

House approves B Reactor park, other measures

9 Dec 15
Bill would require Rattlesnake Mountain access, transfer of some Hanford land

ANNETTE CARY
TRI-CITY HERALD

The U.S. House has passed the annual bill authorizing military policy that would create a new national park to include Hanford's B Reactor and possibly other historic Hanford facilities.

The vote Thursday was 300 to 119.

The bill could be voted on next week in the Senate, where Sens. Patty Murray and Maria Cantwell, both D-Wash., have been working to

get legislation to create a Manhattan Project Historical Park passed.

Supporters of including B Reactor in a national park believe the end of this session is their best chance to get the park approved.

"Creation of this park will help ensure that current and future generations get one-of-a-kind glimpses into an important part of our history," said Rep. Doc Hastings, R-Wash. "This hard-won victory for the Tri-Cities comes after many years of hard work

and would not have been possible without the continued dedication of park supporters and volunteers who made this a reality."

Hastings, who is retiring at the end of this session, worked to get House approval of the new national park and also helped get other Hanford projects inserted in the bill approved in the House.

The bill would require some access to the summit of Rattlesnake Mountain on the Hanford Reach National Monument, such as through guided tours, and would require the Department of Energy to transfer 1,641 acres of

unused Hanford land for industrial development.

"These lands belong to the American people and it is just plain common sense to allow the public to responsibly visit Rattlesnake Mountain," Hastings said.

Hanford-area tribes have opposed public tours of Rattlesnake Mountain, saying it is an important religious and cultural area.

The Tri-City Development Council, in cooperation with local governments, requested the transfer of land for industrial use more than three years ago. TRIDEC is designated by DOE as the local agency in charge of reuse of

unnecessary Hanford facilities and land.

"Hanford lands no longer needed for cleanup should not remain in the hands of the federal government into perpetuity but rather should be returned to the community to sustain our local economy as work at the site is completed," Hastings said.

The bill also includes a requirement pushed by Colorado leaders that an independent advisory board be created to increase transparency for compensation and medical coverage for workers at DOE sites if workplace exposures are determined to have likely caused illnesses

or impairment.

More than \$1 billion has been paid to current and former Hanford and Pacific Northwest National Laboratory employees or their survivors under the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program.

The advisory board is intended to make sure that benefit applications under Part E of the program, which covers wage loss and impairment, are reviewed quickly and accurately.

► Annette Cary: 509-582-1533;
acary@tricityherald.com;
Twitter: @HanfordNews

Workers tested after drugs found

3 instances reported recently to sheriff

ANNETTE CARY
TRI-CITY HERALD

Drug tests were administered to all workers at the Hanford vitrification plant construction site last week.

In recent months, three instances of drugs or drug paraphernalia found at the construction site have

been reported to the Benton County Sheriff's Office, which investigates crime at the Hanford nuclear reservation. However, the illegal substances have not been linked to any individuals.

"The Tri-Cities Metro Drug Task Force has reported that drug trafficking in the Pacific Northwest is on the increase," said Suzanne Heaston, spokeswoman for Bechtel National, the Department of Energy contractor for the vit plant.

The vit plant is seeing a similar

increase in occurrences of illegal drug discovery, she said. However, positive drug test results for vit plant employees remain significantly below the national average, she said.

The items found at the vit plant construction site in recent months included a drug pipe, a pouch with heroin tar residue and a small amount of methamphetamine.

About 1,000 workers, including union and nonunion employees, work at the construction site and

were tested for drugs.

"Our action is a prudent response to the regional increase and to our own observations at the site," Heaston said.

Bechtel National conducts pre-employment drug screening and also random drug testing. Bechtel's goal is to provide a safe workplace free of substance abuse, Heaston said.

The \$12.3 billion vitrification plant is being built for the Department of Energy and will treat up to

56 million gallons of radioactive waste for disposal. The waste is left from the past production of plutonium for the nation's nuclear weapons program.

No radioactive waste has been transferred yet to the vitrification plant site, but the plant has the hazards typical of any large construction project.

◆ Annette Cary: 509-582-1533;
acary@tricityherald.com; Twitter:
@HanfordNews

8 DEC 14

DOE: New deadlines would cost \$18 billion

State also wants 12M-gallon tanks for radioactive waste

ANNETTE CARY

TRI-CITY HERALD

New Hanford deadlines the state of Washington has asked a federal judge to approve would require an extra \$18 billion over the next 14 years, jeopardizing other Department of Energy cleanup projects, according to the federal government.

"Those funding levels are simply not realistic," the Department of Justice argued in legal documents filed electronically in federal court late Friday night.

The state of Washington also filed documents, criticizing DOE's management of Hanford and urging the court to require tight oversight of Hanford's leak-prone underground waste tanks and the vitrification plant being built to treat the waste for disposal.

Friday was the federal court deadline for both parties to respond to competing proposals for new deadlines for the Hanford consent decree after DOE said most of the remaining deadlines in the 2010 court-enforced consent decree were at serious risk of being missed.

The state wants a highly structured consent decree with more than 100 new deadlines to keep DOE on track to treat radioactive waste and to safely manage it until it is treated.

"The state's proposal would ... require a dramatic and unrealistic increase in funding that, if mandated, would jeopardize DOE's ability to carry out ongoing cleanup operations on other parts of the Hanford Site and at other sites across the country," the Department of Justice said in the new filings.

The vitrification plant project and tank waste management already receive about \$1.2 billion annually, which is more than one-fifth of the annual budget for DOE environmental cleanup work across the nation.

The state's proposal for just the next five years would require \$4 billion in addition to the current annual funding, the federal government said. By 2019, the state's plan would require about twice the average historical annual funding for the office responsible for the tank waste retrieval and treatment, with even higher costs in subsequent years, it said.

HANFORD

12 DEC 14

Hastings

presses

DOE

on tanks

He wants to know about implications of more storage at site

ANNETTE CARY

TRI-CITY HERALD

Retiring Rep. Doc Hastings, R-Wash., is pressing the Department of Energy for more information on the cost and implications of building more storage tanks at the Hanford nuclear reservation.

Hastings may not get an answer to the letter he sent to DOE before he retires at the end of the month. But his staff said there was value in having the possibility of new storage tanks discussed publicly and getting answers to questions on the record.

The state of Washington wants DOE to add 4 million gallons of new storage tank capacity, with the possibility of later requiring even more capacity, according to documents filed in federal court as the two parties argue over how to amend a

DOE disputes it missed radioactive sludge deadline

5 D A C
14

The Department of Energy has submitted a statement of dispute to the Environmental Protection Agen-

cy over DOE's failure at Hanford to meet a legal deadline at the end of September to start removing radioactive sludge from Hanford's K West Basin.

When DOE missed the deadline and proposed no new deadline or schedule, EPA began to fine DOE up to \$10,000 a week. EPA said the original 2002 date by which sludge removal was to be completed has been extended 13 years.

DOE submitted the statement of dispute Wednesday, but refused to provide the document to the Herald Wednesday or Thursday and also refused to allow EPA to release it.

The sludge is stored in underwater containers in a basin built in the 1950s about 400 yards from the river.

11 05 14

Chlorine alarm causes Hanford take cover order

About 1,000 workers in central Hanford took cover Wednesday afternoon until a false alarm was declared.

About 2 p.m. a chlorine alarm at the 238W Water Treatment Plant sounded, and workers in the 200 West Area took cover as a precaution.

No chlorine leak was detected and the alarm, which had been worked on earlier in the day, apparently malfunctioned, said Geoff Tyree, a Department of Energy spokesman.

The order was lifted at 3:40 p.m. Chlorine is the only hazardous

Projects win several regional awards

Hazardous material managers honor 3 contractors, lab

TRI-CITY HERALD

Three Hanford contractors and Pacific Northwest National Laboratory took home awards Friday evening from the Eastern Washington Chapter Academy of Certified Hazardous Material Managers.

It held its annual awards ceremony in Pasco.

► CH2M Hill Plateau Remediation Co. received the Excellence in Hazardous Materials Management Award for demolishing an empty construction yard in the 200 West Area in central Hanford.

The yard included 19 wooden buildings and mobile structures, plus nine storage containers, three lay-down yards and eight storage pads. Structures dated to as early as the 1940s. CH2M Hill's demolition team identified the hazards of the job and removed contaminants before demolishing structures to ground level.

The project reduced the footprint of Hanford requiring cleanup.

► Advanced Technologies and Laboratories Interna-

tional worked with other contractors to adopt radiofrequency identification technology for the Hanford 222-S Laboratory.

The project received the Hazardous Materials Identification and Control Research Award. Other companies that worked on the project included Mission Support Alliance, Lockheed Martin Services and Washington River Protection Solutions.

The radiofrequency technology replaced a bar code inventory system to manage more than 5,000 chemical containers. The technology was designed to work with the existing Chemical Inventory Tracking System database and required benchmarking with organizations throughout the Department of Energy complex of sites and facilities.

Accuracy was enhanced with the use of tubing to overcome interferences with metal containers and containers containing liquid. Electromagnetic fields that interfered with signals also were identified.

Use of the new system helped eliminate obsolete chemical and gas containers and reduce stock, including potentially dangerous chemicals. The time required to inventory stock has been reduced and the system also has

provided ergonomic benefits.

► Washington River Protection Solutions received the DOE Office of River Protection Manager's Award for Exemplary Service.

It developed a new technology to drill and extract high level radioactive waste from Hanford's underground waste tanks at multiple depths in the tanks.

A platform is used to position a drill string, an X-ray machine to verify retrieval of samples and a rack of shielded casks to receive and contain the samples.

The technology is intended to provide more representative samples of waste in tanks as data is collected for waste that is fed to the Hanford evaporator and that will be fed to the vitrification plant. The data also is used for monitoring the condition and corrosiveness of the waste.

► Pacific Northwest National Laboratory received the Environmental Management System Award for establishing and maintaining a sustainable campus.

The national lab in Richland has intensively analyzed the use of water and power and hazardous materials.

Plastics, food wastes, papers, chemicals and landscaping wastes are recycled. Lighting has been installed in numerous buildings that

complies with Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) program standards to reduce power consumption up to 30 percent.

The lab also has teamed with Ben Franklin Transit to put the first all-electric transit bus in the United States into service, according to award information.

► The Hazardous Materials Manager of the Year Award went to Peggy Williamson of Fulcrum Environmental Consulting for a Spokane project.

Williamson engineered and supervised the cleanup of the Custer Commercial Center, a 25-acre rail yard.

The site had 160,000 cubic yards of soil contaminated with multiple hazardous materials, including petroleum and metals. Asbestos, lead and electrical waste also were removed and a post-cleanup monitoring plan was developed.

► Annette Cary: 509-582-1533; acary@tricityherald.com; Twitter: @HanfordNews

BRIEFS

Bill restoring Hanford cuts sent to president's desk

The omnibus spending bill that would restore a proposed budget cut for the Hanford nuclear reservation is headed to the White House for the president's signature after the Senate passed the bill Saturday.

The spending bill provides a budget of almost \$2.2 billion for Hanford environmental cleanup in the fiscal year that started Oct. 1, along with paying for most of the federal government.

Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., voted for the bill, saying she fought to make sure that the bill included key

state priorities.

Fellow Democratic Sen. Maria Cantwell voted against the bill, primarily because of its weakening of Wall Street reform.

Spending bill gives Hanford \$2.2B

Senator helps add \$70M to project

The U.S. House's compromise spending bill included restoring proposed budget cuts for Hanford.

The Senate is expected to take up the bill this morning.

The omnibus spending bill would increase the budget for Hanford this year by almost \$70 million

above the request by the Obama administration for a budget of almost \$2.2 billion, thanks to the work of Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash.

The nation has been operating under temporary spending legislation after budgets were not approved before the Oct. 1 start of the current federal fiscal year.

- Annette Cary,
Tri-City Herald

HANFORD RICHLAND OPERATIONS OFFICE

Bill would restore proposed budget cut

Omnibus legislation would increase budget by \$69.9M

ANNETTE CARY
TRI-CITY HERALD

"The funding secured in this bill is a critical win for Hanford and our entire state," Murray said in a statement.

The omnibus spending bill would increase the budget for Hanford this year by almost \$70 million above the request by the Obama administration, for a total budget of almost \$2.2 billion.

"For the omnibus to get this far forward with positive news is just a testament for Patty Murray," said Gary Petersen, vice president of Hanford programs for the Tri-

City Development Council.

The House and Senate still must vote on the bill, but Murray's staff said chances are good that it will pass.

The nation now is operating under temporary spending legislation after budgets were not approved before the Oct. 1 start of the current federal fiscal year.

The current continuing resolution that allows the federal government to operate expires today. But another short-term funding bill may be passed until the House and Senate can vote before the

end of the current session on the new omnibus spending bill, which includes money for most federal agencies.

The compromise bill includes \$941 million for the Department of Energy's Hanford Richland Operations Office, an increase of \$93 million over the administration's fiscal 2015 budget request.

The office is responsible for all Hanford cleanup work except for managing radioactive waste in underground tanks and the vitrification



Courtesy Bechtel National

Employees work with a crane at the High-Level Waste Vitrification Facility import bay recently at the Hanford site. A compromise federal spending bill would increase the budget for Hanford this year to almost \$2.2 billion.

10 YEARS IN THE MAKING

B Reactor to become park

Congress approves bill making Hanford site part of Manhattan Project National Historic Park

ANNETTE CARY
TRI-CITY HERALD

A decade of work to save Hanford's historic B Reactor as part of a new national park succeeded Friday.

The Senate voted 89 to 11 to create a new Manhattan Project National Historic Park that would include B Reactor, among other World War II facilities in three states.

The bill now goes to Obama for

his signature.

"We believe that it is important for future generations to understand the amazing accomplishments of residents of our communities that brought World War II to an end," Kennewick Mayor Steve Young said.

B Reactor was the world's first full-scale nuclear reactor, built in the Eastern Washington desert along the Columbia River as the U.S. raced to develop a nuclear bomb, fearing

INSIDE

Bill includes some access to Rattlesnake Mountain, transfers 1,600 acres of land near Richland for development. | **Page B1**

that Germany was working on a similar initiative.

The reactor produced plutonium for the first nuclear explosion in the New Mexico desert and the bomb dropped on Nagasaki, Japan, helping end the war.

See **PARK** | Page A2



An American flag flies in front of Hanford's historic B Reactor.

Herald file

Rattlesnake access, Hanford land transfer OK'd

Bill including provisions headed to White House for Obama's signature

ANNETTE CARY

TRI-CITY HERALD

The public will be allowed to at least occasionally take in the view from the top of Rattlesnake Mountain under a bill passed Friday by the U.S. Senate.

And some Hanford land will be made available for industrial development.

Both are goals that Rep. Doc Hastings, R-Wash., has worked toward for years, seeing them realized in his last few days in Congress before retiring this month.

Both provisions were attached to

a military policy authorization bill already approved by the House. The bill now is headed to the White House for the Obama's signature.

Rattlesnake Mountain, the highest point in the Mid-Columbia, is part of the Hanford Reach National Monument but is closed to the public, with the exception of some spring wildflower tours arranged by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Department.

"These lands belong to the American people, and it is just plain common sense to allow the public to responsibly visit Rattlesnake Mountain," Hastings said when the House passed the bill earlier this month.

Under the legislation, Fish and Wildlife, which manages the land, could enter into agreements with the Department of Energy, which owns the land, or interested local agencies for guided bus tours to the

summit or to maintain the access road to the summit, according to the bill. Nonmotorized access to the mountain also is required under the bill.

Hanford-area tribes have opposed public tours of Rattlesnake Mountain, saying it is an important religious and cultural area.

The bill also would direct the energy secretary to transfer 1,641 acres of unused land in south Hanford to the Tri-City Development Council for industrial development before the end of September 2015.

The land would be transferred at low cost or no cost to TRIDEC, which is the Department of Energy's designated agency for the reuse of unneeded Hanford assets. Money would need to be spent to develop water, electric and sewer service to the site, plus provide roads, curbing

and street lights.

TRIDEC, which requested the land more than three years ago, expects to transfer the land to the city of Richland, Benton County or the Port of Benton. It does not intend to make any money from the land, TRIDEC officials have said.

"Hanford lands no longer needed for cleanup should not remain in the hands of the federal government into perpetuity, but rather should be returned to the community to sustain our local economy as work at the site is completed," Hastings said.

Most of Hanford is intended to be preserved as shrub steppe habitat as cleanup is completed, with less than 10 percent used for development.

◆ Annette Cary: 509-582-1533;
acary@tricityherald.com; Twitter:
@HanfordNews

“
These lands belong to
the American people,
and it is just plain
common sense to
allow the public to
responsibly visit
Rattlesnake
Mountain.”

U.S. Rep. Doc Hastings,
R-Wash.



Tri-City Herald file

Rattlesnake Mountain near Hanford wears a coating of snow.

15 DEC 14

Yakamas concerned about bill opening mountain to public

Site in Hanford Reach considered sacred

KATE PRENGAMAN

YAKIMA HERALD-REPUBLIC

YAKIMA — Tucked within the 1,000-page defense bill passed by the Senate last week is a provision that would open the summit of Rattlesnake Mountain — a site considered sacred by members of the Yakama Nation — to the public.

The mountain, known as *Laliik* in Yakama, lies in the Hanford Reach National Monument and, for the most part, public access is now re-

stricted. But opening the area for more public use has long been a goal of outgoing Congressman Doc Hastings.

Hastings previously sponsored similar bills that never gained traction in the Senate, so this time he added a provision to the National Defense Authorization Act for 2015, a vast, \$580 billion piece of legislation that covers military spending with a host of other land management issues tacked on.

See **YAKAMAS** | Page A2

HANFORD TIMECARD FRAUD

Feds to drop 3 criminal cases

2 former managers,
1 ex-supervisor agree
to pay civil fines

ANNETTE CARY

TRI-CITY HERALD

Charges related to timecard fraud are expected to be dropped for two former high-level managers and a former supervisor of CH2M Hill Hanford Group after they agreed to pay civil fines, according to the Department of Justice.

Ryan Dodd, who was vice president of the former Hanford contractor, and Terrence Hissong, who worked as the tank waste retrieval director, have each paid fines of \$44,000 to settle allegations.

Stephanie Livesey, a worker supervisor who approved timecards for the former contractor, has agreed to pay a fine of \$22,000.

The settlement agreements are not an admission of

18 DEL 18

liability by any of the three defendants nor a concession by the federal government that its claims were not well-founded, according to legal documents.

Dodd, Hissong and Livesey all said they did not knowingly aid in timecard fraud. They were scheduled to go to trial in federal court in February.

"I'm glad the charges are dropped," Dodd said after the Department of Justice announced the settlement agreement Wednesday evening. "I'm glad to be done with this long ordeal that's been extremely unjust to me and my co-workers."

The settlement agreement follows a jury decision this fall that four other former employees of CH2M Hill Hanford Group (CHG) were not guilty of charges related to timecard fraud.

The U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of

Report urges more tanks at Hanford

Questions raised about how much DOE knows about present condition of underground tanks

ANNETTE CARY

TRI-CITY HERALD

The Department of Energy should look into alternatives for building new waste storage tanks at the Hanford nuclear reservation, the Government Accountability Office recommended in a report released Tuesday.

The report raised questions about how much DOE knows about the condition of its underground waste storage tanks. If another double-shell tank cor-

rodes and needs to be emptied, DOE could be out of space to securely hold the waste, the report said.

"The tanks at Hanford — both single-shell and double-shell — are in deteriorating condition and the schedule for addressing the problem is slipping inexorably into the future," said Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore., in a letter to Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz on Tuesday. Wyden requested the GAO review.

Wyden asked Moniz in the letter for a schedule and plan for

DOE to implement all of the report's recommendations within 90 days.

DOE is emptying waste from 149 leak-prone single-shell tanks into 28 newer double-shell tanks. The waste is left from the World War II and Cold War production of plutonium for the nation's nuclear weapons program.

However, Hanford's oldest double-shell tank, AY-102, has developed a leak between its shells and will be emptied.

The GAO recommendations call for a more complete assessment than DOE has so far

American Crane, Bechtel reach lawsuit settlement

ANNETTE CARY

TRI-CITY HERALD

A lawsuit brought against Bechtel National by one of its subcontractors at the Hanford vitrification plant has been settled through mediation.

American Crane and Equipment Corp. of Pennsylvania sued Bechtel in 2013, saying problems at the vitrification plant had added \$3.9 million to its costs that would not be compensated.

U.S. Judge Lonny Suko dismissed the case earlier this month after the two companies reached a settlement. Terms were not disclosed.

"It was resolved through mediation, which by definition is a consensual resolution," said John Person, attorney for American Crane.

Bechtel takes legal claims seriously and worked diligently to resolve the matter, said Bechtel spokeswoman Suzanne Heaston.

American Crane had agreed in 2003 to design and manufacture eight cranes for \$13.2 million. The cranes are to be used in the vit plant's High Level Waste Facility, where they will be remotely operated as they perform work with radioactive waste

See **LAWSUIT** | Page C9

HANFORD VIT PLANT | WHISTLEBLOWER CASE

State high court ends Tamosaitis' appeal

Justices reject petition to review his state case

ANNETTE CARY

TRI-CITY HERALD

The Washington Supreme Court has declined to consider the dismissal of a case brought by Hanford whistleblower Walter Tamosaitis against Bechtel National, effective-



Tamosaitis

The order did not provide a reason for the court's decision.

"We agree with the court's deci-

ly ending that case filed in Benton County Superior Court.

The state high court issued the order Friday that denied Tamosaitis' petition for review of the lower case decision.

sion," Bechtel National said in a statement issued Saturday. "We are dedicated to providing a work environment where all are free to raise concerns without fear of retaliation. A work force that is engaged in this way is one of the keys to the successful completion of the vit plant."

Tamosaitis continues to fight the case on two other legal fronts. The ruling does not affect his recently resumed case in federal court

against URS Corp., nor a complaint against Bechtel, URS and the Department of Energy under review by the Department of Labor.

Bechtel National holds the DOE contract to build the Hanford vitrification plant to treat radioactive waste held in underground tanks for disposal. Bechtel's primary subcontractor on the project is URS, which employed Tamosaitis.

Tamosaitis sued Bechtel in Ben-

ton County Superior Court, arguing that Bechtel improperly interfered with his employment with URS.

"We were hoping to change the interpretation of the law to give whistleblowers more protection, but the Supreme Court chose not to take it up at this time," Tamosaitis said after the ruling.

Tamosaitis was the research and

See **APPEAL** | Page B3

27 Dec 14

New ventilation system needed to shut down storage facility

ANNETTE CARY
TRI-CITY HERALD

The Department of Energy is making plans to replace the ventilation system at Hanford's Waste Encapsulation and Storage Facility, a necessary step to shut down the building.

Earlier this year, DOE's Office of Inspector General said that 1,936 capsules of radioactive cesium and strontium stored at the facility, called WESF, should be moved to dry storage as soon as possible, in part because of the potential risk posed by a severe earthquake.

Now the capsules are stored under 13 feet of water at WESF, which was built for them at the west end of B Plant between 1971 and 1973.

But the ventilation system that was used when work was done to place the waste in capsules is no longer up to the task of ensuring air is clean and safe when the capsules are processed to be moved to dry storage, according to

DOE documents.

The filters have operated longer than they were planned to and are deteriorating. And the work done with radioactive materials has contaminated the ventilation system.

Although a new system will be installed to ensure continued safe operations at WESF, DOE is making plans to cut costs by installing a smaller system.

That would be accomplished by reducing the space in the building by filling all but one of the seven hot cells served by the ventilation system with grout.

The ventilation system also would be filled with grout. A public meeting on the issue is planned Jan. 7 in Richland.

The seventh hot cell is on standby in case one of the underwater capsules develops a leak or other issue that would require it to be pulled from the water for work. The hot cell also is tentatively planned to be used to process the waste when DOE is ready to

move it to dry storage.

Most of the hot cells measure about 8 feet long and 8 feet high and up to 13.5 feet tall. The floors and walls are lined with stainless steel and workers would look through 25-inch-thick lead glass windows and operate manipulators inside the cells that handled the radioactive materials.

Starting in 1974, the hot cells were used for radioactive cesium and strontium that had been separated from other waste in Hanford's underground storage tanks to reduce the heat in the tanks. Within the hot cells, the material was packed into stainless steel canisters about 21 inches long.

Six of the hot cells were cleaned out and prepared for closure previously. However, some waste was left stored in them.

That includes two containers of floor sweepings containing some strontium,

29 NOV 14

State supports new facility, questions where money will be found

DOE says it could cost up to \$375M without any extras

ANNETTE CARY

TRI-CITY HERALD

The state of Washington supports the concept of a proposed new facility that would allow Hanford's vitrification plant to start treating some waste sooner, but it has concerns about how the Department of Energy will pay for the facility.

The proposed Low-Activity Waste Pretreatment System, LAWPS, would prepare some low-activity waste now held in underground tanks to be treated at the vitrification plant. The waste could then bypass the plant's Pretreatment Facility, where construction has stopped until technical issues are resolved.

"We are all about getting waste into glass as soon as possible," said Suzanne Dahl, the manager of the state Department of Ecology's tank waste treatment section, at a recent committee meeting of the Hanford Advisory Board.

But the state also has some concerns about where money for the project will come from and at what expense to other Hanford projects, she said.

The vitrification plant is being built to turn up to 56 million gallons of radioactive waste held in underground tanks into a stable glass form for disposal. The waste is left from the past production of plutonium for the nation's nuclear weapons program.

The vit plant has been designed to send tank waste first to the plant's Pretreatment Facility to separate waste into low-activity and high-level waste for separate treatment and disposal.

LAWPS, pronounced "lops" by Hanford officials, could separate out some of the low-activity waste from rest of the tank waste and send it directly to the vitrification plant's Low Activity Waste Facility, where construction has continued.

The Department of Energy may not have the full vitrification plant operating until 2031. But by building LAWPS, it could start treating low-activity waste in 2022.

The conceptual design of the proposed underground LAWPS plant has been completed and is being reviewed by DOE, with the next phase, preliminary design, yet to begin.

That means only rough estimates of the cost have been made, which will be refined as the design advances. Now the estimated cost is be-

agencies are asking for input through an Internet survey on public involvement at Hanford.

The Department of Energy, Washington State Department of Ecology and the Environmental Protection Agency plan to use the results of the annual survey to improve Hanford public involvement activities, such as public meetings and comment periods.

The survey is posted at <http://svy.mk/1HYDPPG>.

Call the Hanford cleanup line at 800-321-2008 for more information.

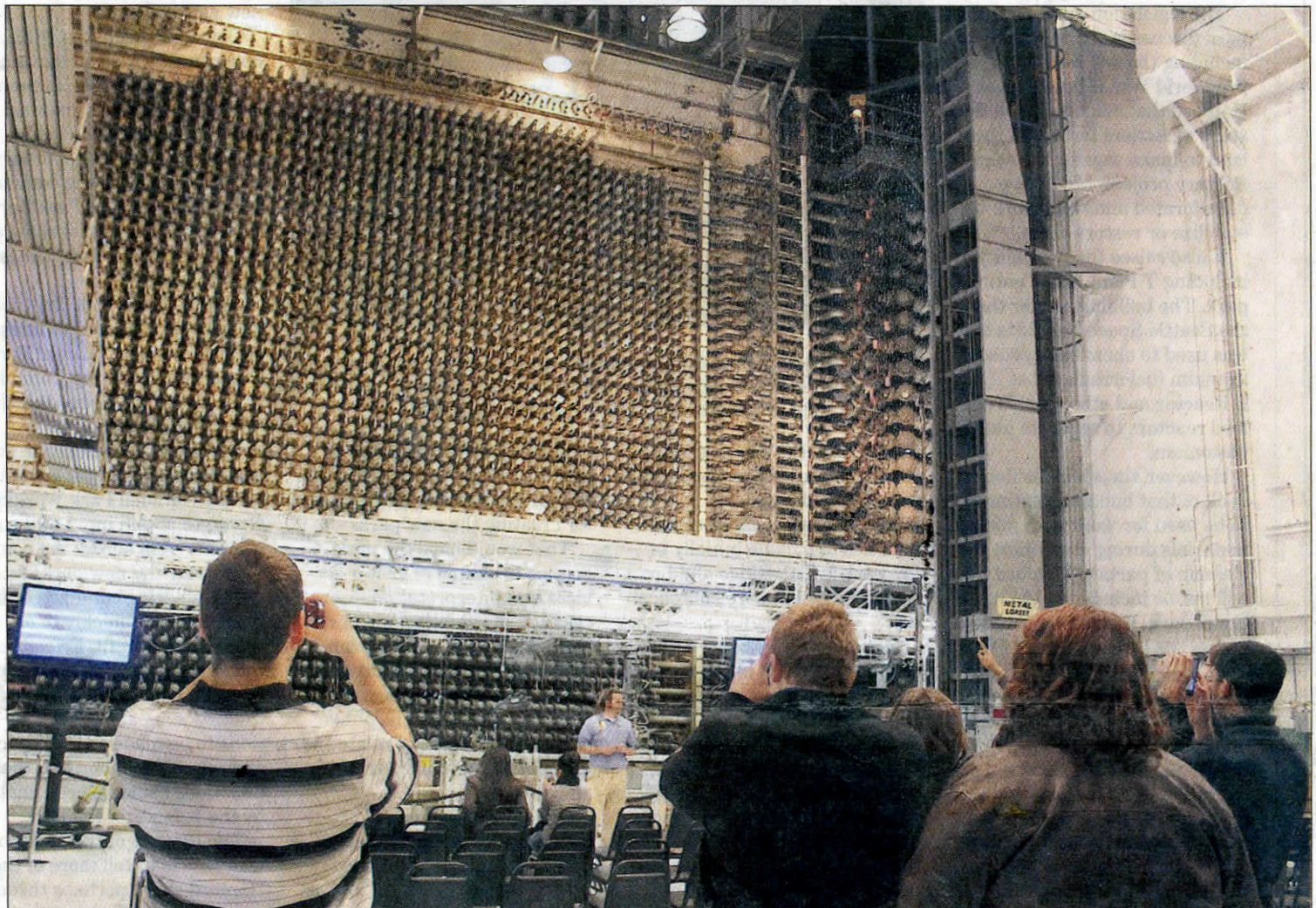
Parenting classes offered starting Jan. 27 in Kennewick

The Kennewick School District will provide free Love and Logic parenting classes from 6:30 to 8 p.m.

Agencies seek opinions on public involvement at Hanford

The Hanford Tri-Party Agreement

Work begins on new Hanford national park



Tri-City Herald file

Students from Delta High School in Richland toured the B Reactor at the Hanford site in 2012. More tours are expected when the reactor becomes part of the new Manhattan Project National Historical Park.

Multitude of decisions means opening day could be 5 years away

ANNETTE CARY

TRI-CITY HERALD

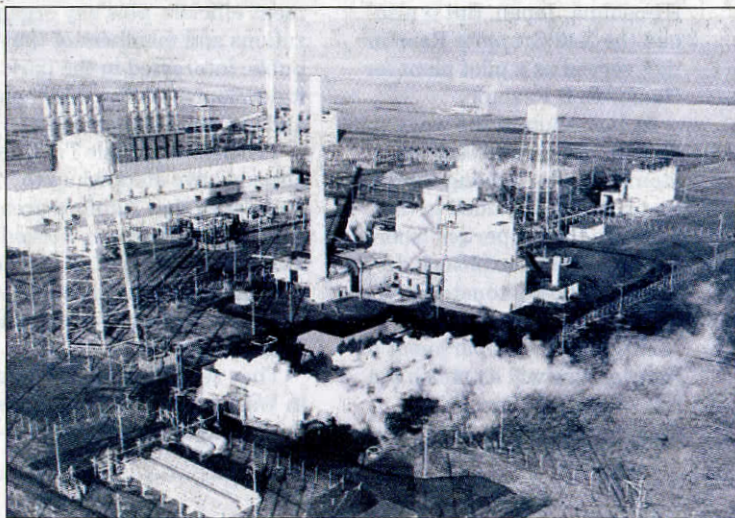
Within a year, decisions should be made on what parts of Hanford initially will be included in the new Manhattan Project National Historical Park.

Usually, national parks are created when legislation is signed into law. But because of the complex nature of the new park that includes Hanford's historic B Reactor and sites in two other states, the secretaries of energy and the interior have been given a year to work out the basic details.

With more work to be done after that, it could be five years before the National Park Service is operating the park, estimated Gary Petersen, vice president of Hanford projects for the Tri-City Development Council.

But some parts of the park could be operating sooner, and the formation of the park already is creating national interest and publicity for the park.

"There unquestionably is a pent-up desire for this new Man-



Courtesy Department of Energy

The Hanford nuclear reservation's B Reactor near Richland is shown in this aerial photo taken 1944-45. Plutonium produced at B Reactor was used in the first atomic bomb detonated during a test in New Mexico and in one of the bombs used to end World War II.

hattan Project National Historical park," TRIDEC and Visit Tri-Cities officials said in a recent letter to David Klaus, Department of Energy undersecretary for management and performance. Klaus is expected to be instrumental in DOE decisions on the new park.

The two local agencies began receiving calls as soon as the legislation passed Dec. 12. Interest has come from people excited to visit the new national park, from entrepreneurs interested in knowing the routes visitors are likely to travel to access the Hanford historic sites

Coming tomorrow

Hear firsthand accounts of the Manhattan Project online.

and from civic groups looking to arrange speakers to tell them more about the national park.

Among the first important decisions DOE and the Department of Interior will make is what will be included in the new park at Hanford, Oak Ridge, Tenn., and Los Alamos, N.M.

B Reactor at Hanford is a given. It was the world's first production-scale reactor and the reactor has changed little since it started up 70 years ago to produce plutonium for the first nuclear explosion in the New Mexico desert and the atomic bomb dropped on Nagasaki, Japan, helping end the war.

But the new national park is planned not only to tell the story of the science and engineering of the Manhattan Project, but the story of the hundreds of thousands of people who sacrificed

Manhattan Project voices



Photos courtesy Department of Energy

The Western Union office at Hanford was packed on a 1944 payday with men waiting to send money home. Other photos in the Department of Energy's collection show the line stretching outside.

Website makes little-heard oral histories available to the public

ANNETTE CARY
TRI-CITY HERALD

During World War II, Phil Gardner traveled more than 100,000 miles to recruit workers for the secret project at Hanford, having not the slightest idea what was being built there.

He and other recruiters scattered across the nation would get Western Union telegrams at the start of the week from Pasco forecasting the new labor requirements at Hanford, a key site in the U.S. effort to produce an atomic bomb before Germany developed one.

On one fall week early in the war, that included 600 laborers, 200 carpenters, 35 auto mechanics, 25 experienced crane oilers, 67 typists, three physicians, 142 firemen and 101 surveyors.

"It sounds ridiculous," particularly given the wartime worker shortages, he said in a 1965 interview. But recruiters "had to do whatever you could do to get the job done."

He told his stories to Stephane Groueff, who interviewed dozens of people who worked on the Manhattan Project for the first comprehensive history written for the general public. Now the Atomic Heritage Foundation has made Gardner's interview and dozens of others available for the public to hear.



A Hanford barbershop does a booming business during the Manhattan Project.

Two years ago, the nonprofit foundation started a website with the Los Alamos Historical Society to post the oral histories of those who worked on the Manhattan Project or were affected by it.

Since then, it has acquired permission to post the interview tapes of three authors whose books are among the best known works about the frantic effort to develop an atomic bomb during World War II. The foundation is working to process the 180 interviews in the collection as creation of a new Man-

hattan Project National Historical Park at the end of 2014 brings increased interest to the topic.

More than a half-million people worked on the Manhattan Project at top-secret sites around the country, including Hanford, which would produce plutonium for the world's first nuclear explosion in the New Mexico desert and the bomb dropped on Nagasaki, Japan, helping end the war.

The interview tapes being made

HANFORD

Promising, pricey technology stalls

DOE considering next steps after attempt to empty tank failed

ANNETTE CARY
TRI-CITY HERALD

The Department of Energy is considering its next steps to empty waste from an underground tank after its most robust retrieval technology failed to work as expected when equipped with a vacuum attachment. Work has temporarily stopped to

empty Tank C-105 after the Mobile Arm Retrieval System, or MARS, worked very slowly to remove approximately 1,500 gallons of the 132,000 gallons of radioactive waste in the tank.

Washington River Protection Solutions proposed MARS when it was awarded the contract in 2008 to manage Hanford's tanks holding 56 million gallons of waste left from the past production of radioactive material.

DOE has spent \$42 million on the technology, according to documents filed in a federal court lawsuit brought by the state of Washington against DOE over deadlines related

to retrieving waste from tanks and treating it for disposal.

BUSINESS

Contractor earns \$10.5M in incentive pay | B6

C-107 and transferring it to a newer, double-shell tank for storage until it can be treated.

It began removing the 253,000

The system was largely successful in a demonstration project on a different tank, emptying waste from Tank



The dome of Hanford Tank C-105 was cut open in June 2013 to allow the Mobile Arm Retrieval System to be lowered through a larger riser into the tank.

Courtesy Washington River Protection Solutions

BRIEFS

12 NOV 14

Tank farm contractor awards subcontracts

Washington River Protection Solutions has spent \$1 billion on subcontracts since taking over the Hanford tank farm work in 2008, it announced Tuesday.

More than 60 percent, or \$622 million, has been awarded to small businesses. That exceeds the contractor's small business goals by \$30 million, it said.

"WRPS feels strongly about working with our current small business partners and setting aside funds to reach out to new small businesses to further promote growth and development in the federal marketplace," said Mari Roden, WRPS small business program manager.

In the fiscal year that ended in September, WRPS spent \$165 million on subcontracts with 67.5 percent of spending going to small businesses. WRPS awarded \$78 million of that to small businesses in Benton, Franklin and Yakima counties in fiscal 2014.

As the Department of Energy tank farm contractor, WRPS is responsible for safely managing 56 million gallons of radioactive and hazardous chemical waste stored in underground tanks.

Board to mull chemical protection

Panel may ask DOE to identify long-term impact of Hanford tank vapors

ANNETTE CARY
TRI-CITY HERALD

The Hanford Advisory Board will consider asking the Department of Energy to identify any long-term

health effects experienced by Hanford employees who have reported an exposure to chemical vapors in the past 20 years.

The board plans to discuss possible recommendations to DOE drafted by a board committee as it meets Wednesday and Thursday at the Red Lion Hanford House in Richland.

Over the last year, at least 55 Hanford workers have received medical evaluations for possible exposure to vapors from waste held in under-

ground tanks. Workers are concerned that the exposure could lead to serious illnesses long term.

Washington River Protection Solutions, the Hanford tank farm contractor, commissioned an independent assessment of tank vapor protection, which concluded in late October that there is "a casual link between chemical vapor releases and subsequent health effects, particularly upper respiratory irritation, experienced by tank farm workers."

The report made 47 recommendations to better protect workers and learn more about the health effects of vapor exposure, and the tank farm contractor immediately began to implement more than half of them. Some require long-term research, such as medical studies.

However, a full plan to implement all the recommendations is yet to be made public. A draft plan was shared

FEDERAL BUDGET

\$2.3B sought for Hanford

Proposal includes \$690M for vit plant, \$724 million for work at tank farms

ANNETTE CARY
TRI-CITY HERALD

The Obama administration's budget request for the Hanford nuclear reservation for fiscal 2016 would cut nearly \$100 million from the budget for work under the Richland Operations Office, but increase money for the Office of River Protection by \$202 million.

Congress will start considering the request, which proposes \$2.3 billion for Hanford cleanup out of \$5.8 billion for environmental cleanup at Department of Energy sites across the nation.

"The president's budget proposal for Hanford cleanup in fiscal year 2016 includes good and bad news for the site," said Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., in a statement.

She was disappointed in the cut to funding for the Richland Operations Office work, but said she was able to restore a similar proposed cut to the final fiscal 2015 budget for the office.

"I'm hopeful that the Republican majority in Congress will work with me to get this done this year too," she said.

The Office of River Protection budget proposal includes \$690 million for the vitrification plant and \$724 million for the tank farms.

The Richland Operations Office, which is responsible for all other Hanford environmental cleanup work, would receive \$914 million under the

budget request.

Rep. Dan Newhouse, R-Wash., said meeting the federal government's cleanup commitments at both Hanford offices should be a higher priority for the administration.

"The Office of River Protection request should go a long way towards meeting commitments made by the Department of Energy," Newhouse said in a statement.

But while the requested budget figure appears promising, uncertainties remain about the costs of work that could be required by a federal court as court-enforced consent decree deadlines for the tank farms and vitrification plant are reset, Newhouse said.

Taking steps to better protect workers from chemical vapors at the tank farms and work toward emptying double-shell Tank AY-102, which

has radioactive waste leaking between its shells, also could have major impacts on the amount of actual cleanup progress that could be made with the budget proposed for the tank farms, he said.

The proposed cut for the Richland Operations Office is challenging by any standard, Newhouse said.

"It's difficult to imagine a scenario where this budget truly provides adequate funding to meet milestones and keep cleanup work on track at projects within the river corridor, Plutonium Finishing Plant and K Area," he said.

The Obama administration needs to provide more details on the potential effects of its proposed budget for Hanford, including the potential in-

See **HANFORD** | Page A2

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Obama budget: \$3.99T

ANITA KUMAR AND WILLIAM DOUGLAS

MCLATCHY WASHINGTON BUREAU

WASHINGTON — President Obama proposed a \$3.99 trillion federal budget Monday that would take more than \$1 trillion from the wealthy and corporations to finance programs for the poor and middle class — a sweeping shift of wealth and a new approach to politics he hopes will define his legacy and frame the campaign for his successor.

4 FEB 13

Hanford plans chemical vapor technology exchange

The Hanford tank farm contractor is looking for current and potential technologies and methods to detect, monitor and abate chemical vapors.

Washington River Protection Solutions plans a Vapors Management Technology Exchange Feb. 24-25 in the Tri-Cities to learn what is available and give businesses, universities and national labs information about the vapor conditions at the Hanford tank farms.

Topics to be discussed include

meteorology, sampling, vapor detection and analysis, personal protective equipment and vapor abatement, including dilution or capture of vapors.

A recent independent assessment concluded that brief, intense vapor releases could be causing respiratory symptoms in workers.

Workers are concerned exposure could lead to serious, long-term health conditions.

Participants will be invited to attend based on expressions of interest sent to the tank farm contractor.

They are due Feb. 9.

More information is posted at 1.usa.gov/16vXYiX.

- Tri-City Herald

29 JAN 15

Hanford contractor hits safety milestones

Washington Closure Hanford and its subcontractor employees have worked 5 million hours without a lost day by a worker because of an on-the-job injury.

This is the second time that safety milestone has been reached since Washington Closure took over the contract to clean up 220 square miles of the Hanford nuclear reservation in the area along the Columbia River in 2005.

Work has been done safely despite employee uncertainty about the future of Hanford work along the river. Washington Closure's contract expires in September, and the Department of Energy has not announced whether its contract will be extended or other arrangements made.

Washington Closure has completed 91 percent of the work assigned to it. However, some high-hazard work will remain past September, including cleaning up a highly radioactive spill beneath the 309 Building and the 618-10 and 618-11 waste burial grounds.

Work is completed on 178 square miles of land, with 321 of 331 buildings demolished and 518 of 585 waste sites cleaned up.

HANFORD 5 Feb 15

Medical services provider praised

ANNETTE CARY

TRI-CITY HERALD

The occupational medical services provider at Hanford received almost 91 percent of the incentive pay possible from the Department of Energy for its work in the fiscal year that ended in September.

HPM Corp. received \$280,705 out of a possible \$310,000, DOE announced Wednesday.

DOE found no significant deficiencies for the year and rated its work in categories of worker health and operational effectiveness as "excellent." The remaining category, customer satisfaction, was "very good."

"The contractor met or exceeded the majority of performance goals and objectives," according to DOE's summary of the evaluation.

DOE awarded HPM Corp. of Kennewick a contract estimated to be worth \$99 million over six years in 2012 to provide occupational medical services to employees of DOE and environmental cleanup contractors at Hanford.

An independent assessment by the Department of Health and Human Service's Federal Occupational Health in 2014 rated HPM's clinical operations as "excellent,"

Bill Johnson brings business background to Hanford's MSA

TRI-CITY HERALD

Bill Johnson, the newly named president of Mission Support Alliance at Hanford, will bring 22 years of professional experience to the Department of Energy contractor when he starts work Feb. 2.

Mission Support Alliance provided more information Wednesday about Johnson after announcing Monday that he had been picked to replace Pasco native Frank Armijo as president. Armijo will be moving to Lockheed Martin corporate offices in Maryland.

Mission Support Alliance was awarded a contract valued at \$3 billion over a decade in 2008 to provide support services sitewide at Hanford.

Johnson holds a bachelor of business management and a master of business adminis-

tration from the Rochester Institute of Technology in Rochester, N.Y., plus has completed executive leadership courses at the Lockheed Martin Center for Leadership Excellence, Carnegie Mellon and the University of Maryland.

He most recently has worked as Lockheed Martin vice president of business services in support of PSEG Long Island and Long Island Power Authority.

Before that he served as director for professional services for the corporation, leading a portfolio of contracts in support of Sandia National Laboratories, the U.S. Department of Labor, the Centers for Disease Control, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of Defense and other government and commercial clients.

Hanford's Mission Support Alliance earns \$16.5 million

Contractor met or exceeded most goals for past fiscal year

ANNETTE CARY

TRI-CITY HERALD

Mission Support Alliance has been awarded 87 percent of the possible incentive payment available for the past fiscal year for its work to provide sitewide services at the Hanford nuclear reservation.

The Department of Energy awarded the Hanford contractor \$16.5 million out of the possible incentive available of almost \$19 million for the fiscal year that ended in September.

"I am pleased with the progress attained this past fiscal year," Stacy Charbonneau, the DOE manager for the Hanford Richland Operations Office, said in a letter to Mission Support Alliance. "I look forward to working with MSA in continuing to right-size the Hanford site infrastructure, improving sitewide safety and, overall, driving for safe and cost effective cleanup."

Mission Support Alliance met or exceeded the majority of its goals and objectives, said new President Bill Johnson and Chief Oper-

ations Officer Dave Ruscitto in a message to employees.

For meeting DOE targets for completed work, Mission Support Alliance received 98 percent of pay available, or almost \$13 million, and a rating of "excellent."

It was rated "very good" in subjective categories, receiving 63 percent of the pay available, or \$3.6 million.

The scorecard released by DOE listed no significant deficiencies. But it said Mission Support Alliance should work on adhering to regulatory requirements for sewer systems and strengthening planning for complying with the legally binding Tri-Party Agreement.

The services Mission Support Alliance provides at Hanford include information technology, utilities, security, fire protection, management of the HAMMER training center, road maintenance, preservation of cultural artifacts and portfolio management for DOE, including providing data to help DOE plan for and meet deadlines.

DOE listed several significant achievements on its scorecard for Mission Support Alliance, starting with its work to carry out DOE's

10 FEB 15

DOE inspector general says Hanford cost audits lacking

ANNETTE CARY
TRI-CITY HERALD

Audits of costs for many contractors at Hanford and other Department of Energy environmental cleanup sites are not being promptly done, according to a special report released Monday by the DOE Office

of Inspector General.

Several Hanford contractors bill costs to the federal government and then make a profit through incentive pay that is awarded depending on the quality of their work.

DOE has depended on the Defense Contract Audit Agency to conduct cost audits on those types of con-

tracts, but the agency has reported delays of one year to more than eight years for audits of some DOE contracts and related subcontracts, according to the report.

The issue is compounded by a requirement that federal contractors maintain some cost data after their contracts end for only three years.

The delays expose DOE to an unacceptable level of financial risk, the report said. Timely audits are needed to detect and prevent DOE from reimbursing costs claimed by contractors that are not allowed and to identify weaknesses in contractor financial controls.

Because of the billions of dollars

DOE is spending on the contracts evaluated in the report and the intricacies of contractor accounting systems, "comprehensive periodic audits are critically important," the report said.

Adding to the problem is the lack

Groups maintain they will sue over chemical vapors

19 FEB 15

ANNETTE CARY

TRI-CITY HERALD

Some of the approximately 75 Hanford workers and others who gathered Wednesday night at a meeting at the Local 598 union hall in Pasco are

already experiencing health problems, said Pete Nicacio, business manager for the United Association of Steamfitters and Plumbers, Local 598.

And it's too soon to say what health problems may lie in the future for

workers exposed in the last two years to chemical vapors from Hanford waste held in underground tanks, he said.

Wednesday marked 90 days since Hanford Challenge and Local 598 notified the Department of Energy and its Hanford tank farm contractor that they intend to file a lawsuit to protect workers from chemical vapors.

The two groups did not use the end of the required notification period to file a lawsuit — although that could be coming. Instead, they met with workers to hear their stories and offer help.

Washington River Protection Solutions, DOE's tank farm contractor,

See **WORKERS** | Page B2

VAPOR PROTECTION AT HANFORD

State wants improvements

Health officials waiting for implementation plan on recommendations in review

ANNETTE CARY

TRI-CITY HERALD

The Department of Energy needs to find better methods of detecting chemical vapors at the Hanford tank farms and to learn more about what is in the vapors, state health officials said.

The state Department of Health weighed in on worker vapor protection

INSIDE:

Inspector
general critical
of cost audits.
| B1

dations in a new independent review of chemical vapor issues, led by the Savannah River National Laboratory in South Carolina.

The implementation plan, initially scheduled to be released in mid-December, is expected to be made public shortly.

"The conclusions contained within the report are based on sound scientific as-

in a recent letter to DOE.

The department is waiting for Hanford officials to release a plan for implementing 47 proposed recommen-

dations and (it) contains recommendations that can improve the safety and health of the workers at the tank farm facilities," David Jansen, director of the Department of Health Office of Radiation Protection, wrote in the letter to DOE.

"While the report is good, we will continue to have serious concerns for worker safety until worker exposures are eliminated or properly controlled using appropriate industrial hygiene and safety protocols," he said.

Since March, 56 workers have

22 Feb 15

Most systems now removed

Piping in 300 Area
last high-hazard
work to be done

ANNETTE CARY
TRI-CITY HERALD

Washington Closure Hanford workers have removed or at least stabilized some of the most radioactive waste in Hanford's 300 Area just north of Richland, along the Columbia River.

It was the last high-hazard work to be done in the 300 Ar-

ea, except for the postponed cleanup of the 324 Building and the high-level radioactive waste spill discovered beneath it.

The work just finished was on a network of underground pipes that carried liquids contaminated with chemical and radiological waste from seven laboratories to the 340 Vault near the river. From there, it was trucked or shipped by rail to the underground tanks holding high-level radioactive waste in central Hanford for

DOE, state argue about proposals

ANNETTE CARY

TRI-CITY HERALD

The state of Washington would inappropriately expand the Hanford consent decree beyond what the parties signed onto in 2010, including adding huge new storage tanks, the Department of Justice argued Thursday in federal court in Richland.

"We have a different view of the scope and objective of the decree," replied Andrew Fitz, senior counsel for the Wash-

ington state attorney general.

Judge Rosanna Malouf Peterson heard the first round of arguments Thursday on proposed changes to the court-enforced consent decree after it became apparent that the Department of Energy could not meet the remaining deadlines..

The opening hearing focused on whether conditions have significantly changed since 2010 at the Hanford tank

HANFORD | ARID LANDS ECOLOGY RESERVE

No retrial for Yakama man

Feds decline to pursue case against tribal member; hunting rights debate continues

ANNETTE CARY

TRI-CITY HERALD

The Department of Justice will not retry Delbert Loren Wheeler, a Yakama tribal member, on a charge of disturbing plants on the Arid Lands Ecology Reserve of the Hanford Reach National Mon-

ument, according to court documents.

A jury found Wheeler guilty in January of driving off-road on the closed reserve, but deadlocked on the charge of damaging plants. He has not been sentenced.

Wheeler and prosecutors continue to argue about

whether Wheeler had a right to enter the reserve, called the ALE, or to hunt the herds of elk there. The ALE is west of Highway 240 as it cuts through Department of Energy land, and includes Rattlesnake Mountain.

Wheeler was driving a pickup with three passengers in the cab and elk carcasses in the pickup bed when federal and state officers stopped him Oct. 7, 2011, on the ALE.

Wheeler argued during his January trial in federal court in Richland that prosecutors had failed to provide evidence on both counts.

He had permission under the Treaty of 1855 and the proclamation that created the national monument to be on the ALE as a tribal member, Wheeler argued in court documents. The treaty gives the

See **RETRIAL** | Page B3

HANFORD VIT PLANT

Safety board raises concerns

Questions raised about whether ventilation system would protect in a severe earthquake

ANNETTE CARY

TRI-CITY HERALD

The Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board is questioning whether part of the ventilation system planned for Hanford's vitrification plant will protect workers and the public from radioactive material in a severe earthquake.

This is the second time since the start of 2015 that the safety board has questioned the safety strategy for the vitrification plant's High-Level Waste Facility. The facility will turn high level radioactive waste left from weapons plutonium production into a stable glass form for disposal.

In both cases, the safety

board has asked for a written report within 90 days on Department of Energy plans to address safety issues.

In January, the safety board questioned plans to prevent a buildup of flammable gas in some tanks in the facility if mixers lost air supply. Air is required to operate the mixers in a design that depends on sucking up waste and shooting it back out, much like a turkey baster.

Hanford officials have been aware of both issues

and have been working on plans to resolve them, with the safety board's requests for reports calling attention to the importance it places on addressing the safety issues.

The safety strategy for the design of the High Level Waste Facility proposes downgrading the seismic design standards that must be met for some key components of the facility's confinement ventilation system,

See **CONCERNS** | Page B2

BRIEFS

18 Feb 15

Public tank vapors meeting scheduled today in Pasco

Union Local 598 in Pasco and Hanford Challenge plan a public meeting today on Hanford worker exposure to chemical vapors from waste stored in the nuclear reservation's underground tanks.

The meeting will be from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Local 598 Union Hall, 1328 Road 28.

The two organizations and Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility sent the Department of Energy and its Hanford tank farm contractor a notice of intent to file a lawsuit in November.

Today will be about 90 days, the required waiting period for filing a lawsuit, from the day the agencies were notified.

There will be brief remarks at the start of the meeting, followed by a chance for workers and the public to hear and discuss their perspectives on vapor exposures.

Since March 2014, 56 Hanford workers have received medical evaluations for possible exposures to chemical vapors.

An independent team lead by the Savannah River National Laboratory released new findings on the vapors in October. This month the tank farm contractor released its plan to take action on 47 recommendations in the independent report to better protect workers and learn more about the

effects of the vapors on worker health long term.

The state of Washington also has given notice of its intent to sue. Because of a delay in getting the notification to DOE, its potential lawsuit cannot be filed before March.

DOE plans Hanford open house on vit plant, tank waste

The Department of Energy plans an open house March 3 in Kennewick to provide information and answer questions about work at the Hanford tank farms and the vitrification plant being built to treat the waste.

It will be from 5 to 7 p.m. at the Red Lion Hotel Columbia Center, 1101 N. Columbia Center Blvd. Films, exhibits and stations where kids can try on protective equipment are

planned.

The vitrification plant is being built to turn up to 56 million gallons of radioactive waste stored at the Hanford tank farms into a stable glass form for disposal, possibly starting in 2022. The waste is left from the past production of plutonium for the nation's nuclear weapons program.

The last open house on the vitrification plant was held in March 2012.

This time, DOE will include information on the tank farms. Work is under way there to empty waste from leak-prone underground tanks and store it in newer double-shell tanks until it can be treated.

8 FEB 15

Timecard case takes toll

Former Hanford executive reflects on ordeal of fraud accusations

ANNETTE CARY

TRI-CITY HERALD

On the day that Ryan Dodd was indicted on 34 felony counts related to timbercard fraud at the Hanford nuclear reservation, the accountant in his nature took over.

The Hanford executive, whom friends sometimes called “the Boy Scout” for his straightforward ways, took the paperwork out to his back porch and created a spreadsheet to add up the possible penalties — he was looking at up to 400 years in prison and \$25 million in fines.

More than 20 months later in December 2014, the U.S. Department of Justice dropped all criminal charges against Dodd in a plea deal. He agreed to pay a civil fine of \$44,000.

“I call it extortion,” he said.

Dodd denied knowledge of timocard fraud. He believed reasonable management procedures were in place to deter and detect such fraud, according to the settlement agreement.

Agreeing to pay the fine put an end to an ordeal that had the potential to consume his and his family’s lives for years to come.

His criminal trial was scheduled for this month, and prosecutors threatened to file civil

25 Feb 15

Total price down a bit

Entire project now estimated to cost \$110.2B through 2090, report states

ANNETTE CARY

TRI-CITY HERALD

An estimated \$110.2 billion is needed to complete the remaining environmental cleanup at the Hanford nuclear reservation, plus some post-cleanup oversight.

The price tag is down from \$113.6 billion a year ago, after spending more than \$2 billion since then.

If the estimated remaining costs for the plant were spread evenly among everyone living in the United States today, each person would have to pay about \$345 during the next 75 years.

The estimated remaining

cleanup cost is based on completing most cleanup work in 2060 and then some continuing oversight and monitoring until 2090. The oversight, called long-term stewardship, would cost \$4.8 million.

This is the fifth annual lifecycle report since it became an annual requirement added to the legally binding Tri-Party Agreement in 2010.

The agreement requires the report to be based on completing work to meet all of its regulatory and cleanup obligations and deadlines, which can result in some

'Daughters of Hanford' project under way

6 MAY 15
Work focuses on women who have been affected by nuclear reservation

SARA SCHILLING
TRI-CITY HERALD

Anna King has been a reporter for years, and sometimes a special story will bubble up inside her, demanding to get out.

"You have it in your mind and your heart and you have to figure out a way to tell it," she said.

That's how it was with *Daughters of Hanford*, which launched this week.

The multimedia project focuses on a dozen women who have influenced or been influenced by the Hanford Nuclear Reservation — from early workers to cleanup watchdogs.

It includes 12 radio pieces, portraits, an interactive website, geo-mapping application and museum exhibit.

Northwest Public Radio and Washington State University Tri-Cities are presenting the project, and it's hosted by the Reach center in Richland.

The exhibit will open at the center off Columbia Park Trail this summer.

King, a correspondent for Northwest News Network, which is a collaboration of public radio stations across Washington, Oregon and Idaho, is working on *Daughters* with photographer Kai-Huei Yau and Doug Gast, an artist and associate professor of fine arts at Washington State University Tri-Cities.

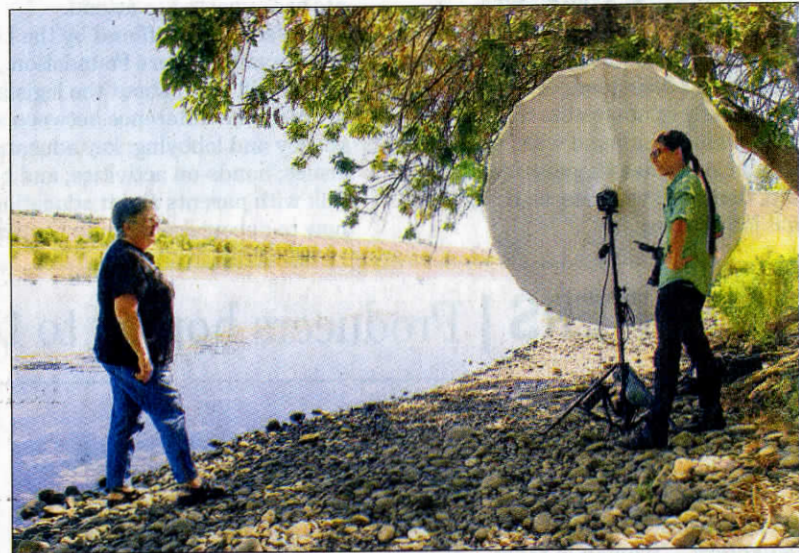
It's exciting to see it start to roll out after so many months of planning and effort, King said.

The first radio story was released this week. It features Susan Leckband, a longtime Hanford Advisory Board member, highlighting how her natural curiosity informs and helps her Hanford work. The portrait shows Leckband nestled against a tree along the Columbia River, flashing her trademark warm, inquisitive smile.

Other women selected for the project range from Leona Woods Marshall Libby, who helped build the B Reactor, to U.S. Sen. Patty Murray. Their stories — and those of the other *Daughters* — will air on public radio across the Northwest over the coming months.

The project website, www.daughtersofhanford.org, also will be loaded with extra information —

See **DAUGHTERS** | Page B2



Courtesy Joey Jensen

Kai-Huei Yau photographs Susan Leckband near WSU Tri-Cities. Leckband, a longtime Hanford Advisory Board member, is one of the women featured in a new multimedia project, *Daughters of Hanford*.

Hanford tour registration starts March 9

More in-depth tour of B Reactor also available

ANNETTE CARY

TRI-CITY HERALD

Registration begins at 9 a.m. March 9 for Hanford tours this year, with initially a choice of two tours.

Visitors can choose between a

tour focused on Hanford environmental cleanup, which includes a look inside B Reactor, or a more in-depth tour of B Reactor, which will include a drive past pre-World War II sites on the nuclear reservation.

In April, registration will start for a third tour to be offered for the first time this year. It will focus on the sites where settlers lived before they were forced to give up their farms,

homes and businesses for the secret Manhattan Project to produce plutonium in WWII.

The registration this month will begin and end at the B Reactor tour headquarters at 2000 Logston Blvd. in Richland off Highway 240. The free tours will last four to five hours.

B Reactor was the world's first full-scale nuclear reactor, producing plutonium for the world's first nucle-

ar explosion in the New Mexico desert and the bomb dropped over Nagasaki, Japan, helping end World War II.

The environmental cleanup tour also includes stops at the Cold Test Facility, where technologies to empty Hanford tanks of high-level radioactive waste are tested; the Environmental Restoration Disposal Facility, a massive, lined landfill for low-

level radioactive and hazardous chemical waste; the central Hanford plant for treating contaminated groundwater and the vitrification plant being built to glassify waste now in underground tanks.

The tour bus will drive past other sites as participants hear about the progress of cleanup and some of the

See **HANFORD** | Page B2

bia Center Boulevard. He died at the scene, and an autopsy revealed he died from trauma caused by the collision.

Investigators have sent footage from traffic cameras near the crash site to a local professional video company to try and develop a better image of the truck in the crash.

Anyone with information can call Crime Stoppers at 509-586-8477 or 800-222-8477.

28 FEB 15

DOE cancels open house on tank farms, vit plant

The Department of Energy has canceled the public open house planned March 3 in Kennewick on the Hanford tank farms and vitrification plant.

It will be rescheduled, according to

HANFORD 5 MAR 15
WHISTLEBLOWER

Lawsuit heading to trial

9th Circuit declines
to review ruling in
favor of Tamosaitis

ANNETTE CARY
TRI-CITY HERALD

The 9th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals declined Wednesday to review a ruling in favor of Hanford whistleblower Walt Tamosaitis.

In November a three-judge panel of the appeals court found that Tamosaitis' case was wrongly dismissed from federal court and that he was entitled to a jury trial.



Tamosaitis

It was the first time a court of appeals has confirmed that whistleblowers are entitled to a jury trial under the

Energy Reorganization Act.

Four years ago Tamosaitis raised concerns about technical issues at the \$12.3 billion plant being built to glassify radioactive Hanford wastes.

Tamosaitis already was vindicated by the halt to construction of the Pretreatment Facility at the vitrification plant to resolve technical issues, including keeping waste well mixed in vessels within the plant, said his attorney Jack Sheridan.

"As of today, the mixing issue is still not solved, and the testing Walter argued for is finally being done," Sheridan said.

"Walter couldn't be happier that he is finally getting his day in court in front of a jury," he said.

URS, which was recently purchased by AECOM, had asked that a larger panel of judges review the decision. The full court was advised of the request for a rehearing and no judge asked for a vote on the issue. The request for a rehearing was then rejected, according to court documents.

See **HANFORD** | Page B2

AG evaluating options of Hanford tank vapors

The Washington state attorney general is evaluating legal options after filing a notice of intent to sue the Department of Energy and its contractor over chemical vapor releases from Hanford tank wastes.

Over the past year, 56 Hanford workers have been evaluated because of possible exposure to

chemical vapors.

The state was required to give DOE 90 days notice, which ended Sunday. It has received no formal response to the notice.

"My office, along with our state agency clients, are reviewing the recent plan to address vapors," Bob Ferguson, the attorney general, said in a statement.

A team of independent experts made 47 recommendations to better protect workers. Washington River Protection Solutions released a plan last month to implement the recommendations.

Despite 20 years of study and several reports, DOE has failed to find a solution and workers continue to get sick, Ferguson has said.

- Tri-City Herald

HANFORD CLEANUP

Landfill hits milestone

17 MAR 15

17 million tons of waste disposed at facility since 1996

ANNETTE CARY

TRI-CITY HERALD

The main Hanford landfill for contaminated material from the nuclear site's environmental cleanup has reached a new milestone, 17 million tons of waste disposed of since it opened in 1996.

The Environmental Restoration Disposal Facility in central Hanford accepts waste with hazardous chemical and low-level radioactive contamination.

"Reaching 17 million tons of material disposed at ERDF shows the excellent cleanup work being done at the Hanford site," said Mark French, the Department of Energy project director.

It is the largest disposal facility in the DOE cleanup complex. Its 70-foot-deep disposal area covers roughly the same area as 52 football fields, although some areas are already full.

The central Hanford landfill has been called the heart, backbone and hub of Hanford cleanup, according to the Environmental Protection Agency, a Hanford regulator.

See **LANDFILL** | Page B2

National tour picks Hanford

Map chooses stop
at major landmark
in each U.S. state

ANNETTE CARY

TRI-CITY HERALD

As it turns out, the best way to find Waldo is also the best way to find Hanford.

A new map of the most efficient way to tour the nation, with a stop at a major national landmark in each state, picked Hanford for the stop in Washington state.

That's raised some eyebrows on the west side of the

state. After all, the map designers could have picked Mount Rainier, the San Juan Islands or Mount St. Helens to represent the state.

They can blame Waldo and science.

Randy Olson is a doctoral student with a blog and a "data tinkering hobby," who decided on a whim last month to come up with a the optimal computer strategy to find Waldo, the guy in the red-and-white striped shirt that's hidden among dozens of people in each scene in the children's *Where's Waldo?*

See **TOUR** | Page A2

Groups plan own meetings

Gatherings set
around state; DOE
didn't plan any

ANNETTE CARY

TRI-CITY HERALD

Four Northwest groups are holding their own versions of Hanford State of the Site meetings after learning that the Department of Energy did not plan any this year.

Columbia Riverkeeper, Hanford Challenge, Heart of America Northwest and Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility have organized the meetings in three Washington communities. A meeting has been held in Spokane and more are planned in Vancouver and Walla Walla.

The DOE Hanford State of

the Site meetings have provided a chance for DOE and its regulators to update the public on progress to clean up contamination left from the past production of weapons plutonium. And they give workers, retirees and the public a chance to raise issues and ask questions of top Hanford officials.

The State of the Site meeting held in Richland last spring drew a crowd of 250 people with questions about preserving Hanford's shrub steppe wildland, protecting workers from tank vapors and the shutdown of a major Hanford laboratory, among other topics.

The meetings have been held sporadically in recent years. A meeting planned in fall 2013 was canceled when the federal government was

DOE CLEANUP BUDGET

Letter critical of cuts

TRIDEC tells
lawmakers progress
could be stopped

ANNETTE CARY

TRI-CITY HERALD

At a time that the Department of Energy's overall budget is increasing, the Obama administration's budget requests for environmental cleanup of nuclear weapons sites are dropping, says the Tri-City Development Council.

The proposed cut comes despite both sides of Congress repeatedly supporting the federal government's legal and moral obligations to clean up Hanford and other sites, TRIDEC said in a letter sent to members of Washington's congressional delegation.

The cleanup budget request has declined as demands on the program are increasing, from the rising costs at the Hanford vitrification plant to the need to honor international agreements for a South Carolina mixed oxide fuel plant and the need to restart the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant in New Mexico after two accidents in early 2014.

The proposed cut would come as federal projects might again face forced budget cuts called sequestration, following the financial relief for fiscal 2014 and 2015 negotiated by Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., and Rep. Paul Ryan, R-Wis.

The administration's proposed budget would help

Budget amendment could help Hanford

Senate Budget Committee approves measure that could lead to more money for cleanup at nuclear site

ANNETTE CARY
TRI-CITY HERALD

A budget amendment that could keep the door open for more money for Hanford cleanup in the next fis-

cal year was approved Thursday by the Senate Budget Committee.

Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., introduced the amendment to allow for increased funding for the Department of Energy's nuclear waste

cleanup across the nation, including at the Hanford nuclear reservation.

The amendment would create a placeholder in the proposed fiscal 2016 budget if a future deal can be reached to increase cleanup funding without raising federal spending in the budget. Money would have to come from either increased revenue or a cut to another section of the pro-

posed budget.

The Obama administration released a fiscal 2016 budget request in February that provides a \$5.8 billion budget for DOE Office of Environmental Management environmental cleanup across the nation.

Murray said she applauded the increase to \$5.8 billion, which is \$200 million more than the administra-

tion's request the previous year.

"Unfortunately, this request is still \$43 million below what Congress appropriated (last year)," she said. "And funding will be cut at nine of the 16 nuclear waste cleanup sites across the nation."

The budget for the DOE Hanford

See **BUDGET** | Page C2

HANFORD | RADIATION EXPOSURE

Group to weigh easing compensation requirements

Public meetings March 25, 26 in Richland

ANNETTE CARY

TRI-CITY HERALD

A federal advisory group will consider this week further easing the requirements for some Hanford workers to receive \$150,000 in compensation plus medical care if they

have developed certain cancers.

The Advisory Board on Radiation and Worker Health will meet at the Red Lion Richland Hanford House at 8 a.m. Wednesday and Thursday. The public meeting is scheduled to address easing rules

for certain Hanford workers about 3 p.m. Wednesday, followed by public comments at 4:30 p.m.

The board will hear a presentation on the lack of radiation monitoring for construction workers at Hanford, including those employed by J.A. Jones Construction Services Co. from 1984 through Feb. 28, 1987, and Kaiser Engi-

neers Hanford from March 1, 1987, through the end of 1990.

The Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program requires that radiation exposure be estimated for Hanford workers who develop cancer to determine if their cancer likely was caused by radiation. However, if too little information is available to estimate exposure for

groups of employees, they may be designated "special exposure cohorts" with eased rules.

They may be automatically compensated if they were employed for at least 250 days at Hanford and then developed certain cancers that medical research has linked to radiation exposure. A reconstruction of their esti-

mated radiation exposure is not required to show they received enough radiation to likely cause the cancer.

Special exposure cohorts already have been approved to ease the cancer compensation rules for most Hanford workers from Oct. 1, 1943, through 1983.

See **EASING** | Page B2

HANFORD | RADIATION EXPOSURE

Compensation rules likely to ease

Some construction, subcontractor workers with cancer could get in

ANNETTE CARY

TRI-CITY HERALD

The compensation rules for some Hanford construction workers and subcontractor workers who developed cancer could be eased in about three months.

The federal Advisory Board on

Radiation and Worker Health voted unanimously Wednesday to recommend a "special exposure cohort" designation for employees of Hanford construction contractors from 1984-90 and any subcontractor during that period.

The Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program pays \$150,000 to Hanford workers or their survivors if workers had cancer likely caused by radiation exposure at Hanford. The program also pays medical costs related to the cancer after a claim is

approved.

The law establishing the program requires that radiation exposure be estimated to determine if it likely caused cancer. If too little information is available to estimate exposure for groups of workers, they may be designated a special exposure cohort with eased rules.

They can be automatically compensated if they were employed for at least 250 days at Hanford and then developed certain cancers that medical research has linked to radiation exposure.

The advisory board, which meets in Richland this week, next will send a letter to the secretary of Health and Human Services, Sylvia Mathews Burwell, who must accept the recommendation. If Congress does not object within 30 days, the special exposure cohort designation becomes final.

The process takes about three months. Then any previously denied claims for people in the special exposure cohort will be screened to see if they qualify for compensation under the eased rules.

Hanford already has the eased claim process for most Hanford employees from Oct. 1, 1943, through 1983.

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health recommended the additional special exposure cohort be approved after questioning whether adequate radiation monitoring was done for construction workers after 1983 through the end of 1990.

J.A. Jones Construction Services

26 MAR 15

Murray questions DOE's spending

Senator says agency appears to be pulling plug on some cleanup

ANNETTE CARY
TRI-CITY HERALD

Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., asked the energy secretary Wednesday why the Department of Energy is not using an additional \$45 million she and other members of Congress fought to get for Hanford cleanup in the present budget.



Murray

Work is well under way toward cleanup on the 324 building and the 618-10 Burial Ground, with \$209 million combined

spent, she said at a hearing of the Senate Appropriations Energy and Water Development Subcommittee.

"It seems to me that DOE now is trying to pull the plug on them, which creates a safety risk, cleanup delays, cost increases and missing those Tri-Party Agreement milestones," she said.

The hearing was to address the administration's proposed budget for fiscal 2016, which would reduce spending on cleanup along the Columbia River by almost \$204 million from current spending to \$108 million.

Overall the Hanford DOE Richland Operations Office — which is responsible for Hanford cleanup other than management of waste in storage tanks or treatment of the tanks — would have spending cut by about \$93 million.

Much of the cleanup along the Columbia River is expected to be finished this year, but the proposed cut would impact work on the 618-10 Burial Ground and the 324 Building.

"Several high-risk projects close to the city of Richland, close to the Columbia River and Energy Northwest remain," Murray said. "I'm really concerned that the fiscal year 2016 budget request would

COMMUNITY EDUCATION CLASSES

6 APR 2015 Learn Hanford, early Richland history

New courses include efforts to save artifacts, narrative of security force

ANNETTE CARY

TRI-CITY HERALD

You don't need to wait until the new Manhattan Project National Historical Park is open to learn the history of Hanford and how it helped

shape the Tri-Cities.

Kennewick Community Ed is offering three new classes this spring on the Manhattan Project's comic equivalent to *Dilbert*, the history of Hanford's security force and efforts to save artifacts as Hanford's buildings are rapidly torn down. It also is offering repeats of its popular walking tours of Richland's "alphabet house" neighborhoods.

Community Ed coordinator Terry Andre hopes publicity about Han-

ford's inclusion in the new national park will spark an interest in the site's history.

Dupus Boomer, the cartoon creation of Dick Donnell, helped the people who came from across the nation to create plutonium at the secret nuclear reservation in the 1940s make light of their hardship. People bought the weekly paper to see what the comic character was up to, according to Community Ed.

Government bureaucracy, traffic

on George Washington Way and especially the blowing dust were fodder for the comics. "On a clear day you can see the new houses across the street," Boomer says.

His first name, Dupus, was a mix of Hanford contractor Dupont and U.S., and Boomer referred to the boomtown that Richland had become.

Connie Estep, who is leading the class *Comic Relief for Atomic Pioneers*, was a curator for the former

More information

Register online at <http://bit.ly/1Pbg194> or in person with cash or a check at Kennewick Community Education, 1000 W. Fourth Ave.

CREHST museum in Richland.

The class is offered from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. May 7 at the Kamiakin High School Library. Cost is \$12.

The Legacy of the Hanford Patrol will trace the changes in the Hanford security forces over more than 70 years.

Bruce Cameron, training manager

See **HISTORY** | Page B2

3 APR 15

More workers report tank vapor exposures

Incident reports down since employees have been wearing respirators for tank farm work

ANNETTE CARY

TRI-CITY HERALD

Three more Hanford workers reported symptoms Thursday morning consistent with those caused by exposure to chemical vapors.

Few incidents have been reported since workers have been required to wear supplied air respirators for much of the work at the Hanford tank farms over the last five months while

improvements are made to better protect workers from vapors.

The three workers who reported symptoms — plus two other workers who reported an odor but had no symptoms — were doing work that was assessed as not requiring the supplied air respirators.

The three workers with symptoms were checked by the

B REACTOR

4 SAT 15

National park planning begins

ANNETTE CARY

TRI-CITY HERALD

The Tri-Cities is on the edge of a huge economic opportunity with the formation of the Manhattan Project National Historical Park, said Sen. Maria Cantwell, D-Wash., as she discussed plans with government and civic leaders Friday in Kennewick.

The Manhattan Project National Park Advocacy Committee discussed early proposals for the new park with Cantwell as the local committee prepares to impress National Park Service and Department of Energy headquarters officials who will visit April 14-16. B Reactor will be the centerpiece of the Hanford portion of the park.

That visit will include a public open house with park

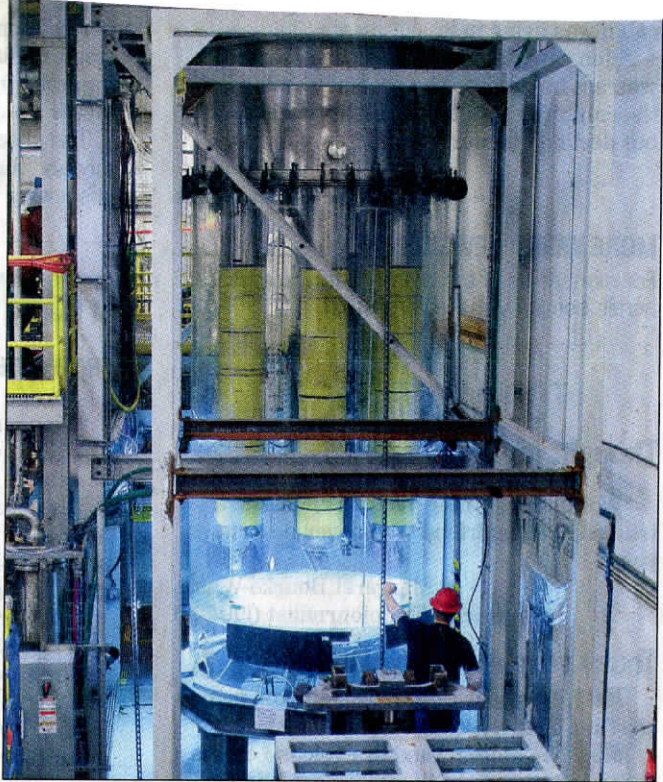
service officials from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. April 15 in the atrium of the Computational Sciences Facility at Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, 3300 Stevens Drive, Richland.

"You have a very unique opportunity here to build on the history and the tradition of the Tri-Cities, focusing on the Manhattan Project museum, and tell a story not only of this area but of our whole nation from a scientific perspective," said Cantwell, who helped push legislation through Congress to create the park.

B Reactor, the world's first



Cantwell



Courtesy Bechtel National

Workers used a clear plastic vessel for half-scale testing of the vitrification plant vessel mixing system.

10 APR 14

Bechtel: Tests are promising

‘Positive surprises’ seen in trial runs of vit plant system

ANNETTE CARY
TRI-CITY HERALD

Hanford officials have seen encouraging results in half-scale tests of a system designed to keep high-level radioactive waste well-mixed within certain tanks in the vitrification plant, according to Bechtel National.

“We’ve had a few surprises when we’ve been doing this testing,” said Rick Brouns, pulse jet mixing project manager. “I’m pleased to report they’ve been positive surprises.”

Pulse jet mixers will be used in the vitrification plant to ensure waste in tanks remains well-mixed. There has been concern that in some tanks, enough plutonium could collect to create an unplanned

nuclear reaction, or that flammable hydrogen could build up, particularly if there is a loss of power.

Because of high radiation levels, once processing begins at the vitrification plant, the mixing system is designed to work without moving parts that would require workers to perform maintenance.

The pulse jet mixers work the same way as a turkey baster, sucking liquid in and expelling it to keep the waste mixed.

“We’re finding that we are actually able to clear the bottom of the vessel of solids at lower jet velocities than we had projected from prior testing and from looking at the correlations from the past,” Brouns said.

The system performed better than expected, despite fears that mixing issues would be very difficult to solve, he said.

See **TESTS** | Page A2

BRIEFS

Hanford Advisory Board evening meeting April 8

The Hanford Advisory Board plans an evening session April 8 to encourage the public to attend.

The session is part of a two-day meeting that will start at noon the same day. Topics to be discussed include guidelines for cleaning up the inner area of central Hanford and a proposal to start treating low activity radioactive waste at the vitrification plant before the plant's Pretreatment Facility is finished. Public comment will be heard at 2 p.m.

The evening portion of the meeting starts at 6:15 p.m. with a primer on

understanding radiological terms, followed by public comment at 7:30 p.m.

The meeting will continue April 9 from 8:30 a.m. until noon, with public comment at 10:30 a.m. The meeting is at the Red Lion Hanford House, 802 George Washington Way, Richland.

DOE announces new Hanford tours

Focus is pre-Manhattan Project settlers

ANNETTE CARY

TRI-CITY HERALD

A new Hanford tour focusing on the life of settlers before the federal government took over their homes, businesses and farms for the secret Manhattan Project has been announced by the Department of Energy.

Registration will open at 8

a.m. May 12. Seats may be reserved for tours from late spring through the fall at www.hanford.gov, by calling 509-376-1647 or in person at the B Reactor Tour Headquarters, 2000 Logston Blvd., Richland.

Two other sets of Hanford tours this year have already

See **TOURS** | Page B2

HANFORD ADVISORY BOARD

Cautious central plan pushed

Group wants DOE to take a conservative approach

ANNETTE CARY

TRI-CITY HERALD

The Hanford Advisory Board is recommending that the Department of Energy take a conservative approach as it prepares to make plans to clean up the innermost 10 square miles of the Hanford

nuclear reservation.

Unlike much of the rest of the 586 square miles of Hanford, the inner 10 square miles is expected to be off limits to the public even after active environmental cleanup concludes.

The land at the center of Hanford was used during weapons plutonium production to chemically process irradiated fuel and dispose of waste. Most of Hanford's major production and waste disposal facilities, except those located in the area

along the Columbia River, are clustered there.

"A lot of hard decisions are left to come," said board member Shelley Cimon, as the advisory board discussed the issue at its Richland meeting last week.

Central Hanford includes burial grounds with 42 miles of trenches, some of them over ponds used for waste disposal, she said. The PUREX tunnels are

See **PLAN** | Page B2

HANFORD NATIONAL PARK

Open house set April 15 in Richland

Some officials to get first in-depth look at role of nuclear site

TRI-CITY HERALD

National Park Service staff will get their first in-depth look at Hanford as they visit this week along with some Department of Energy officials from Washington, D.C.

An open house is planned from 4:30

to 6:30 p.m. April 15 at the Red Lion Hanford House, 802 George Washington Way, Richland. The location has changed since an earlier announcement.

The public can meet agency leaders, share ideas and help kick off planning to make historical areas at Hanford

part of the new Manhattan Project National Historical Park.

The park also will include sites at Oak Ridge, Tenn., and Los Alamos, N.M., where additional workers raced to develop and produce the world's first atomic weapons as Nazi Germany worked to develop the same technology.

Today, about 16 park service staff and five DOE officials from Washington, D.C., will tour historic areas of Hanford that could be included in the new national park.

The centerpiece will be B Reactor,

See **OPEN HOUSE** | Page B2

HANFORD TIMECARD FRAUD

Supervisor gets 30-day sentence

Daniel Niebuhr is first to be sentenced in case after investigation that lasted years

ANNETTE CARY

TRI-CITY HERALD

A former Hanford supervisor was sentenced on Tuesday to 30 days incarceration, three months of home detention and a fine of \$34,146 after pleading guilty to timecard fraud.

Daniel Niebuhr was scheduled to go to trial with four other Hanford field work supervisors, also called a person in charge or PIC, last fall.

He changed his plea to guilty just days before the trial. The other four PICs were acquitted of all charges by a jury. After that, the Department of Justice dropped criminal charges against four other former or current Hanford supervisors or managers

who were indicted with Niebuhr.

Niebuhr was the first defendant to be sentenced in Hanford cases related to timecard fraud after an investigation that lasted for years. Most of the remaining 10 defendants who pleaded guilty are hourly workers.

The federal sentencing range calculated for Niebuhr and accepted by the prosecution and the defense in the plea agreement was eight to 14 months incarceration. But the Department of Justice asked Tuesday for just one month, followed by seven months of home detention.

"It is a lenient recommendation within an already

16 APR 10

Agency says it wants to build on what already is happening in community

ANNETTE CARY

TRI-CITY HERALD

Retired Rep. Doc Hastings said he had just one request of the National Park Service during a community open house Wednesday in Richland for the new Manhattan Project National Historical Park.

If historic B Reactor could be built in 18 months, then DOE and the National Park Service should be able to have the new national park operating in 17 months and two weeks, Hastings said.

Hastings, who was instrumental in getting legislation approved in December to

“
It is about the workers who lived in a secret place, who endured hardships to win the war.”

Vic Knox, associate director of park planning, facilities and lands, U.S. Park Service

create the new park, wants as many of the nuclear reservation's early workers to be alive to see the park in operation as possible, he said.

This week, DOE officials from Washington, D.C., and officials from the National Park

Service toured Hanford to make plans for the new park. They have met with community leaders and working on an agreement due at the end of the year outlining what roles and responsibilities each federal agency will have.

“Standing up this park will take time,” said Vic Knox, the park service associate director for park planning, facilities and lands.

Legislation created the park, but funding still must be obtained, he said. Planning must be done for both short- and long-term operation of the park to provide for public access and historical preservation

In the meantime, the park service will do all it can to support and improve the tours of B Reactor already offered by DOE, he said.

“We do not come in here to

Federal officials awed by history of Hanford

Tour part of process for Manhattan Project National Historic Park

TY BEAVER

TRI-CITY HERALD

Despite working for the Department of Energy for more than 20 years and making a few trips to the Hanford site, Laurie Morman had never taken a proper tour of the nuclear reservation.

Her father was also a physicist

and worked with DOE, but his work "was just what Daddy did."

But after viewing historic sites at Hanford on Tuesday, from the remains of farming communities that preceded the reservation to the B Reactor itself, Morman said she was in awe of what the site represents and the message it holds for anyone who wants to know that part of the United States' past.

"You can read all the history you want, until you sit in the middle of B Reactor, you can't fathom it," she told the Herald.

Morman was one of several feder-

al officials, including from the National Park Service, who toured Hanford on Tuesday as the process of opening portions of the site to the public begin as part of the Manhattan Project National Historic Park project.

Officials said there is still a lot of work ahead to making the park a reality. Specific details about the future park, such as where a visitor center could be located, are likely years away from being decided. However, they were impressed at the

Contractor gets mixed report

DOE says company building vit plant is doing good job

ANNETTE CARY

TRI-CITY HERALD

Bechtel National needs to improve its handling of technical issues and quality assurance, but is doing a good job of identifying issues as it designs and builds the Hanford vitrification plant, according to the Department of Energy.

DOE announced a month ago that Bechtel would receive 65 percent of the award pay possible for the last six months of 2014 as DOE's contractor. It is the highest percentage among the last five pay awards received.

Details were released Friday by DOE on the decision to award Bechtel almost \$4.1 million out of a possible \$6.3 million for work done between July 1 and Dec. 31 of last year.

"Our scores are steadily increasing," said Peggy McCullough, the Bechtel director of the vit plant project, in a message to employees Friday. "Your attention to safety and quality is clearly evident in (DOE's) evaluation of our performance."

Bechtel's top score was for project management related to self-analysis, assessments, discovery and action. It received 87 percent of the pay available, or almost \$1.1 million.

Bechtel did a better job of communicating and being open with DOE in almost all areas, which provided DOE a better understanding of emerging issues and input into how Bechtel is resolving issues, DOE said in a "scorecard." The document explains what is working well and what needs improvement.

Bechtel identified and reported issues, resulting in quicker resolution, the scorecard said. More than 80 percent of issues were identified

by Bechtel. There also was improved discussion and more self-questioning in Bechtel's Management Performance Improvement Review Board.

However, Bechtel needs to more quickly analyze issues to determine their causes, the scorecard said.

Bechtel's second-highest score was in project management related to environment, safety and health, with 75 percent of the possible award received, or \$945,000.

It has met requirements for improving its nuclear safety culture in five of six key areas and should check off the sixth shortly, the scorecard said. Safety performance continues to be very good for the construction work on a project of the vit plant's size and complexity.

DOE did find some Occupational Safety and Health Administration deficiencies on some installed electrical

HANFORD

19 APR 15

High-hazard 'pencil tanks' gone from plutonium facility

Work took longer because crane needed repairs

ANNETTE CARY

TRI-CITY HERALD

Hanford workers have removed all the highly contaminated "pencil tanks" from the Plutonium Finishing Plant, a key step toward having the plant torn down in 2016.

"This was really a significant achievement," said Mike Swartz, vice president in charge of work at the plant for CH2M Hill Plateau Remediation Co.

CH2M Hill started work toward removing the pencil tanks in 2008. Initially, the project was expected to be completed in spring 2012.

But the remotely operated crane needed to maneuver

the long, skinny tanks has shown its age. Work has repeatedly stopped through the years for repairs to the crane.

"The crane was never designed to handle the amount of work we put it through," said Tom Teynor, Department of Energy project director for the Plutonium Finishing Plant.

Before work to remove the tanks started, workers repeatedly entered the contaminated four-story canyon of the plant's Plutonium Reclamation Facility to repair the crane used in the Cold War. They wore three to four layers of protective clothing and breathed through air hoses. Each worker also carried an emergency air bottle.

The Plutonium Reclamation Facility was built in 1963

Hanford to join Park Service for centennial

Officials working on agencies' new responsibilities

ANNETTE CARY

TRI-CITY HERALD

The Manhattan Project National Historical Park will be one of the nation's newest parks as the National

Park Service celebrates its 100th birthday next year.

Even if the national park's signature arrowhead — the emblem used at all the nation's parks — has not gone up at Hanford yet, the results of

the celebration should last well into the future, Peggy O'Dell, the deputy director of operations for the National Park Service, said in Richland on Thursday.

National Park Service officials, along with Department of Energy officials from Washington, D.C., are in the Tri-Cities this week to visit his-

toric areas of Hanford and to work on an agreement for the roles and responsibilities of each federal agency in the new park.

In December, national legislation created the new park, which includes historic areas at Hanford, Oak Ridge, Tenn., and Los Alamos, N.M., that played roles in the Man-

hattan Project race to produce the world's first nuclear weapon during World War II.

Hanford produced plutonium for the world's first atomic explosion in the New Mexico desert and the atomic bomb dropped on Nagasaki,

See **CENTENNIAL** | Page B2

Bechtel donation funds competition in Richland

Bechtel National donated \$15,000 to the Mathematics, Engineering, Science Achievement program to help students in Pasco and the Lower Valley gain engineering experience.

The money allowed students from 10 middle and high schools in Pasco, Granger and Sunnyside to attend the ME-SA Day competition April 18 at Washington State University Tri-Cities.

Students could compete in a national competition to develop and operate prosthetic arms. They also could build and fly a balsa wood glider, develop an app, participate in an egg drop, give an oral presentation or construct a model of a bisected human eye or brain.

Bechtel National holds the Department of Energy contract to design and build the Hanford vitrification plant.

HANFORD TIMECARD CASE

Workers await sentencing

10 defendants will likely get little to no jail time

ANNETTE CARY

TRI-CITY HERALD

Most of the former CH2M Hill Hanford Group workers waiting for sentencing in federal court on charges re-

lated to timecard fraud are likely to receive little, if any, jail time.

The next sentencing date, for five of 10 remaining defendants, is April 23 in the Yakima Federal Courthouse.

All 10 provided substantial assistance in the investigation of timecard fraud. A recommendation has yet to be made for one of the defendants, Glenda Davis, who changed her plea

after her trial was scheduled.

The U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern Washington District has indicated in court records that it will recommend reduced sentences for the other nine defendants based on their cooperation in the case. Some have aided the investigation since late 2008.

The prosecution's assessment of

their level of cooperation will influence the sentences. Some were asked to make recorded phone calls to other Hanford workers to aid investigators.

At most, the prosecution is prepared to recommend four separate 48-hour periods of confinement to be served in a month, possibly on

See **TIMECARD** | Page B2

Large budget jump needed for 2017

DOE officials present budget information for public comment

ANNETTE CARY

TRI-CITY HERALD

The fiscal 2017 budget for the Richland Operations Office would need to double to meet environmental cleanup requirements, according to the Department of Energy.

DOE Hanford officials presented budget information for public comment Tuesday evening in Richland

in advance of notifying DOE officials in Washington, D.C., of Hanford budget needs for the year after next. About 35 people attended the meeting, which also was webcast.

The Office of River Protection, which is responsible for 56 million gallons of radioactive waste held in underground tanks and the vitrification plant being built to treat the waste for disposal, did not release projected budget numbers Tuesday. The Richland Operations Office, responsible for the rest of Hanford cleanup, projected a need for \$1.9 billion.

For fiscal 2016 the administration

INSIDE

Sen. Wyden wants probe of purchase orders. | **B1**

together typically receive about \$2.2 billion annually.

Jon Peschong, the deputy assistant manager for Richland Operations Office cleanup, outlined the work needed to be done, but said the actual work tackled would depend on money available.

Money for cleanup along the Columbia River would need to increase from the \$108 million requested next

year to \$403 million in fiscal 2017. Most river corridor cleanup is expected to be finished this fiscal year, but some high hazard projects would remain, including cleaning up the highly radioactive spill of cesium and strontium beneath the 324 Building just north of Richland. On a prioritized list of fiscal 2017 work prepared by DOE, the project was on the borderline for work that could be accomplished with a typical annual budget.

has requested \$914 million for the Richland Operations Office. Both offices

together typically receive about \$2.2 billion annually.

The building over the spill protects it from precipitation that could carry it deeper toward groundwater, which moves toward

the nearby Columbia River.

"We don't think contamination beneath the building will migrate," Peschong said.

But Pam Larsen, speaking as a Richland resident rather than in her role as executive director of Hanford Communities, said underground water lines near the building have leaked twice in recent years. Water lines will remain in use as long as the building stands to provide fire protection.

Gerald Pollet, executive director of Heart of America Northwest,

More timecard fraud defendants fined

Federal judge decides against jail sentences

ANNETTE CARY

TRI-CITY HERALD

YAKIMA — Four more defendants were sentenced Thursday on felony charges related to timecard fraud at Hanford, receiving fines of up to \$165,744 but no time incarcerated.

All were paid hourly wages as radiological control technicians for CH2M Hill Hanford Group, the former Hanford tank farm contractor. They admitted to collecting overtime pay for hours they were not at work.

The court is always concerned about disparities of sentences, said Judge Lonny Suko in the Yakima federal courthouse.

Earlier, some defendants ac-

cused of aiding timecard fraud had criminal charges dropped and paid civil fines, he said. All were managers or supervisors. In addition, four supervisors who went to trial on charges related to timecard fraud were acquitted.

"The issue is one of fairness and justice," Suko said.

He followed the same sentencing strategy he used last week, when the first group of hourly defendants was sen-

tenced. He passed out sentences that included substantial fines, but not the jail time that prosecutors requested for some of them.

Thursday, Suko imposed fines based on the amount of pay the prosecution estimated they received for hours they were not at work.

He did not reduce any of the proposed fines, as he did last week for two workers who provided what the prosecution

called "outstanding" assistance to investigators. They made telephone calls recorded by investigators to provide evidence of timecard fraud by other CH2M Hill tank farm employees.

The defendants sentenced Thursday all provided substantial assistance, resulting in assistant U.S. attorney Tyler Tornabene requesting less incarceration than called for under federal sentencing guide-

lines. They provided help, such as testifying for the prosecution at trial, but they were not asked to and did not make monitored phone calls.

The judge required Joel Radford to pay the largest fine, \$165,744. He received a slightly higher wage than the other workers sentenced Thursday because he served as lead radiological control technician,

See **HANFORD** | Page C2

MAY 15

State: Cleanup 25 years behind schedule

Ecology says money biggest factor affecting work and its delays

ANNETTE CARY

TRI-CITY HERALD

Environmental cleanup work at Hanford is 25 years behind schedule and more delays need to be avoided, according to the Washington Department of Ecology.

As Department of Energy Hanford

officials prepare to finalize their requested budget for fiscal 2017, the state is recommending strategies for acquiring Hanford's portion of the DOE environmental cleanup budget.

"Budget (is) the biggest factor affecting cleanup today," said John Price, the state Tri-Party Agreement section manager, at a Hanford meeting last week.

He cited a 2012 DOE Office of Planning and Budget finding that estimated Hanford cleanup has fallen 25 years behind DOE's schedule.

"That is because for about 20 years

the appropriated budget has been less than needed to comply with environmental regulations," he said.

Hanford officials need to support adequate funding not just for Hanford, but for other cleanup sites across the nation, wrote Jane Hedges, manager of the state Nuclear Waste Program, in a letter to Hanford DOE leaders.

DOE has developed a schedule for defense cleanup sites to ship their transuranic waste to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant in New Mexico for disposal. Hanford's transuranic waste —

typically debris contaminated with plutonium — is scheduled to be shipped there after waste from other sites. Officials said Hanford has other work to do in the meantime.

Other sites not only need adequate money to keep to their shipment schedules and avoid delays for Hanford's eventual shipments, but additional funds could help them ship their waste sooner, Hedges' letter said.

Hanford has 20,000 containers of waste waiting to be treated and disposed of either at Hanford or New

Mexico, depending on what surveys determine they contain. About 700 containers are in above-ground storage and already are deteriorating. Far more — 12,500 containers — are temporarily buried and degrading below ground, according to Hedges.

Washington supports increased money to get the repository operating again so Hanford waste could be disposed of sooner, ending the threat that the waste poses to human health and the environment, the letter said.

GAO: Further limits should be weighed

DOE's technical approach,
cost estimates questioned

ANNETTE CARY

TRI-CITY HERALD

The Department of Energy should consider further limiting construction at Hanford's vitrification plant until it has aggressive strategies to

address risk developed and in place, the Government Accountability Office said in a report released Thursday.

It also recommended that DOE take a broader look to make sure it has found the best alternatives to address technical and schedule problems at the plant under construction.

The report was prepared at the request of the Senate Armed Servic-

es Committee after DOE proposed building a Low Activity Waste Pretreatment System and a Tank Waste Characterization and Staging Facility to address schedule and technical issues at the plant.

DOE has estimated the two facilities to be built outside the plant could add as much as \$1 billion to costs to clean up Hanford, but the GAO indicated the costs for those fa-

cilities and other changes at the vit plant could be higher.

Construction on the vitrification plant began in 2002 with building being done just ahead of completion of ongoing design of the plant to get it operating sooner. It is a strategy that DOE no longer uses for such large, complex projects.

The plant is intended to turn up to 56 million gallons of radioactive

waste into a stable glass form for disposal. The waste, now held in aging underground tanks, is left from the past production of plutonium for the nation's nuclear weapons program.

Because of unresolved technical issues, including the possibility of an unplanned nuclear reaction, construction stopped on the plant's Pre-

Newhouse gains key support

Idaho Rep. Mike Simpson would help reconcile conflicting versions of proposal

ANNETTE CARY

TRI-CITY HERALD

Rep. Dan Newhouse secured a key commitment during debate on the U.S. House floor to help ensure that adequate money is available in the next fiscal year for work at the Hanford tank farms and vitrification plant.

The House passed the Hanford budget for next year Friday as part of the Fiscal 2016 Energy and Water Appropriations Bill by a vote of 240 to 170. Next, the Senate must take up the Hanford budget.

The House version of the budget restores much of the money the Obama administration proposed cutting from completion of cleanup along the Columbia River at Hanford. But that appeared to come partly at the expense of money that the administration requested for the Hanford vitrification plant and tank farms.

"The restoration of funds

for cleanup along the Columbia River Corridor, which is legally required and a priority for the Mid-Columbia region, puts those projects on a very strong path forward," Newhouse said on the House floor.

But as the final bill is developed, he wants to continue to work with Rep. Mike Simpson, R-Idaho, "to ensure that all the work that the federal government is legally obligated to do is realized," he said.

"I am particularly concerned with ensuring that work is able to progress on retrieving Hanford's tank waste and preparing to feed an operational Waste Treatment Plant, while providing sufficient resources to meet near-term regulatory requirements in the tank farms," Newhouse told Simpson.

Simpson is the chairman of the House Energy and Water Development

Logston Blvd., Richland.

Free talk about Hanford 'Atomic Man' set May 13

The Hanford glove box explosion that contaminated Hanford worker Harold McCluskey in 1976 will be discussed May 13 at the Health and Safety Expo.

Radioactive concentrated nitric acid and shards of glass and metal sprayed into the neck and face of McCluskey. He survived, but underwent lengthy medical treatment and came to be called the Atomic Man.

Eugene Carbaugh, a senior health physicist for Mission Support Alliance, will discuss at 4:30 p.m. what happened, the medical response and how the response might be different today.

The free expo is at TRAC in Pasco.

Historic Hanford tour sign-up begins today

Registration opens at 8 a.m. today for a new set of Hanford tours focusing on life before land was seized by the federal government for the Manhattan Project.

Many of the sites on the tour are being considered for inclusion in the new Manhattan Project National Historical Park.

Seats may be reserved for tours scheduled on select days from May 26 through Oct. 21 at <http://tours.hanford.gov/historicTours>, by calling 509-376-1647 or in person at the B Reactor Tour Headquarters, 2000

HANFORD | ENERGY NEEDS

Natural gas study held

DOE already has spent \$6M to explore possibility; diesel only other noted source

ANNETTE CARY

TRI-CITY HERALD

The Department of Energy is putting on hold an environmental study on using natural gas to replace diesel fuel at Hanford's vitrification plant.

About \$6 million has been spent on the environmental

impact study.

DOE projected that switching fuel sources could save FROM \$527 million to \$823 million, depending on the price of fuel.

It also would eliminate the need for 42 truckloads per week of diesel to be delivered to Hanford and would reduce greenhouse gas emis-

sions by about 1 million tons.

The vitrification plant is expected to use at least 30,000 gallons of diesel a day at full operation to feed boilers that generate steam for heating and radioactive waste processing.

In February 2012, DOE anticipated a draft of the study being released in spring 2013 with a final version ready by fall and a decision on the project possibly made by the end of the year.

"The Department of Energy remains supportive of completing the analyses necessary to consider bringing natural gas onto the Hanford site," DOE said in a statement this week. But given current cleanup priorities and schedules, it does not plan to pursue the project now.

Not only has the start-up of the vitrification plant

See **STUDY** | Page A2

HANFORD CONSENT DECREE

Judge agrees to modify deal

Court-enforced agreement signed in 2010 after DOE couldn't meet deadlines

ANNETTE CARY

TRI-CITY HERALD

A federal judge has agreed to consider all three proposals to modify the court-enforced Hanford consent decree signed in 2010.

The Department of Energy, the state of Oregon and the state of Washington had asked the federal court to intervene in the case in fall 2014.

Judge Rosanna Malouf Peterson of Spokane said in an order filed Monday that all three parties in the case had shown there were significantly changed

conditions that warranted modification of the consent decree.

Now her attention will turn to looking at the specific amendments proposed by each. An evidence hearing has not been scheduled, although Malouf Peterson discussed plans for it in her legal order.

The consent decree was signed in 2010 to resolve a lawsuit brought by the state of Washington against DOE as it became evident that DOE could not meet deadlines in the legally binding Tri-Party Agreement related to waste held in underground tanks and its treatment.

DOE has 56 million gallons of radioactive waste in the tanks left from the past production of weapons plutonium. It plans to turn much of the waste into a stable glass form for disposal at the

vitrification plant.

But "almost immediately after the consent decree was entered" DOE gave notice that one or more of the new deadlines were at risk, Malouf Peterson said in the court order.

The consent decree discussed the possibility of changed conditions, including unforeseen technical and safety concerns that might affect the schedule. But the specific conditions that changed were not listed.

While some of the changes could have been foreseeable, Washington did not show that DOE actually anticipated them, the judge found.

DOE cited technical concerns, including preventing potential hydrogen buildup and preventing an unplanned

8 MAY 15

WSU Tri-Cities to store, display, curate items

DOE's extensive range of pieces will be housed in new facility, with more chances for public viewing

ANNETTE CARY

TRI-CITY HERALD

Plans are underway to move Hanford artifacts out of storage.

The Department of Energy's extensive collection of Hanford historical objects and photos will receive professional archival care and be available for research and public exhibitions through Washington State University Tri-Cities under a new contract.

Items range from the desk that Manhattan Project scientist Enrico Fermi used at Hanford to first-of-a-

kind equipment developed there.

"This sets the stage for the history of the Hanford Site to become a signature program for WSU-TC and yet another draw for visitors to the Manhattan Project National Historical Park," said Michael Mays, vice chancellor for academic affairs at the Tri-Cities branch.

"(We) have lots of ideas for how to use the collection to expand the public's understanding of one of the most transformative periods in human history," he said.

DOE and its contractor, Mission Support Alliance, have scoured



Courtesy DOE

Whiskey bottles retrieved from the Hanford construction burn pit and landfill.

Hanford buildings over the last two years to make sure that historical items are saved to tell the story of the site's place in world history from World War II through the Cold War.

The collection of items, including those curated through the CREHST

museum before its closure, now includes 1,600 objects and 3,000 historical photos.

The new contract awarded to WSU Tri-Cities includes more than storage and expert care of the items, said Colleen French, national park program manager for DOE at Hanford.

"Now we have the ability to move the collection out into the community for the benefit of all taxpayers," she said.

The arrangement will offer opportunities for interpretation and education programs, public exhibits, research by students and professors, and symposiums.

"As we look ahead to the Manhattan Project National Historical

Park, WSU-TC will be an educational partner with unique capabilities and expertise," French said. "With this collection, they will develop a fundamental understanding about Hanford history that will be a real asset as interpretive and educational programs are developed for students of all ages."

As the United States raced to build an atomic bomb before the Nazis during World War II, Hanford created the plutonium for the world's first atomic explosion in the New Mexico desert and the bomb dropped on Nagasaki, Japan.

Hanford continued to produce plutonium at nine nuclear reactors

TIMECARD FRAUD

Former supervisor to pay \$7,500 fine

Final defendant
in multiyear probe

ANNETTE CARY

TRI-CITY HERALD

The final defendant in a multiyear investigation of timecard fraud at Hanford was sentenced Tuesday in federal court in Richland to pay a fine of \$7,500.

Like most of the other de-

fendants in the related cases, Glenda Davis will not serve jail or prison time.

The prosecution did not ask U.S. Judge Edward Shea for a prison sentence for Davis, a radiological control supervisor for former Hanford tank farm contractor CH2M Hill Hanford Group, according to court documents.

Davis had been scheduled

See **FRAUD** | Page B2

31 MAY 15

Uranium also to be treated

ANNETTE CARY

TRI-CITY HERALD

Equipment is being installed in what's already the most sophisticated groundwater treatment plant at Hanford, to expand its capabilities to address another contaminant at the nuclear reservation.

By the end of the year, the new system is scheduled to be tested and start removing uranium from water pumped from the ground in central Hanford, keeping the contaminant from eventually make its way to the Columbia River. The system, including some infrastructure, will cost about \$6.2 million.

The 200 West Pump and Treat Facility, opened in 2012, already removes a variety of contaminants from groundwater.

Jon Peschong, a Department of Energy Hanford deputy assistant manager for environmental cleanup, called it the crown jewel of the department's groundwater treatment systems at a recent Hanford Advisory Board committee meeting. It can treat more types of contaminants than any other plant in the DOE complex of environmental cleanup sites.

Microorganisms at the plant consume nitrates. An air stripping system removes carbon tetrachloride. The plant also can remove chromium and trichloroethene from groundwater.

The 17,500-square-foot radiological building on one end of the plant was built to remove radioactive contaminants from water.

WASHINGTON CLOSURE HANFORD

Cleanup contract extended for 1 year

Additional time will bring total budget to almost \$2.9 billion

The Department of Energy is extending Washington Closure Hanford's contract by one year through September 2016, DOE announced Tuesday.

The extension gives some job certainty to the employees of the contractor.

At least some of the 700 employ-

ees will have jobs for another year.

The final year of the extended contract would focus mostly on two challenging projects, cleanup of the trenches at the 618-10 Burial Ground and placing the 324 Building in maintenance status for future demolition, said Scott Sax, president of Washington Closure, in a message to employees Tuesday.

Washington Closure is working under a 10-year contract that was expected to end four months from now with the environmental cleanup of the 220 square miles of Hanford

along the Columbia River completed.

But budget shortfalls, including sequestration's mandatory budget cuts, and some contamination that was found to be more extensive or more hazardous than expected, have kept the work from being done by September 2015. DOE also has added \$400 million worth of work to the contract since it was awarded.

The work covered under the contract through this fiscal year comes to just over \$2.7 billion, and the additional year will bring the contract

budget to a total of almost \$2.9 billion.

"They've done exemplary work," said Doug Shoop, DOE deputy site manager for the Richland Operations Office. "We would not have contemplated extending the contract if they had not done work in such a safe and efficient manner."

Work to date by Washington Closure has been \$295 million under budget.

However, DOE does not anticipate extending the contract past September 2016, Shoop said. That appears

to be the best time to end the contract, he said.

Washington Closure will continue to excavate trenches in the 618-10 Burial Ground north of Richland under the extension. The burial ground also has vertically buried pipes that radioactive and hazardous chemical waste was dropped down.

Washington Closure had driven over-casings into the ground around those pipes. Work to remove the pipes would only start in the final

DEADLINES EXTENDED

Hanford sludge deal reached

Agreement puts an end to \$10,000 weekly DOE fine

ANNETTE CARY

TRI-CITY HERALD

The Department of Energy and the Environmental Protection Agency have reached an agreement to extend legal deadlines for getting radioactive sludge out of the K West Basin near the Columbia River.

The agreement brings to an end a fine that had been growing at the rate of \$10,000 a week since shortly after DOE missed a deadline to begin moving the sludge last September.

EPA agreed to cap the fine at \$125,000 because a tentative agreement was reached

about 13 weeks after the fine started accumulating.

Basins attached to Hanford's K East and K West reactors were used to store irradiated fuel stranded when processing to remove weapons-grade plutonium stopped near the end of the Cold War.

As the fuel corroded underwater, it combined with dirt and bits of concrete from the pools to form a highly radioactive sludge. The fuel has been gone for 11 years, but the sludge remains.

The new agreement extends the deadline to start removing sludge from the K West Basin by four years to Sept. 30, 2018. The sludge must be removed under the new deadlines by the end of

See **SLUDGE** | Page A2

HANFORD

CH2M Hill given 98 percent of possible pay

Contractor paid almost \$9.7 million for fiscal 2014

ANNETTE CARY
TRI-CITY HERALD

Hanford contractor CH2M Hill Plateau Remediation Co. has been awarded 98 percent of the possible pay it could

earn from the Department of Energy for its performance in fiscal 2014.

That was slightly better than the 95 percent of possible pay it earned for fiscal 2013.

For fiscal 2014, the contractor was paid almost \$9.7 million out of a possible payment of slightly more than \$9.8 million, DOE said in a pay summary released Thursday. It

rated the contractor's work as "excellent."

"We reduced risks on the Hanford site by removing a record amount of contaminants from the groundwater, completing the exterior of the building we will use to move radioactive sludge away from the Columbia River and compliantly managing spent nuclear waste and fuels," said John Ciucci, CH2M Hill presi-

dent, in a statement.

The contractor's work allowed DOE to meet all 12 of the legally binding Tri-Party Agreement deadlines on projects to which CH2M Hill was assigned.

It also accomplished a number of DOE's key performance goals for environmental cleanup at Hanford, DOE said in an evaluation summary.

CH2M Hill removed 25 pen-

cil tank units from the Plutonium Finishing Plant in 2014, helping it to have all of the tanks in the Plutonium Reclamation Facility of the plant removed this spring.

It treated 1.8 billion gallons of contaminated groundwater. It met its annual goal for removing hexavalent chromium from groundwater near the Columbia River four months ahead of schedule.

CH2M Hill also completed the engineering design for ventilation improvements at the Waste Encapsulation and Storage Facility, where nearly 2,000 capsules of radioactive strontium and cesium are stored underwater.

"The contractor was very responsive to (DOE) needs, especially during the

See **HANFORD** | Page C2

BRIEFS

31 MAY 15

U.S. to collect almost \$20M in Hanford timecard fraud case

The U.S. Department of Justice will collect almost \$19.9 million in criminal and civil fines, damages and penalties related to a conspiracy to commit timecard fraud at the Hanford tank farms, the federal government announced.

"We have been investigating and prosecuting this case since 2008 with our law enforcement partners," said Michael Ormsby, the U.S. attorney for Eastern Washington, in a statement. The case concluded this month.

"While we recognize there are

many dedicated people who work hard every day to advance the crucial mission of cleaning up Hanford, this case should serve as a fair warning to all corporations and individuals doing business at Hanford who might seek to abuse the public's trust," he said.

Most of the money collected was from former Hanford contractor CH2M Hill Hanford Group, which paid \$18.5 million in a civil and criminal settlement reached in 2013. CH2M Hill also agreed to pay about \$500,000 to install a system to help detect and deter any future timecard fraud.

Eleven individual criminal defendants were ordered to pay a total of \$766,912. In addition, four defendants agreed to pay civil penalties totaling

about \$115,000 when their criminal charges were dropped.

Four of the former employees of CH2M Hill Hanford Group went to trial and were acquitted.

No injuries after train hits abandoned car in Kennewick

No one was hurt early Saturday when a BNSF Railway train struck a vehicle that was abandoned on tracks in the area of West Canal Drive and North Yost Street in Kennewick.

A 36-year-old Kennewick man later was arrested on suspicion of second-degree trespassing and hit-and-run in connection with the incident.

Kennewick officers were called to the tracks at 5:10 a.m.

Richard W Singrey allegedly had driven across the field behind Canal

Replica of atomic bomb with Hanford roots to make parade rounds

31 May 15

ANNETTE CARY

TRI-CITY HERALD

Caleb Perronteau was on his way to work Saturday when he had to stop to take a look at what was parked along Van Giesen Street in his hometown of West Richland.

"It's awesome," he said after getting a close up look at a replica of Fat Man, the bomb that was dropped on Nagasaki, Japan, helping end World War II. "Definitely worth stopping."

For the past nine months Terry Klute, Bob Ver Steeg and their pals who hang out at the

Richland Airport have been building a full-size model of the bomb, which was loaded in 1945 with plutonium made at the Hanford nuclear reservation.

Saturday, it had its first public outing at a motorcycle poker run in West Richland held to raise money for Time of Remembrance.

Its builders plan to enter it in parades and take it to regional events. Once the novelty wears off, they hope to find a museum interested in giving it a home.

Zebadiah Hindman of West Richland, who stopped with Perronteau to take a look Saturday, knew what the bulbous contraption was

after studying the history of the atomic bomb at Hanford High.

But he didn't know it was so big. "Completely impressive," he said.

Klute and Ver Steeg, both retirees, don't remember whose idea it was to build the model, but Klute is clear about the motivation.

He thought it would be educational for the community.

"We are trying to preserve some history — get a conversation going," he said.

If it were not for the Manhattan Project

See **BOMB** | Page A2



Find us
on the go
▶ Phone
▶ Tablet

For breaking news throughout the day, go to www.tricityherald.com

MID-COLUMBIA

SECTION B | tricityherald.com | Thursday, June 11, 2015

CONTACT THE NEWSROOM: 582-1502; news@tricityherald.com; fax 582-1510

HANFORD TANK FARM

Whistleblower, contractor settle case

Labor judge approves agreement over 2011 incident

ANNETTE CARY
TRI-CITY HERALD

A settlement agreement has been reached between Hanford whistleblower Shelly Doss, a former environmental specialist at the tank

farms, and tank farm contractor Washington River Protection Solutions.

Neither side has revealed the details of the settlement, which was approved by administrative law Judge Scott Morris of the U.S. De-

partment of Labor. He had been set to hear arguments by both sides in the case later this month.

In July 2014, the Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration issued a preliminary order



Doss

requiring the tank farm contractor to rehire Doss and pay her more than \$220,000. It found the contractor had violated federal whistleblower provisions when it fired Doss, of Burbank, in October 2011 after she repeatedly raised issues of nuclear and environmental safety, plus permit and record-keeping violations.

Both Doss and Washington River

Protection Solutions had asked for a review by the administrative judge.

Both sides declined Wednesday to discuss specifics or release the settlement agreement, which was announced by Hanford Challenge. The group's attorneys filed Doss' initial whistleblower complaint in 2011.

See **SETTLE** | Page B2

MANHATTAN PROJECT NATIONAL PARK

Senators vying to host headquarters

Cantwell pushes for Hanford as location

ANNETTE CARY

TRI-CITY HERALD

The National Park Service will treat each of the three sites in the new Manhattan Project National Historical Park as equally important, a park service official said Wednesday as he was pressed about which of the sites would

play host to the park's headquarters.

Sen. Maria Cantwell, D-Wash., and Sen. Martin Heinrich, D-N.M., raised the issue of where the headquarters should be located at a hearing of the Senate Natural Resources Subcommittee on

Kurion teams up with Areva to win Hanford work

Technologies used to clean up after Japan nuclear disaster can also be used at Richland site

ANNETTE CARY

TRI-CITY HERALD

Kurion has teamed up with Areva to move more of its technology into use on Department of Energy environmental cleanup projects, starting with Hanford.

Kurion's technologies that have been used for cleanup after the Fukushima, Japan, nuclear disaster could also be used to help with Hanford cleanup, said Dave Brockman, executive vice president of Kurion's North America operations.

The joint venture is designed to meld the strengths of global nuclear powerhouse Areva, with 4,300 employees in North America, and small business Kurion, which was founded in 2008.

Kurion has proprietary technologies for high-level radioactive waste, including in

robotics, waste separation and small-scale waste vitrification.

It opened a facility in Richland in 2012, to take advantage of local expertise, from Pacific Northwest National Laboratory to companies that fabricate nuclear equipment. The move also put the company next door to Hanford, the Department of Energy's largest environmental cleanup site.

Areva already has work at Hanford, which could be helpful in leveraging work for Kurion. Although Areva is best known in the Tri-Cities for its commercial nuclear fuel fabrication plant in Richland, it also employs 70 people at Hanford.

Areva is on the teams of two Hanford contractors, the Hanford tank farms and central Hanford cleanup contractors, as a fee-sharing subcontractor. It also was awarded a subcontract to engineer a system to dig up soil contaminated by concentrated cesium and strontium beneath the 324 Building just north of Richland.

Kurion has been awarded contracts at

BRIEFS

Richland Players, symphony celebrate

The Reach center in Richland is playing host to a 70th anniversary party June 19 for the Richland Players and Mid-Columbia Symphony.

The event starts at 6 p.m. Information from the two groups will be on display, and the Mid-Columbia Youth Symphony will perform at the center at 1943 Columbia Park Trail. A new cornerstone and plaque celebrating 70 years of performing arts in the Tri-Cities also will be unveiled.

Tickets are \$30, including wine and food. They're available at www.midcolumbia-symphony.org or www.richlandplayers.org. The proceeds will go to Richland Players, Mid-Columbia Sym-

phony and the Reach.

Foundation selling B Reactor posters

The nonprofit Atomic Heritage Foundation is selling a new line of colorful posters and notecards featuring drawings of Hanford's B Reactor and three other Manhattan Project icons: the "gadget" at the Trinity Site in New Mexico, the world's first atomic bomb using plutonium from B Reactor; the Los Alamos, N.M., main gate; and the chapel at Oak Ridge, Tenn.

The foundation is dedicated to preserving the history and telling the stories of the Manhattan Project and exploring its impact. To buy online, go to www.atomicheritagefoundation.com. Prices start at \$14.95.

- Tri-City Herald

DOE analysis finds lessened efficiency at tank farm

18 JUN 15

ANNETTE CARY
TRI-CITY HERALD

The gear that is protecting Hanford tank farm workers from chemical vapors also is significantly slowing work, according to documents

filed in federal court. A Department of Energy analysis found that the reduction in efficiency ranges from 30 percent to 70 percent, with an average reduction of 50 percent. Tasks that once took a month now take two months.

Because of the change, DOE has proposed it be given an extra year to retrieve waste from the next set of nine tanks in the A and AX tank farms. Retrieval would be completed in fall 2023 under DOE's proposed schedule to amend the 2010 consent decree, which set court-enforced deadlines for work related to Hanford tank waste.

In late 2014 Washington River Protection Solutions began requiring employees conducting much of the work in the Hanford tank farms to wear supplied air respirators after dozens of workers reported suspected exposure to chemical vapors from waste held in the underground tanks.

The additional safety gear that

workers must wear weighs about 40 pounds, including a tank filled with compressed air for breathing that is similar to tanks used for scuba diving, according to court documents filed by DOE. Not only the weight, but also the heat of the extra gear makes workers tire sooner.

See **VAPOR** | Page B2

14 JUN 15

HANFORD ADVISORY BOARD

Spending proposal lacking

Plan does not include money to pay for retrieval of waste from 2 problematic tanks

ANNETTE CARY

TRI-CITY HERALD

The Department of Energy appears to plan to significantly underfund Hanford cleanup in budgets being set now, said the Hanford Advisory Board in a letter of advice to DOE and regulators.

The board discussed the proposed annual budgets for the next two years for the Hanford nuclear reservation at its meeting Wednesday and Thursday in Richland, reaching consensus on what it would like to see funded as representatives of a broad range of constituencies, including local government, the tribes, the public, the work force, environmental groups and local business.

The board acknowledged that after years of budgets failing to provide enough money to meet environmental cleanup requirements at Hanford, it is almost impossible to develop budgets for fiscal 2016 and 2017 that meet them now.

"Current budgets fall far short of meeting those agreements (between DOE and the state of Washington) and place both the environment and public safety at ever increasing risk," the board said in its letter.

DOE said when it opened public discussion on the fiscal 2017 budget in late April that the budget would need to double from its present level to meet environmental cleanup requirements.

DOE has released little detail on half of the fiscal 2017 budget for Hanford, covering the work to manage the tank farms where 56 million gallons of radioactive waste are held in underground tanks and the vitrification plant under construction to treat the waste for disposal.

The plans and deadlines for that work are being discussed in federal court, as DOE has been unable to meet deadlines set in a 2010 court-enforced consent decree.

The court process excludes public input or review and may result in funding decisions that vary widely from advisory board and public priorities, the board said.

It seems reasonable to expect that the Hanford budgets will change significantly after a new court order is issued, the board said.

The board is concerned that the fiscal 2017 budget proposal, which had limited information shared publicly, does not appear to include money to retrieve waste from two problematic tanks.

One of 28 newer double-shell tanks, Tank AY-102, has waste leaking between its shells, and Tank T-III, one of 149 older single-shell tanks, is leaking waste into the ground.

The board also is pressing for new tanks to be built to securely hold waste because of delays in getting the waste treated for disposal. The plan is to turn much, if not all, of it into a stable glass form at the vitrification

6/27/05

DOE: Safety culture shows some signs of improvement

ANNETTE CARY

TRI-CITY HERALD

Improvements have been made in the safety culture at the Hanford vitrification plant, according to a followup assessment conducted by an independent arm of the Department of Energy.

Staff and management said "things are better and going in a good direction," although there remains much room for improvement, the assessment said.

This is the third assessment since the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board found in 2011 that DOE and contractor management behavior reinforced a culture deterring the timely reporting, acknowledgment and resolution of technical concerns related to the future safe operation of the plant.

The latest study, by the DOE Office of Enterprise Assessments, found improved results

for the Hanford DOE office overseeing work at the vitrification plant and contractor Bechtel National. It was a turnaround after a decline in some measurements of safety culture between 2011 and 2014.

"While we recognize the overall positive results, we also acknowledge there remain areas for continued improvement," the DOE Hanford Office of River Protection said in a statement. "ORP takes these results seriously."

In contrast to the 2014 results, the assessment released Friday showed improvements in how Office of River Protection workers perceive the behaviors important for a healthy safety culture.

"Interviewees commented that current safety issues are being addressed, and no one expressed concern about significant safety issues being suppressed," the assessment report said.

HANFORD CLEANUP

State objects to extra time to empty tanks

DOE wants to delay work because of tank vapors

ANNETTE CARY
TRI-CITY HERALD

The Department of Energy should not be given additional time to meet a court-enforced consent decree

deadline to have the next group of Hanford waste tanks emptied, Washington state Attorney General Bob Ferguson said Monday.

Earlier this month, DOE proposed extending deadlines for retrieving radioactive waste from the next group of nine leak-prone underground tanks for one year, giving it until fall 2023 to complete the work.

DOE said requiring supplied air respirators for most tank farm workers as protection against chemical vapors reduces efficiency by 30 percent to 70 percent.

The state responded in federal court documents, calling DOE's request another example of its lack of contingency planning.

"I will hold the Department of En-

ergy accountable to its commitments to protect worker safety and meet agreed-upon timelines for the Hanford cleanup," Ferguson said in a statement.

"The danger these tanks represent is well documented," he said. "Energy should not use its responsibility to protect workers — a duty it has always had — as a reason to let

critical deadlines to clean up Hanford slip further into the distant future."

DOE and the state have filed competing proposals to amend the 2010 consent decree after DOE said most of the remaining deadlines were at serious risk of being missed.

HANFORD | COCOONED REACTORS

Officials check in on sealed past

ANNETTE CARY
TRI-CITY HERALD

Four defunct Hanford nuclear reactors have had their steel doors welded shut again after passing inspections to make sure they remain safe and secure.

They were dimly lit, grimy and overall a little eerie inside, based on the description of Ken Niles, nuclear safety administrator for the

Oregon Department of Energy, who toured H Reactor while it was opened up.

“Unlike B Reactor, it was not all dressed up for visitors,” he said.

The plan for eight of Hanford’s nine reactors once used to produce weapons plutonium is to tear them down to little more than their radioactive cores and seal them up

See **PAST** | Page B4



Courtesy Oregon Department of Energy
Hanford officials and invited visitors take a look above the H Reactor core when the reactor was recently unsealed for an inspection required every five years.

10 June 15
**HANFORD
COMPENSATION**

Rules eased for ill workers

Payment for those
who develop cancer
linked to radiation

ANNETTE CARY

TRI-CITY HERALD

New rules that will make compensation easier to obtain for ill Hanford workers have taken effect.

They should help more workers receive \$150,000 compensation plus reimbursement for current medical expenses related to Hanford exposures that may have caused certain cancers. Their survivors also may be eligible to claim the compensation.

The Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program initially required Hanford employees to have their radiation exposure estimated to show that it was high enough that it may have

Firm files protest with feds about losing Hanford work

Advanced Technologies and Laboratories has filed a protest with the Government Accountability Office after not winning a contract to continue performing work at Hanford's 222-S Laboratory.

The 222-S Laboratory accepts samples of some of Hanford's most radioactive and hazardous chemical waste to determine the content of dangerous substances down to parts per trillion.

Most of the analyses performed are of high-level radioactive waste from

Hanford's underground waste tanks. The information is used to determine what types of waste can be combined in tanks, and to help plan how workers can best be protected while working at specific tanks.

The contract, valued at \$44.6 million, was awarded in late May to Western Advantage of Piketon, Ohio. It includes a two-year base period with options for three additional one-year periods.

Advanced Technologies and Laboratories of Maryland has held the contract since 2005 when DOE decided to split the work out of the Hanford tank farm contract to create a small business opportunity. It was one of four bidders for the new contract.

- Tri-City Herald

MANHATTAN PROJECT NATIONAL PARK

Senators vying to host headquarters

Cantwell pushes for Hanford as location

ANNETTE CARY

TRI-CITY HERALD

The National Park Service will treat each of the three sites in the new Manhattan Project National Historical Park as equally important, a park service official said Wednesday as he was pressed about which of the sites would

play host to the park's headquarters.

Sen. Maria Cantwell, D-Wash., and Sen. Martin Heinrich, D-N.M., raised the issue of where the headquarters should be located at a hearing of the Senate Natural Resources Subcommittee on

See **SENATORS** | Page B2

16 JUN 15 Kurion teams up with Areva to win Hanford work

Technologies used to clean up after Japan nuclear disaster can also be used at Richland site

ANNETTE CARY

TRI-CITY HERALD

Kurion has teamed up with Areva to move more of its technology into use on Department of Energy environmental cleanup projects, starting with Hanford.

Kurion's technologies that have been used for cleanup after the Fukushima, Japan, nuclear disaster could also be used to help with Hanford cleanup, said Dave Brockman, executive vice president of Kurion's North America operations.

The joint venture is designed to meld the strengths of global nuclear powerhouse Areva, with 4,300 employees in North America, and small business Kurion, which was founded in 2008.

Kurion has proprietary technologies for high-level radioactive waste, including in

robotics, waste separation and small-scale waste vitrification.

It opened a facility in Richland in 2012, to take advantage of local expertise, from Pacific Northwest National Laboratory to companies that fabricate nuclear equipment. The move, also put the company next door to Hanford, the Department of Energy's largest environmental cleanup site.

Areva already has work at Hanford, which could be helpful in leveraging work for Kurion. Although Areva is best known in the Tri-Cities for its commercial nuclear fuel fabrication plant in Richland, it also employs 70 people at Hanford.

Areva is on the teams of two Hanford contractors, the Hanford tank farms and central Hanford cleanup contractors, as a fee-sharing subcontractor. It also was awarded a subcontract to engineer a system to dig up soil contaminated by concentrated cesium and strontium beneath the 324 Building just north of Richland.

Kurion has been awarded contracts at

BRIEFS

Richland Players, symphony celebrate

The Reach center in Richland is playing host to a 70th anniversary party June 19 for the Richland Players and Mid-Columbia Symphony.

The event starts at 6 p.m. Information from the two groups will be on display, and the Mid-Columbia Youth Symphony will perform at the center at 1943 Columbia Park Trail. A new cornerstone and plaque celebrating 70 years of performing arts in the Tri-Cities also will be unveiled.

Tickets are \$30, including wine and food. They're available at www.midcolumbia-symphony.org or www.richlandplayers.org. The proceeds will go to Richland Players, Mid-Columbia Sym-

phony and the Reach.

Foundation selling B Reactor posters

The nonprofit Atomic Heritage Foundation is selling a new line of colorful posters and notecards featuring drawings of Hanford's B Reactor and three other Manhattan Project icons: the "gadget" at the Trinity Site in New Mexico, the world's first atomic bomb using plutonium from B Reactor; the Los Alamos, N.M., main gate; and the chapel at Oak Ridge, Tenn.

The foundation is dedicated to preserving the history and telling the stories of the Manhattan Project and exploring its impact. To buy online, go to www.atomicheritagefoundation.com. Prices start at \$14.95.

- Tri-City Herald

DOE analysis finds lessened efficiency at tank farm

18 JUN 15

ANNETTE CARY

TRI-CITY HERALD

The gear that is protecting Hanford tank farm workers from chemical vapors also is significantly slowing work, according to documents

filed in federal court.

A Department of Energy analysis found that the reduction in efficiency ranges from 30 percent to 70 percent, with an average reduction of 50 percent. Tasks that once took a month now take two months.

Because of the change, DOE has proposed it be given an extra year to retrieve waste from the next set of nine tanks in the A and AX tank farms. Retrieval would be completed in fall 2023 under DOE's proposed schedule to amend the 2010 consent decree, which set court-enforced deadlines for work related to Hanford tank waste.

In late 2014 Washington River Protection Solutions began requiring employees conducting much of the work in the Hanford tank farms to wear supplied air respirators after dozens of workers reported suspected exposure to chemical vapors from waste held in the underground tanks.

The additional safety gear that

workers must wear weighs about 40 pounds, including a tank filled with compressed air for breathing that is similar to tanks used for scuba diving, according to court documents filed by DOE. Not only the weight, but also the heat of the extra gear makes workers tire sooner.

See **VAPOR** | Page B2

14 JUN 15

HANFORD ADVISORY BOARD

Spending proposal lacking

Plan does not include money to pay for retrieval of waste from 2 problematic tanks

ANNETTE CARY

TRI-CITY HERALD

The Department of Energy appears to plan to significantly underfund Hanford cleanup in budgets being set now, said the Hanford Advisory Board in a letter of advice to DOE and regulators.

The board discussed the proposed annual budgets for the next two years for the Hanford nuclear reservation at its meeting Wednesday and Thursday in Richland, reaching consensus on what it would like to see funded as representatives of a broad range of constituencies, including local government, the tribes, the public, the work force, environmental groups and local business.

The board acknowledged that after years of budgets failing to provide enough money to meet environmental cleanup requirements at Hanford, it is almost impossible to develop budgets for fiscal 2016 and 2017 that meet them now.

"Current budgets fall far short of meeting those agreements (between DOE and the state of Washington) and place both the environment and public safety at ever increasing risk," the board said in its letter.

DOE said when it opened public discussion on the fiscal 2017 budget in late April that the budget would need to double from its present level to meet environmental cleanup requirements.

DOE has released little detail on half of the fiscal 2017 budget for Hanford, covering the work to manage the tank farms where 56 million gallons of radioactive waste are held in underground tanks and the vitrification plant under construction to treat the waste for disposal.

The plans and deadlines for that work are being discussed in federal court, as DOE has been unable to meet deadlines set in a 2010 court-enforced consent decree.

The court process excludes public input or review and may result in funding decisions that vary widely from advisory board and public priorities, the board said.

It seems reasonable to expect that the Hanford budgets will change significantly after a new court order is issued, the board said.

The board is concerned that the fiscal 2017 budget proposal, which had limited information shared publicly, does not appear to include money to retrieve waste from two problematic tanks.

One of 28 newer double-shell tanks, Tank AY-102, has waste leaking between its shells, and Tank T-III, one of 149 older single-shell tanks, is leaking waste into the ground.

The board also is pressing for new tanks to be built to securely hold waste because of delays in getting the waste treated for disposal. The plan is to turn much, if not all, of it into a stable glass form at the vitrification

Court will consider more time to empty Hanford waste tanks

State opposes allowing DOE extra year

ANNETTE CARY

TRI-CITY HERALD

A federal judge will consider the Department of Energy's proposal to delay a deadline to empty the next nine leak-prone Hanford tanks of radioactive waste over the objections of the state of Washington.

However, U.S. Judge Rosanna Malouf Peterson will give the state more time to make its case to the court. The state opposes allowing DOE an extra year, until 2023, to have the tanks emptied.

DOE and the state are obligated to adhere to the terms of the court-enforced consent decree they both signed in 2010.

But "judicial economy favors an exception in this case so that the court may consider all modification proposals at one time, rather than entering a modification that may prove unworkable when it is entered," Malouf Peterson wrote in a court order.

DOE and the state filed competing proposals in late 2014 to amend the consent decree after it became apparent that DOE could not meet most of the remaining deadlines, including to retrieve waste

from some of Hanford's 149 single-shell tanks and to build and begin operating the vitrification plant to treat up to 56 million gallons of radioactive waste held in underground tanks.

The state of Washington objected when DOE filed court documents in June to change its proposed amendment to include a delay in emptying some tanks. DOE's original proposed amendment had called for making some changes to the schedule for emptying tanks, moving some work closer to 2022 but not changing the 2022 deadline.

The state objected, saying DOE had not requested the state's permission to submit a revised proposed amendment and had not followed procedures spelled out in the consent decree for modifying its terms. The consent decree requires parties proposing an amendment to allow 10 days for the other party to respond.

DOE did not notify the state that the 2022 tank deadline was at risk until less than an hour before DOE asked the court to change the deadline,

26 JUL 10

Appeals court backs decision for companies

Jury correctly found complex contracts supported sued firms

ANNETTE CARY

TRI-CITY HERALD

The Washington State Court of Appeals has upheld court judgments in favor of two companies sued after a worker fell 50 feet from a Hanford catwalk onto concrete in 2009.

Dean Wilcox, who survived the fall, was an employee of Washington Closure Hanford and could not sue his employer because of worker compensation restrictions. Instead, he sued two other companies in Benton County Superior Court that were involved in the employment of the work control planner on the project.

A look at the case provides insights into the nature of contracting with the federal government and "leads to a conclusion that many contract provisions written to gain government favor and to avoid state employment benefits law are a farce," said the opinion signed by a panel of three judges.

Washington Closure subcontracted for temporary staff in 2007 with ELR Consulting, a small business that qualifies for federal government contracts as a small business owned by a disabled military veteran. The company's president was shot during the Vietnam War.

The federal government requires that 3 percent of contract dollars go to disabled veteran small businesses; and Washington Closure received extra pay for subcontracting with small businesses or lost pay if it did not.

ELR did not always directly employ workers it provided for Washington Closure, but instead turned to other employment service companies. One of those was Bartlett Services, a Massachusetts corporation that calls itself the leading provider of technical and professional services to contractors at DOE nuclear sites, such as Hanford, according to the court opinion.

"In other words, WCH received a contract incentive payment by contracting with ELR to provide workers that

30 JUL 2016
**Public meeting set on
Hanford land transfer**

A public meeting is planned for 5:30 p.m. today to discuss the environmental assessment for unneeded Hanford land to be used for economic development, as well as to collect public comment.

An open house starts at 5 p.m., before the formal meeting at the Hampton Inn, 486 Bradley Blvd. in Richland.

The Department of Energy's recent environmental review found nothing to be a deal breaker for the land transfer, according to the Tri-City Development Council.

TRIDEC requested 1,341 acres in May 2011, and another 300 acres was added nearby, where Energy Northwest has proposed a solar farm.

Former Rep. Doc Hastings got federal legislation passed in December that requires DOE to transfer the two parcels by the end of September.

The Hanford Comprehensive Land Use Plan calls for most of the land at the 586-square-mile nuclear reservation to be used for preservation or conservation as environmental cleanup is completed. About 10 percent of the land is planned for industrial use.

DOE taking comments

Department done with environmental assessment; meeting set for July 30

ANNETTE CARY
TRI-CITY HERALD

The Department of Energy has completed a draft environmental assessment of unneeded Hanford land to be used for economic development, finding nothing that appears to be a deal breaker, according to the Tri-City Development Council.

A public meeting is planned 5:30 p.m. July 30 at the Hampton Inn in Richland to discuss the assessment and collect public comment.

TRIDEC, along with local governments, requested 1,341 acres of Hanford land

just north of Richland for economic development in May 2011. Added to that request were 300 acres nearby that had been proposed by Energy Northwest for a solar farm.

The proposal started moving forward more quickly after former Rep. Doc Hastings got federal legislation passed in December that requires DOE to transfer the two parcels to TRIDEC by the end of September, little more than two months from now.

TRIDEC is designated by the federal government as a community reuse

MANHATTAN PROJECT NATIONAL PARK

Feds want comments

DOE, Park Service
give public until
Aug. 28 to speak up

SARA SCHILLING

TRI-CITY HERALD

The public has until Aug. 28 to review and comment on a draft agreement that, once finalized, will guide operations of the Manhattan Project National Historical Park.

The agreement, between the National Park Service and the Department of Ener-

gy, can be viewed at www.parkplanning.nps.gov/MPNHP.

Local officials who've read the draft said it appears solid.

Kennewick Mayor Steve Young, chairman of a local advocacy group formed to represent the community in development of the national park, said he still needs to go over the report in more detail.

But "it looks pretty good. They've done a lot of good work on it," he said.

24 JULY 15

Judge rules for more DOE accountability

Specific cleanup requirements and deadlines needed

ANNETTE CARY
TRI-CITY HERALD

Specific cleanup requirements and deadlines are needed in the Hanford consent decree to hold the Department of Energy accountable, U.S. Judge Rosanna Malouf Peterson said Thursday.

The federal and Washington state governments can assume that she will reject DOE's proposed amendment procedure for the court-enforced consent decree and lean closer to the state's proposal, she said at the conclusion of a four-hour hearing in the Richland federal courtroom.

The state has submitted a lengthy list of deadlines for emptying waste from certain leak-prone waste tanks and getting the vitrification plant built and operating to treat the waste. DOE had proposed not setting most new deadlines until technical issues are resolved and it has more certainty about the work to be done and the cost and schedule.

The judge will appoint a panel of experts to help her with technical and scientific issues outlined in more than 6,000 pages of documents, she said.

She gave DOE and the state 21 days to each appoint a representative to the panel. If they can agree on the third

member of the panel, she will consider their recommendation, she said.

Malouf Peterson made only brief remarks Thursday after listening to arguments from DOE and the states of Washington and Oregon. She will issue a written opinion, she said.

Her ruling will focus on whether the proposed amendments would resolve problems caused by DOE's inability to meet deadlines agreed to in 2010 and the issue of holding DOE accountable rather than focusing on specific deadlines.

The state of Washington's job as a Hanford regulator is to hold DOE accountable, but the history of trying to get tank waste treated for disposal is one of moving deadlines and delays, said Andrew Fitz, lead attorney in the case for the Office of Attorney General.

The 2010 consent decree resolved a lawsuit filed by the state in 2008 when it became apparent that DOE could not meet deadlines related to emptying waste from underground tanks and treating the waste. The consent decree set new deadlines to be enforced by the court.

But now most of the remaining deadlines in the consent decree are at serious risk of being missed by DOE.

"Effectively we are back where we were when we filed the lawsuit," Fitz said, adding DOE wants to move deadlines out and says "trust us."

11 AUG 15 Bechtel to pay \$800,000 to feds

Settlement entered anonymously; payment and steps end safety, welding investigations

ANNETTE CARY
TRI-CITY HERALD

An agreement for Bechtel National to pay \$800,000 to the federal government last month has been anonymously entered in the Hanford

court-enforced consent decree case now being considered in federal court.

The payment and completion of several steps Bechtel has agreed to take through 2016 effectively ends a series of investigations that began

in late 2011, according to the agreement.

At issue were questions about whether safety was being integrated into the design because of inconsistencies between early safety analyses and later work.

There also were concerns about inadequate welds in tanks that would hold radioactive waste and the adequa-

cy of programs to assure quality and make improvements when problems are found.

The agreement between Bechtel and the DOE Office of Enforcement did not include a finding of a violation by Bechtel after Bechtel analyzed the causes of issues being investigated and took action to correct problems.

Bechtel reported the issues, the DOE contractor said.

Corrective actions also were identified by Bechtel and are well under way, said Bechtel spokesman Todd Nelson.

The DOE Office of Enforcement found after investigations in 2011 and 2012 that Bechtel failed to maintain its safety analyses approved a

decade ago as technical issues have been raised at the plant. That has allowed inconsistencies between the safety analyses in the design to exist, in some cases, for years, the agreement said.

The vitrification plant is being built to turn up to 56 million gallons of radioac-

11 AUG 10

Millwright was discriminated against

Worker raised safety issues before layoff

ANNETTE CARY
TRI-CITY HERALD

The Department of Labor has tentatively ordered Bechtel National to pay some limited back wages plus \$25,000 to a millwright who

repeatedly raised safety issues at Hanford before losing his job amidst layoffs in 2011.

Bechtel and the millwright, Walt Ford, have 30 days to object to the finding and request a hearing before an administrative law judge. If neither side files, the ruling becomes final.

Bechtel has not filed an objection with the Department

of Labor, but said in a statement Monday that it disagrees with the initial finding.

"We are confident that a full review of the evidence will demonstrate there has been no retaliation," the Department of Energy contractor said.

The Department of Labor review of the complaint filed

by Ford found that his role as a whistleblower in his 35 years at Hanford contributed to the decision to lay him off in November 2011.

Bechtel laid Ford off in the first round of layoffs as all construction work was stopped at the Hanford vitrification plant's Pretreatment Facility and much of the work was stopped at the

plant's High Level Waste Facility because of technical issues. A significant percentage of the construction workforce lost their jobs in a project-wide rolling layoff, Bechtel said.

But evidence showed Ford "was scrutinized and treated more harshly than other employees," the Department of Labor found. He was ranked

25th out of 26 millwrights the month before he lost his job.

However, the Department of Labor said Bechtel showed that if Ford had not been laid off in November, he would have been laid off by the end of March. Bechtel must pay back wages of about \$4,500 a month only from mid

1 AUG 15

New deadlines proposed

DOE repository says date set to resume operation not viable

ANNETTE CARY

TRI-CITY HERALD

New deadlines have been proposed for dealing with Hanford waste that may be shipped to a national waste repository in New Mexico that is currently shut down.

The Department of Energy asked the state of Washington to allow it more flexibility in meeting deadlines because of

the shutdown of the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant.

The plant stated in a news release Friday that the original resumption date of March 2016 is no longer viable. DOE said it "anticipates having a revised cost and schedule plan this fall."

The state agreed that revising the deadlines made sense, but asked that two conditions be met, said John Price, the Tri-Party Agreement section manager for the Washington Department of Ecology. The Tri-Party Agreement sets legally binding deadlines agreed to by DOE and its regulators,

Hanford public meeting

What: Meeting to discuss proposed Hanford deadline changes

When: 5:30 p.m.
Aug. 11

Where: Richland Public Library Gallery, 955 Northgate Drive

the state of Washington and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

A public meeting is planned Aug. 11 in Richland to hear comments on the proposed

changes.

The state required that the end date for shipment of waste to the New Mexico remain in 2030. It heard public concerns the last time deadlines were revised that the date of completion stand firm, Price said.

The state also required more annual deadlines to track the progress of work to make sure DOE is on track to meet the 2030 date, he said.

Some Hanford waste, including drums and boxes of debris contaminated with plutonium, is planned to be sent to

See **DEADLINES** | Page A2

AECOM talks probes, lawsuits in SEC filing

Stock price takes dive in early trading

ANNETTE CARY

TRI-CITY HERALD

AECOM stockholders had a rocky ride Wednesday after the company disclosed government investigations and litigation it is involved in at the Hanford nuclear reservation in a filing with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

AECOM became a large player in Hanford projects when it acquired URS in fall 2014. Issues disclosed in the SEC filing occurred before then and are well-known to those familiar with Hanford. However, reports that AECOM is under investigation in re-

gard to some of those issues had not been widely disclosed.

The price of AECOM stock fell almost 3.7 percent to \$29.46 after the disclosures of Hanford issues. During the day, it fell as much as 11 percent, but rebounded by the close of business.

Legal firms responded by announcing investigations, including the possibility of a class-action lawsuit for shareholders.

The SEC filing said the federal government is investigating circumstances surrounding the response

See **AECOM** | Page A2

13 AUG 15

Tamosaitis to receive \$4.1M settlement

Subcontractor URS, parent company on hook for money; case was set to go to a jury in about a year

ANNETTE CARY
TRI-CITY HERALD

Hanford subcontractor URS has agreed to settle a lawsuit brought by former employee Walter Tamosaitis for \$4.1 million.

The settlement in the whistleblower case comes almost one year before the case was set for a jury trial in federal court in Richland.

“We are very pleased that Walter can get on with his life after five

years of litigation and that he has been vindicated,” said Jack Sheridan of Seattle, Tamosaitis’ attorney.

“This settlement sends a message to whistleblowers everywhere that integrity and truth are worth fighting for and that you can win if you don’t give up.”

Tamosaitis believes he was removed as the research and technology manager for the massive vitrification plant under construction at Hanford because he raised ques-



Tamosaitis

tions about the future safe operation of the plant. It could start turning radioactive waste left from past production of plutonium for the nation’s nuclear weapons program into a stable glass form for disposal in 2022.

AECOM, which acquired URS last year, said it agreed to settle “to avoid the cost and distraction of litigation relating to events that occurred over five years ago. The company strongly disagrees that it retaliated against him in any manner.”

Tamosaitis told the Herald Wednesday that he hopes his win sends a message to “all those out there — especially the young engineers who have integrity, are honest and have the courage to hang in there — that justice will prevail. Wrong only prevails when good people don’t speak up.”

In the summer of 2010, Tamosaitis raised a concern that technical issues, including some related to keeping waste well-mixed within the plant, had not been resolved as Bechtel National was working to meet a deadline, according to court documents. At risk was an incen-

tive payment of \$6 million to be split between Bechtel and URS, with much of it dependent on resolving the mixing issue by the end of July 2010.

Bechtel holds the Department of Energy contract to build the vitrification plant and URS, now part of AECOM, is its primary subcontractor. Tamosaitis was employed by URS.

A few days after Tamosaitis discussed his concerns, he was removed from the project and escorted from vitrification plant offices,

HANFORD

26 AUG 15

Final Atomic Man glove boxes removed

Plant 84 percent ready for
demolition in September 2016

TRI-CITY HERALD

Hanford workers have finished removing the glove boxes from the highly contaminated room at Hanford where the the Atomic Man was injured.

Harold McCluskey was sprayed with shards of glass, resin beads, nitric acid and radioactive americium 241 in 1976 when chemicals exploded within a glove box in the Americium Recovery Facility. He would survive the accident and come to be known as the Atomic Man.

Hanford workers did some cleanup of the room in 2010-11, using economic stimulus money to remove two of the room's five glove boxes. Then a CH2M Hill Plateau Remediation Co. crew began work in September 2014 on the three most highly contaminated glove boxes.

"Safely removing these three glove boxes represents continuing progress in cleaning out and demolishing the Plutonium Finishing Plant," said Mark Whitney, the Department of Energy principal deputy assistant secretary for environmental management, in a statement.

"The demolition of the Plutonium Finishing Plant will remove a significant Hanford Site risk and will allow cleanup funds to be used elsewhere on the site," he said.

The room still contains several chemical processing tanks that will be removed next.

DOE and CH2M Hill are working to have the plant down to slab on grade by Sept. 30, 2016. The plant now is about 84 percent ready for demolition, with remaining work including the removal of exhaust ventilation ducting and plutonium processing equipment.

22 Aug 15

Kennewick mayor sued by woman

Mission Support Alliance also named in lawsuit; Young a vice president there

ANNETTE CARY
TRI-CITY HERALD

Kennewick Mayor Steve Young is named in a lawsuit that alleges he retaliated against a Hanford employee after she was mistakenly suspected of writing an anonymous note critical of him.

Young, the Mission Support Alliance vice president of portfolio management, was her direct supervisor.

Mission Support Alliance is a prime contractor for the Department of Energy for cleanup work at the Hanford nuclear reservation. The contractor also was named in the lawsuit, along with former chief operating officer David Ruscitto.

Julie Atwood, a Hanford manager for Mission Support Alliance, received positive reviews during 30 years for her work for the state of Washington and contractors at Hanford, according to documents filed by her attorney in Benton County Superior Court on Friday.

She was pressured to resign Sept. 19, 2013, shortly after a human resources official said an investigation of her had found no wrongdoing, according to documents filed by attorney Jack Sheridan.

A typewritten note was received by human resources officials early in September 2013 accusing Young of creating a hostile



Atwood



Young



Ruscitto

work environment for women.

Shortly after that, Young called a meeting to inform lead workers of the complaint, but Atwood was not notified of the meeting, according to the lawsuit.

One of the lead workers at the meeting noticed Atwood was not there and offered to go get her, but Young said he would talk to Atwood later.

About a week later, on Sept. 9, Ruscitto, who has since retired, told a Hanford DOE official that Atwood was being investigated for timecard fraud, the lawsuit said.

At that time, human resources officials had not been told to investigate Atwood, and it was highly unusual for Hanford contractors to discuss internal personnel investigations with DOE before they had been conducted and completed, the lawsuit said.

On Sept. 12 a human resources official and an employee concerns special-