200 West to 200 East, said J.R. Biggs, Westinghouse Hanford Co.'s West Area transition projects deputy manager.

The tank farms' only evaporator in the 200 East Area. The facility evaporates water out of the waste to reduce its overall volume. Also, 46 of Hanford's 49 double-shell tanks are in 200 East.

Hanford has 128 single-shell underground storage tanks, 68 of which leak. Hanford officials want to move all of the waste into the safer double-shell tanks.

The only functioning pipeline to move wastes between the 200 East and 200 West has not been used since 1989. The areas are 3.2 miles apart.

The Tri-Party Agreement calls for a new double-shell pipeline system to replace the current single-shell pipeline. But the environmental impact study for the new pipeline was piggybacked onto a plan to build six underground tanks that now have been put on hold.

That meant the new pipeline's environmental study also went on hold, said Westinghouse spokesman Mike Berriochoa.

Consequently, the 43-year-old pipeline had to be tested to make sure it does not leak. The 3-inch pipeline is secure, Biggs said.

The 200 West Area has three double-shell tanks — 101-SY, 102-SY and 103-SY.

About 500,000 gallons of waste were pumped out of Tan tank 7½ miles away, Biggs said. The tank farms' byproducts of sludge and salt cake will be moved because they would pollute the waste.

Then 102-SY will be pumped out. Liquid waste will be moved to shell tanks in 200 West. The 200 East has 200 West.

About 5 million gallons of waste are in 27 single-shell tanks and salt cake will be moved because they would pollute the waste.

Westinghouse does not have a double-shell 101-SY tank. The tank farms' byproducts of sludge and salt cake will be moved because they would pollute the waste.

The Department of Energy is planning to build a new double-shell tank for wastes to be put in the watch list.

Wastes in 200 East single-shell tanks are being moved to 200 West in parallel efforts. Biggs said.

The official schedule for the single-shell tanks is aiming for 1998 or 1999.

Overall, Hanford has 128 single-shell tanks of wastes in liquid form.

Hanford proposed waste site

Senate plan would tear up Tri-Party pact

By LES BLUMENTHAL
Herald Washington, D.C., bureau

WASHINGTON — Hanford would become the nuclear storage site for thousands of tons of highly radioactive spent fuel from the nation's commercial nuclear power plants under a proposal Friday from the chairman of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee.

The plan from Sen. Frank Murkowski, R-Alaska, came as he and the ranking Democrat on the committee, Louisiana Sen. J. Bennett Johnston, introduced legislation that would tear up the current plan to clean up Hanford and grant broad new authority to the Department of Energy.

The Murkowski-Johnston bill does not cap funding for Hanford, but would pre-empt key federal environmental laws and the Tri-Party Agreement and allow the department to set its own standards for the cleanup.

DOE would have two years to submit a new cleanup plan to Congress, prepare a comprehensive land-use plan for the reservation and complete a detailed risk assessment for all activities and conditions that pose a danger to health, safety and the environment.

In a statement quietly slipped into the Congressional Record,

Murkowski suggested Hanford and DOE's Savannah River complex in South Carolina be used to store temporarily 30,000 metric tons of spent nuclear fuel currently held at commercial nuclear power plants across the nation.

"I believe Hanford and Savannah River offer excellent sites for the temporary, dry-cask storage of civilian nuclear fuel until a permanent geologic repository is available," Murkowski said.

Washington state's two senators — Democrat Patty Murray and Republican Slade Gorton — vowed an all-out fight to halt any effort to store additional nuclear waste at Hanford. State officials were not immediately available for comment.

“... Hanford and Savannah River offer excellent sites for the ... storage of civilian nuclear fuel.”

— Frank Murkowski,
Alaska Republican

Introduction of the Murkowski-Johnston Hanford bill was a setback for Murray and Gorton, who have spent weeks trying to convince Murkowski and Johnston to back off their proposal for such a radical restructuring of the Hanford cleanup.

State officials have said they may be prepared to sue if the Tri-Party Agreement, which currently covers the cleanup, is tossed out.

Murray said she fears allowing storage of commercial waste would

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