

REACHING OUT IN THE MID-COLUMBIA

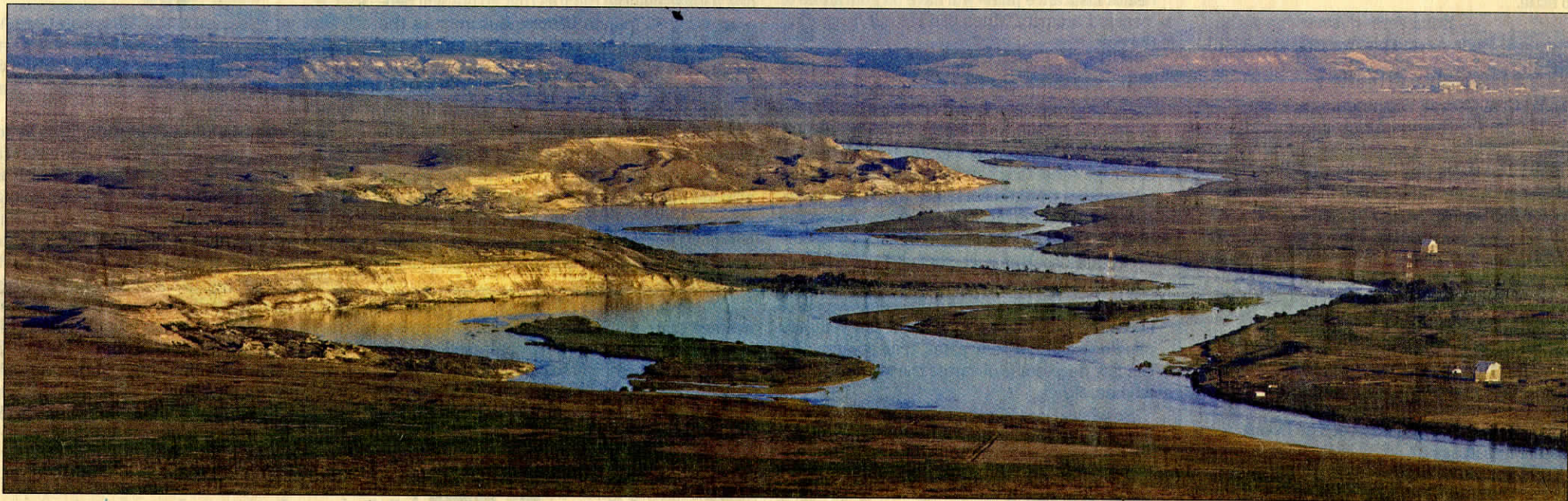


Photo courtesy Tom Foster

The crest of Saddle Mountain provides a sweeping view of the Hanford Reach National Monument section of the Columbia River. To the right is the cocooned H and F reactors at the Hanford nuclear reservation. The White Bluffs were formed by ancestral river deposits between about 5.5 million and 3.5 million years ago. Old and new landslides have shifted the course of the river channel. **Send us your photos at tricityherald.com/submitphoto.**

CH2M Hill notified of problems

No further action planned
as contractor makes fixes

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

CH2M Hill Plateau Remediation Co. has received an enforcement letter for having inadequate controls over radioactive material at Hanford from the Department of Energy Office of Health, Safety and Security.

However, DOE has not issued a fine and plans to take no further action after finding progress toward improvements in CH2M Hill programs, the letter stated.

The incidents discussed in the letter occurred in late 2010 through spring 2011 at Hanford's Plutonium Finishing Plant and the K East Reactor. It pointed out that problems continued to occur in that time frame, despite efforts to make corrections that would prevent them.

But a surveillance this spring by Hanford DOE officials reported significant improvements in radiological work planning and execution, the letter stated.

The surveillance report identified more effective use of controls to prevent the spread of radioactive materials and a more disciplined use of procedures and critiques.

HANFORD LAND

25 SEP 12

Study looks at industrial development

Land transfer would
focus on creating jobs

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The Department of Energy is starting an environmental study on transferring 1,641 acres of the nuclear reservation for industrial development to create new jobs.

The Tri-City Development Council, which has been designated a community reuse organization for Hanford, has requested 1,341 acres near

HANFORD NEWS ONLINE

Find related stories at
www.hanfordnews.com

Richland city limits on the northwest corner of Horn Rapids Road and Stevens Drive. It's been joined in that request by the city of Richland, the Port of Benton and Benton County.

In addition, TRIDEC has requested 300 acres to the north of the larger parcel for a clean energy park in conjunction with Energy Northwest.

See **STUDY** | Page A2

30 SEP 12
Civil litigation filed by ex-worker
on behalf of government alleges
fraud by Hanford contractor

ANNETTE CARY
HERALD STAFF WRITER

The federal government is taking over a civil lawsuit filed against former Hanford contractor CH2M Hill Hanford Group and its parent corporation for alleged timecard fraud.

The lawsuit was filed in U.S. District Court in Eastern Washington by former CH2M Hill worker Carl Schroeder on behalf of the United States under the False Claims Act. The act allows individuals to sue on behalf of the government and collect a portion of any damages awarded.

Schroeder is one of eight former CH2M Hill workers who have pleaded guilty in the same federal court to conspiracy to commit timecard fraud.

They admitted to claiming a full eight hours of work when they were assigned to overtime shifts after their regular workdays or work weeks ended, even though they worked fewer than eight hours of overtime.

The Department of Justice has notified the court that it plans to file a motion to dismiss Schroeder from the False Claims Act civil lawsuit he filed because of his criminal conduct in the case, the Department of Justice said Friday.

The False Claims Act bars any whistleblower filing claims from receiving damages if he or she is convicted of criminal conduct in the case.

Schroeder filed the claim in federal court in 2009, but the case has been sealed until recently, when Judge Lonny Suko ordered three of 22 documents in the case unsealed. Schroeder pleaded guilty in November 2011 for falsifying his timecard as part of a conspiracy with other workers.

The civil lawsuit against CH2M Hill says it knowingly presented false claims to the Department of Energy for overtime payment for more than a decade. DOE reimburses CH2M Hill for

100712 Contractor earns \$3.1M for vit plant

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Bechtel National has earned its lowest award payment yet for work on the Hanford vitrification plant, according to information from the Department of Energy.

It was eligible to earn \$6.3 million for work on the project for the first six months of this calendar year, but DOE gave its contractor \$3.1 million or just less than 50 percent of the possible award payment.

The award was based on ratings for cost and project management, both of which came in at just under 50, or "satisfactory," on a scale of 1 to 100. Any score from 1 to 50 is rated satisfactory.

The low rating "reflects the lack of closure on the path forward to address and correct issues," said Carrie Meyer, spokeswoman for the Department of Energy.

The project management score was brought down by a numerical rating of 5 for engineering and a numerical rating of 45 for nuclear safety.

The cost score was brought down by a numerical rating of 20 for factors that included the estimate at completion, management reserve funds and variances.

HANFORD NEWS ONLINE

Find related stories at
www.hanfordnews.com

"We accept the Department of Energy's fee determination and are working closely with the department on the issues," said Suzanne Heaston, Bechtel spokeswoman.

Bechtel is building and commissioning the \$12.2 billion plant to treat up to 56 million gallons of radioactive waste now held in underground tanks for disposal. The waste is left from the past production of plutonium for the nation's weapons program.

Award payments are intended to provide motivation for excellence in contract performance, Meyer said.

The award recognized an improvement in safety and health performance, which rated 85 or "very good," and positive steps taken in nuclear safety and quality culture, which rated a 65 or "good," Meyer said.

But it also recognized a decline in performance in engineering, quality management and procurement performance, she said.

DOE's Hanford Office of

“
We accept the
Department of
Energy's fee
determination
and are working
closely with the
department on
the issues.”

Suzanne Heaston,
Bechtel spokeswoman

”

BRIEFS

29 SEP 12

Judge hears arguments about Hanford lawsuit

YAKIMA — Judge Lonny Suko heard arguments to dismiss Hanford whistleblower Walter Tamosaitis' lawsuit against his employer Thursday in Yakim, but made no ruling.

URS Energy and Construction has filed a motion for summary judgment in the case. It is the last defendant standing in legal action brought by Tamosaitis in Eastern Washington U.S. District Court.

Tamosaitis alleges he was removed from work at the Hanford vitrification plant for

Site scores well in organizational survey

Similar organizations used for comparison of climate

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Hanford scored better than similar organizations on a just-completed employee survey about the nuclear reservation's organizational climate.

The survey looked particularly at employee's opinions about how safety was managed at the site, including whether they could bring up safety concerns without fear of retaliation.

Results were released Tuesday to management and employees of DOE and its contractors and were posted at www.hanford.gov.

"I think the findings show the Hanford site, including both parts of the organiza-

tion, are actually doing very well," said Peg Anthony, an organizational consultant for EurekaFacts, which DOE hired to conduct the survey. Hanford is divided into oversight under the DOE Richland Operations Office and the DOE Office of River Protection.

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the top, no areas fell below a 3.5, she said.

See **SURVEY** | Page B2

RICHLAND PUBLIC FACILITIES DISTRICT

Board mulls how to raise money without finished Reach center

Panel to also discuss budget at next meeting

MICHELLE DUPLER

HERALD STAFF WRITER

As the Richland Public Facilities District looks toward writing its 2013 budget, board members are asking how they can bring in money without having a finished building.

The district's signature project — the Hanford Reach Interpretive Center — isn't scheduled to open until August 2014, but with the district having experienced a lean year in 2012, board members are working to make sure next year's budget is conservative and that the district lives within its means.

Board President Fred Raab said the district's budget committee is looking at ways to generate income through tours and

educational programs — things the district can do while the interpretive center is being built.

Treasurer Dan Boyd said the committee also is looking at selling memberships for the interpretive center that would offer discounts on some activities.

The board has had to cut its budget significantly this year, lay off staff, and transfer money from other accounts into the operating budget as cash dwindled.

The interpretive center project also faced financial setbacks as Bechtel National and Washington River Protection System withdrew donations or pledges totaling about \$500,000 and a bid for the first phase of con-

struction came in about \$1 million more than expected.

And finances have led the board to scale down the project from 61,000 square feet to a first-phase building of 12,000 to 17,000 square feet.

But the project's fortunes may be turning as Mission Support Alliance and Lockheed Martin donated \$1 million in cash and services toward the interpretive center and the district recently secured \$700,000 in leftover stimulus money to put toward the first phase of construction, which involves extending utilities and building a road at the site at Columbia Park west where the interpretive center will be built.

The board is scheduled for further budget talks at next Monday's meeting.

► *Michelle Dupler: 582-1543; mdupler@tricityherald.com*

3 OCT 12

DOE urged to speed up work to upgrade ventilation systems

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The Department of Energy is not doing enough to prevent a buildup of flammable gases in radioactive waste tanks at Hanford, according to the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board.

"A significant flammable gas accident would have considerable radiological consequences, endanger personnel, contaminate portions of the tank farms and seriously disrupt the waste cleanup mission," the defense board said in a report dated Friday.

It sent a formal written recommendation to Energy Secretary Steven Chu on Friday and publicly released it Tuesday. A written recommendation is the most powerful mech-

HANFORD NEWS ONLINE

Find related stories at www.hanfordnews.com

anism available to the defense board for advising DOE on safety matters.

The recommendation calls on DOE to work faster to upgrade the ventilation for each of Hanford's 28 double-shell tanks to ensure removal of flammable gases from the tanks' headspace and to install real-time monitoring equipment to measure tank ventilation flow rates.

Many of Hanford's double-shell tanks contain enough gas trapped in the waste that safe conditions could be exceeded if the gas were spontaneously released either in normal operations or during an accident, according to the recommendation report from the safety board.

"The current control strategy does not

11 OCT 12

Reactions mixed to possible transfer of Hanford land

DORI O'NEAL

HERALD STAFF WRITER

About 50 people turned out Wednesday night for a hearing on the possible transfer of 1,641 acres of Hanford land for industrial development.

The Tri-City Development Council (TRIDEC), in partnership with Richland and Port of Benton, made the proposal to the Department of Energy last year.

TRIDEC Vice President Gary Petersen said about 10,000 acres of Hanford land already has been turned over to various city, county and private industry interests since 1966. The Pacific Northwest

National Laboratory and the Richland Airport now sit on land once considered part of Hanford.

TRIDEC is part of a community reuse organization authorized by Congress in 1993 to represent communities adversely affected by DOE workforce restructuring at defense nuclear facilities.

Some who spoke Wednesday expressed concerns about who the land would be turned over to.

"I'd like to see the transfer to the Port of Benton or city of Richland and not TRIDEC," said Vince Panesko of Richland. "It scares me that (with TRIDEC in charge)

Battelle contract extension in effect

2 Oct 12
Recently signed 5-year deal
got under way on Monday

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Pacific Northwest National Laboratory began operating under a new five-year contract extension for Battelle on Monday.

The Department of Energy announced that it planned to extend Battelle's contract to manage the DOE national lab in Richland just over a year ago, but the contract extension was signed less than two weeks before it took effect.

The extension will extend Battelle's run as contractor from 1965 through September 2017.

"We're pleased to continue to work

HANFORD NEWS ONLINE

Find related stories at www.hanfordnews.com

with them," said Roger Snyder, manager of the DOE Pacific Northwest Site Office. "They are a well-performing contractor."

During the past year, DOE and Battelle have worked out contract changes that stem from issues raised when DOE earlier considered competing the contract rather than extending it with Battelle. That idea was dropped when the Obama administration said routinely opening lab contracts to competition was not saving money and improving efficiency as intended.

But the issues remained.

Unlike most other DOE national laboratories, DOE does not own all of the buildings at PNNL, which employs more

than 4,500 people, most on the Richland campus.

DOE owns some of the buildings, like the Environmental Molecular Sciences Laboratory. But others are owned by third parties and leased to the lab and, most significantly, Battelle owns the original buildings on the PNNL campus.

They were built in the late 1960s and early 1970s and include the Research Operations Building at what serves as the entrance to the campus and the Battelle Auditorium.

A formal agreement for DOE use of the Battelle facilities has been worked out to replace a gentleman's agreement.

"During negotiations, the goal of both parties was to ensure that Battelle-owned facilities remain available to support the mission of PNNL," said Mike Kluse, lab director.

See **BATTELLE** | Page A2

Workers at Pasco shop not at risk; contaminated items heading back to Hanford

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

An excavator later found to have radioactive contamination was taken from the Hanford nuclear reservation to a Pasco shop for maintenance.

Workers at Powers Equipment in Pasco are not believed to have been put at risk, but some contaminated items were found there after the work was completed.

The problem was discovered Monday afternoon when the excavator was returned to Hanford, said Mark McKenna, spokesman for Washington Closure Hanford.

Radiological control technicians surveyed the excavator before it was put back into use and detected contamination in two places. They found radioactive contamination on the grease on the bucket joint and on grease on the turret deck, which pivots below the cab.

The contamination likely was spread in the grease from one part of the equipment to another, said Jerry Simiele, Washington Closure radiological control and industrial hygiene manager.

A crew was sent to Powers Equipment in Pasco, which had leased the excavator for Hanford use, to survey for any contamination there. The survey found no contamination in the equipment yard or public areas, but it did find three contaminated items.

Public to hear proposal of Hanford land release

The Department of Energy will have a public meeting Wednesday on a proposal to release 1,641 acres at Hanford for industrial use.

DOE plans to prepare an environmental assessment of 4,400 acres, with the most suitable parcels to be transferred picked from that acreage. The land borders Horn Rapids Road and extends north along Stevens Drive.

The land would be transferred to the Tri-City Development Council, which then would transfer ownership to a company planning to build on the land or to a public agency partner, such as the city of Richland.

It's among about 10 percent of the 586 square miles at Hanford that are planned for industrial use once the land is no longer needed by the Department of Energy.

The Wednesday meeting at the Richland Public Library, 955 Northgate Drive, will collect input on what should be considered in the environmental assessment. The

Washington Closure marks safety milestone

Washington Closure Hanford and its subcontractor employees have worked another 2 million hours without a lost workday injury.

Washington Closure holds the Department of Energy contract to manage the \$2.3 billion River Corridor Closure Project, a 220-square-mile area along the Columbia River. The River Corridor team is made up of 860 Washington Closure employees and 220 subcontractor employees.

This is the fifth time the River Corridor Closure team achieved two million hours without a lost workday injury since the project started in August 2005.

First shield windows arrive at vit plant

Workers will be able to safely observe work with radioactive items

HERALD NEWS SERVICES

The Hanford vitrification plant has received the first shipment of 87 leaded-glass shield windows that will be used in four buildings of the plant that will process radioactive waste.

The windows will allow operators to safely observe work with radioactive material inside hot cells.

The first shipment of 22 windows is for the Analytical Laboratory. Other windows will be used in the Pretreatment, Low Activity Waste and the High Level Waste facilities.

Each laboratory shield window weighs 7,200 pounds, is 16 inches thick and measures 75 inches wide by 65 inches tall. They have a yellow tint and are made of borosilicate glass and lead.

The windows were manufactured by Hot Cell Services Corp. of Kent.

"The supplier was one of the few manufacturers in the world who could provide these type of windows," said Lori Baker, Bechtel National manager of procurement and subcontracts. "We are fortunate the supplier is so geographically close to the project. Due to the temperature control requirements for the windows, transportation and warehousing are critical elements for material handling."

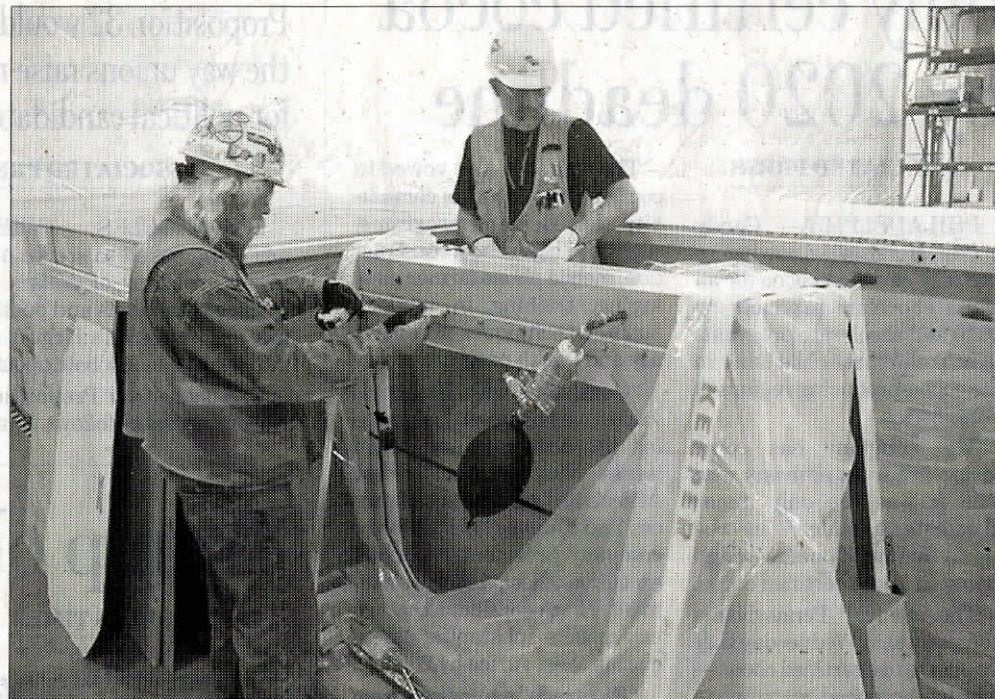
The windows can withstand extreme high and low temperatures, but they cannot withstand a temperature change of plus or minus five degrees within an hour, she said.

The shield windows will be

one of the last items to be placed in the laboratory and will be stored in a controlled environment until they are installed in the fall of 2013. The long lead time on the procurement is necessary because it takes a year to manufacture the windows, according to Bechtel.

The rest of the windows will be delivered in the next two months. Once installed, the windows will go through yearly maintenance and testing.

The \$12.2 billion vitrification plant, or Waste Treatment Plant, is being built by the Department of Energy to turn up to 56 million gallons of radioactive waste into a stable glass form for disposal starting in 2019. The waste is left from the past production of plutonium for the nation's nuclear weapons program.



Workers at the Hanford vitrification plant have received the first of 87 specially designed, leaded-glass shield windows for plant. Each window weighs 7,200 pounds.

Photo courtesy Bechtel National

USS Enterprise reactors clear Hanford review

47-foot compartments may be brought up Columbia for disposal at Hanford

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The Department of Defense has found no issues that would prevent the defueled reactor compartments of the world's first nuclear-powered naval aircraft carrier from being disposed of at Hanford.

The Department of Energy agreed with the Finding of No Significant Impact report.

The report, based on a completed environmental assessment, clears the way for a final decision to send the USS Enterprise reactor compartments to Hanford.

The Navy has used a trench in central Hanford since 1986 to dispose of reactor compartments and other

reactor components from 114 nuclear-powered submarines and cruisers.

The eight reactor compartments from Enterprise would be added to that Naval debris in Hanford's Trench 94 in central Hanford, about seven miles from the Columbia River.

However, it will be years before the reactor compartments arrive at Hanford, under the proposed plan.

The Navy would begin decommissioning of Enterprise in mid-2013. It would be defueled at Newport News (Va.) Shipbuilding before being towed to the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard and Intermediate Maintenance Facility in Bremerton in about 2017.

Then the reactor compartment disposal would require six to eight years.

Enterprise's eight reactors are in four pairs of reactor compartments that would be separated by cutting through a structural space between the two reactor compartments. A containment structure would be built around the reactor compartments,

enclosing them to form a package.

A barge would be used to ship the reactor compartments through the Puget Sound, along the Pacific Coast and then up the Columbia River to the Port of Benton to be unloaded for the trip across Hanford.

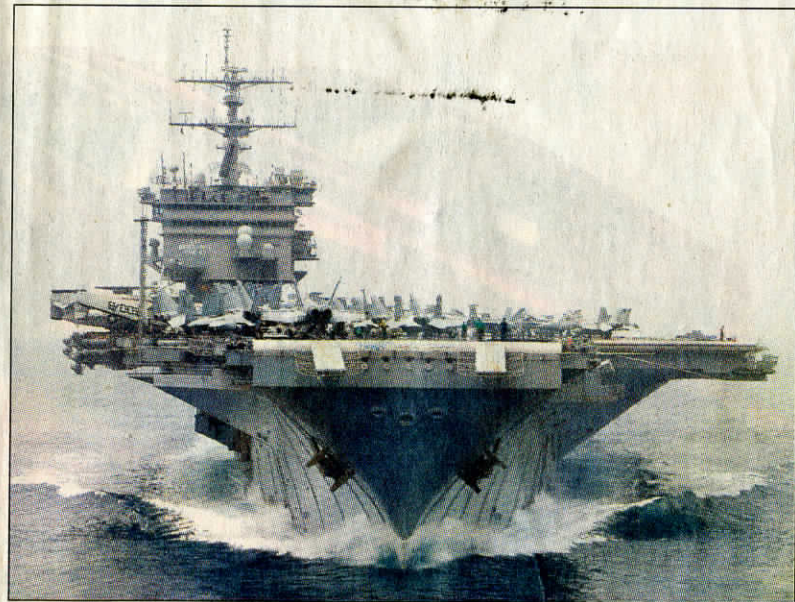
The packaged compartments could be up to 47 feet tall, making clearance potentially tight under the cable bridge.

The environmental assessment concluded that Enterprise's reactor compartments would be similar to those of cruisers, so there would be no additional environmental impact beyond those already studied for cruisers.

The environmental assessment calls Enterprise the oldest operating ship in the Navy. It was commissioned in 1961 and will end 51 years of service in an inactivation ceremony Dec. 1.

It served during the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Vietnam War and the Iraq War.

► *Annette Cary: 582-1533; acary@tricityherald.com*



Courtesy U.S. Navy

The aircraft carrier USS Enterprise transits the Strait of Bab el Mandeb in the Red Sea in 2011. The carrier will be decommissioned in 2013 and its nuclear reactor compartments are likely going to be sent to Hanford.

Tamosaitis loses case

Summary judgment leveled
against Hanford whistleblower

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

A whistleblower lawsuit against vitrification plant subcontractor URS Energy and Construction has been dismissed in Eastern Washington U.S. District Court.

The ruling granting summary judgment for URS by Judge Lonny Suko closes the



Tamosaitis

federal case brought by Hanford whistleblower Walter Tamosaitis regarding his removal from the vitrification plant project July 2, 2010.

Suko earlier dismissed claims in the same case against the Department of Energy and URS Energy and Construction's parent company. That leaves no outstanding claims, other than appeals.

"We disagree with the ruling, and we are

confident that the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals will overturn Judge Suko's rulings in this case," said Tamosaitis' attorney Jack Sheridan, in a statement.

This week, Suko ruled that Tamosaitis had not followed requirements of the Energy Reorganization Act requiring that the Department of Labor have a full year to issue a decision before it is moved to federal court.

The claim was amended to name URS Energy and Construction, rather than

10 OCT 12

DOE Inspector General says agency failed to look at risks, costs of early operation

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The Department of Energy has failed to develop a detailed analysis of the costs and risks of a proposed plan to start operating part of the Hanford vitrification plant early, according to the DOE Office of Inspector General.

It issued a management alert Tuesday.

DOE has been considering starting operation of the Low Activity Waste Facility at the plant 15 months before the rest of the plant.

However, it told the DOE Office of Inspector General that its phased operations startup proposal, called the "2020 Vision One System," is on hold while technical issues are addressed and a new cost and schedule for the vitrification plant is established.

8 Oct 12

Pump problem slows emptying of tank

Hydraulic system had leak; could take 4-6 weeks to replace pump

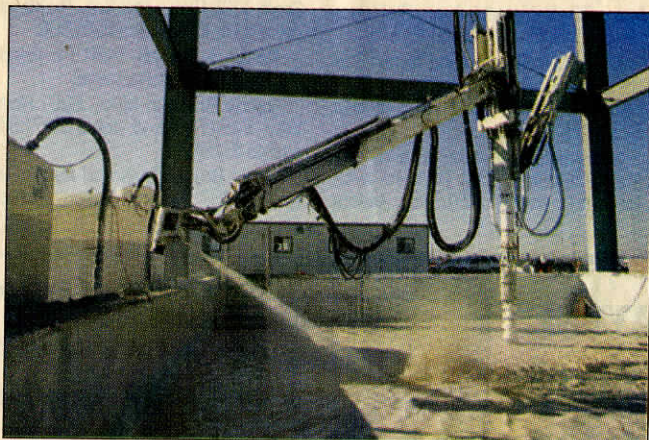
ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Another pump problem has stopped work with the new Mobile Arm Retrieval System, or MARS, to empty an underground Hanford tank of radioactive waste.

Although that means Tank C-107 will not be emptied of waste this month as expected, Washington River Protection Solutions still believes it will be emptied by the end of the year.

"We won't miss any deadlines," said Kent Smith, Washington River Protection Solutions manager of single-shell tank retrieval and closure.



Herald file

The Mobile Arm Retrieval System, or MARS, pictured above from 2011, has removed almost 80 percent of sludge and radioactive waste at Tank C-107 at Hanford. But a pump problem has stopped that work. Washington River Protection Solutions still hopes that it will be able to empty the tank by the end of the year.

That would make it the fourth underground tank emptied this calendar year, if regulators sign off after study-

ing the data. Before this, workers had made progress on emptying multiple tanks, but failed to finish waste

retrieval of any tank for five years.

Finishing work to empty Tank C-107 this year will keep the tank retrieval project on track under the latest plan to have four tanks completed this year, three in 2013 and three more in 2014.

The Department of Energy has a legal deadline to have all 16 underground tanks in the group called C Tank Farm emptied by fall 2014. Seven tanks remain, including the tank now using the MARS system.

Hanford has 56 million gallons of radioactive waste left from the past production of weapons plutonium. Waste is being emptied from 139 leak-prone single-shell tanks that still hold waste into 28 newer double-shell tanks.

16 OCT 12

Many companies showing interest in Reach Center

PAULA HORTON

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The new scaled-down project for the Hanford Reach Interpretive Center has attracted a lot of interest from architecture and design firms across the state and into Oregon, officials said.

About 40 people with design and bid teams showed up last week to tour the site at the west end of Columbia Park, construction manager John Koberg told the Richland Public Facilities District board Monday.

Companies from the Tri-Cities, Seattle, Spokane and Portland have solicited

See **REACH** | Page B2

12 OCT 12

Material between tank walls apparently radioactive waste

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

A sample taken from between the inner and outer walls of a Hanford double-shell tank confirms the material is consistent with the radioactive waste held in the tank, according to preliminary test results.

It's more evidence that at least one of Hanford's double-shell tanks, which are needed to hold waste for decades to come, may be deteriorating. Finding waste outside the inner shell of Tank AY-102 is a first for a Hanford double-shell tank.

The Department of Energy expects to know enough by the end of next week to declare whether or not Tank AY-102 is leaking from its inner shell.

Hanford has 56 million gallons of radioactive and hazardous chemical waste held in underground tanks until they can be treated for disposal. The waste is left from the past production of plutonium for

HANFORD NEWS ONLINE

Find related stories at www.hanfordnews.com

the nation's nuclear weapons program.

The waste is being pumped from leak-prone single-shell tanks, some of them built as early as World War II, into 28 newer double-shell tanks. The double-shell tanks might have to hold waste for as long as another 40 years until all the waste can be treated.

It is important to remember that the material within the walls of Tank AY-102 is stable, said Tom Fletcher, DOE assistant manager of the tank farms, in a message to DOE employees Thursday.

No radioactive material has been found outside the outer wall of the tank, and there is no indication of radioactive contamination in the leak-detection pit outside the tank, he said.

The issue was covered in

August during video monitoring of the area between the inner and outer walls that was designed as an overflow space if the inner steel liner were to leak. The outer shell is made of steel and covered with steel-reinforced concrete.

A video camera, inserted down a tank riser that had not previously been used for visual examinations, Riser 90, showed two side-by-side areas of contamination. One was a dry mound about 24 by 36 by 8 inches.

A small sample collected in connection with the video inspections showed the material was radioactive but provided little other information.

Workers next sent video equipment down the remaining nine risers that provide access into the area between the tank's shells, finding nothing unusual near eight of the risers.

But more unusual material

Officials confirm tank leak

Oldest double-shell tank leaking chemical waste from inner shell

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The Department of Energy has confirmed that its oldest double-shell tank is actively leaking radioactive and hazardous chemical waste from its inner shell.

DOE made the announcement Monday after a video inspection of the area between the shells Sunday showed more waste in one place than a video taken Thursday showed.

"It's a very, very small volume," said Tom Fletcher, DOE assistant manager for the tank farms. Although there's no good way to measure the amount, it could be a couple of tablespoons of additional waste between the video inspections.

INSIDE

Mission Support Alliance gets 3-year contract extension for support services. | B1

Tank AY-102 is the first of Hanford's double-shell tanks known to have leaked waste from its inner shell.

The Hanford nuclear reservation has 28 double-shell tanks that are being used to hold waste from older single-shell tanks, many of which have leaked in the past. Together, the two types of underground tanks hold 56 million gallons of radioactive waste left from the past production of plutonium for the nation's nuclear weapons program.

Tank AY-102 is a year or two past its 40-year design life. However, waste will need to continue to be stored in at least some of the double-shell tanks until all the waste is treated for disposal, which may take another 40 years.

The waste is not believed to have leaked from the outer shell, which serves as secondary containment for the tank, into the soil beneath it. No waste has been found in the leak-detection pit beneath the tank, DOE said.

10 OCT 12

Hanford

dosimetry program in new hands

Dade Moeller now is
operating radiation
dosimetry services

HERALD NEWS SERVICES

Dade Moeller of Richland now is providing technical direction and operation of the radiation dosimetry program for Hanford workers.

The program is among the radiological site services for that have been moved from Pacific Northwest National Laboratory to Mission Support Alliance. Mission Support Alliance provides sitewide services at Hanford under a Department of Energy contract.

PNNL had provided those services since 1965.

Dade Moeller helped with the move of those services, for 7,500 workers, including helping Mission Support Alliance earn approval to perform the services under DOE's Laboratory Accreditation Program. Accreditation was a prerequisite for Mission Support Alliance to take over radiological site services.

This is the first time DOE has granted the accreditation associated with a change of organizations for programs with the scope and magnitude of the Hanford program, according to Dade Moeller.

"Dade Moeller is a well respected entity at the Hanford Site, as well as nationally, within the fields of radiation protection and worker safety," said Keith Klein, former manager of the DOE Richland Operations Office, who worked to create a Hanford site services contract.

Dade Moeller's reputation should give workers a high level of confidence in workplace safety, he said.

Dade Moeller will provide technical direction to Hanford's radiation dosimetry programs, which includes measuring and calculating the dose if workers are exposed to ionizing radiation.

The company also will provide technical direction to the Radiation Exposure Records Program, which preserves records of workers' radiological exposures and maintains Hanford's dosimetry policies and procedures.

Glovebox pulled from plant

2-story box tainted from plutonium at finishing plant

ANNETTE CARY
HERALD STAFF WRITER

Hanford workers have pulled the largest plutonium-tainted glovebox yet out of the Plutonium Finishing Plant.

The two-story glovebox, weighing 10 tons and stretching almost the width of the room where it stood, needed to come out of the plant to allow gloveboxes in the room behind it to be removed.

"It was absolutely wonderful to

HANFORD NEWS ONLINE

Find related stories at www.hanfordnews.com

watch," said Jerry Long, vice president of the Plutonium Finishing Plant closure project for Department of Energy contractor CH2M Hill Plateau Remediation Co.

DOE has called the Plutonium Finishing Plant the most complex and hazardous facility at Hanford. It operated for 40 years starting in 1949, taking plutonium that had been chemically separated from Hanford's irradiated fuel rods and producing metal buttons

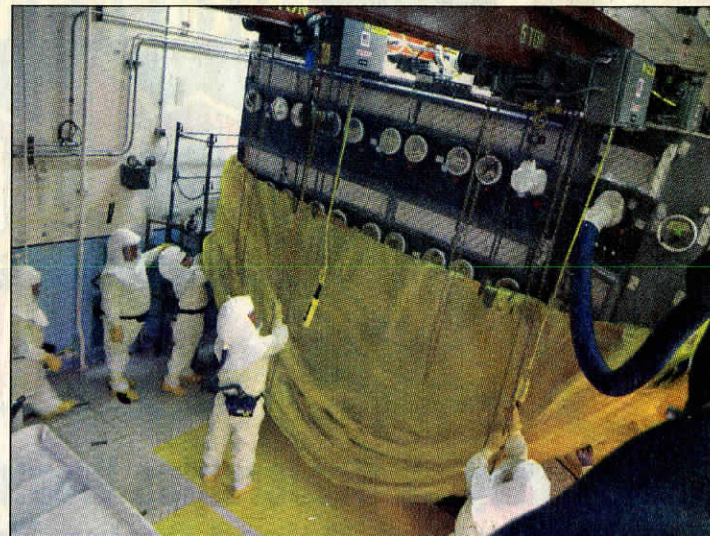
the size of hockey pucks.

The buttons were shipped off Hanford to be fabricated for use in the nation's nuclear weapons program.

Now the plant is being prepared for demolition. DOE has a legal deadline under the Tri-Party Agreement to have the plant torn down to slab on grade by fall 2016 and would like to have it torn down a year earlier.

Some 177, or about 76 percent, of the gloveboxes have been removed. But work started with smaller and less-complex gloveboxes to help workers gain

See **GLOVEBOX** | Page B3



Courtesy of DOE

Hanford workers maneuver hoisting and rigging equipment to remove a 10-ton, two-story glovebox from the Plutonium Finishing Plant.

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

MID-COLUMBIA

Tuesday, Oct. 23, 2012

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

MISSION SUPPORT ALLIANCE

DOE extends contract for 3 years

Contractor provides services for Hanford, including fire, utilities, IT, roads, security

ANNETTE CARY
HERALD STAFF WRITER

The Department of Energy has notified Mission Support Alliance that it will extend its contract to provide support services across the Hanford nuclear reservation for three more years.

The contract extension is valued at an estimated \$950 million.

Mission Support Alliance began work under a five-year contract, with a three-year and then a two-year extension option for a total of 10 years. The initial five-year contract period ends May 25, 2014.

With about a year and a half left on the five-year contract award, DOE needed to either start work on rebidding the support services contract or on exercising its option for the first extension.

"Clearly, MSA is doing a very good job," Doug Shoop, deputy project manager for the DOE Hanford Richland Operations Office, said Monday. MSA is a limited liability company formed by Lockheed Martin, Jacobs Engineering Group and WSI, formerly Wackenhut Services.

DOE is pleased with MSA's good safety record and the numerous efficiencies it has found to provide services across the state, he said. MSA told employees in a memo Monday that it had saved the federal government

more than \$110 million.

MSA holds a first-of-a-kind contract for the entire DOE complex, DOE officials have said.

As Fluor Hanford's contract expired, DOE broke its assignment into two projects, hiring CH2M Hill Plateau Remediation Co. to take over central Hanford cleanup and groundwater operations and hiring MSA to provide sitewide services.

That includes utilities, roads, infor-

See **CONTRACT** | Page B2

ILL HANFORD WORKERS

Many claims will be reviewed

More than 800 to get new look
under recently eased rules

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

More than 800 previously denied or pending claims for ill Hanford workers are being reconsidered or put on a fast track for a decision after federal compensation rules were recently eased.

All those claims are for cancers covered by a newly designated special exposure cohort for workers at Hanford from July 1972 through 1983. Workers received that designation if inadequate information existed to estimate their radiation exposure.

The classification allows workers or

HANFORD NEWS ONLINE

Find related stories at
www.hanfordnews.com

their survivors to claim \$150,000 in compensation plus medical coverage without an estimate showing they received enough radiation to likely cause the cancer. They also may be eligible for up to an additional \$250,000 for impairment and wage loss.

Workers at Hanford before June 30, 1972, already were covered by the eased rules.

Tuesday, the Department of Labor held morning and evening town hall meetings in Pasco to provide more information on compensation programs for ill Hanford workers, with about 80 people attending the morning session.

To be eligible for compensation without

an estimate of the radiation dose received, workers must have spent 250 days working at Hanford. If they have fewer days, the time may be combined with work at another site covered by the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program.

Workers at the 700 Area, now the Federal Building in Richland, must show they spent 250 days out of the office and at Hanford.

Preliminary decisions already have been made on some of the 800 previously denied claims for workers from July 1972 through 1983, said Carol Campbell, Department of Labor unit branch chief.

Letters were sent out to those with claims being reviewed. However, some

Kurion opens new modular vit test system

Kurion has opened its new modular vitrification system test facility in Richland.

The nuclear waste management company moved its test facility from Rolla, Mo., to Richland in July and then needed to complete construction of its engineering scale pilot system.

It will be used to mature and commercially demonstrate Kurion's modular vitrification technology to help with waste cleanup at Department of Energy sites and nuclear plants worldwide.

HANFORD

\$12.3M subcontract awarded

Company will dig 85 feet to groundwater in soil near H, DR and D reactors

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Washington Closure Hanford has awarded a subcontract worth \$12.3 million to clean up the remaining waste sites in the soil around Hanford's D, DR and H reactors.

TerranearPMC, a small business based in Irving, Texas, that qualifies under Small Business Administration standards as a disadvantaged business, will do the work.

It has an office in Kennewick.

Terranear will be digging up chromium-contaminated soil, some of it down to groundwater about 85 feet deep. The work also includes digging up pipelines used for chemically contaminated waste and some miscellaneous waste sites.

"We're expecting to remove about 2.5 million tons of material during the course of this subcontract," said Scott Myers, Washington Closure project manager for field remediation at the three reactors.

Similar work to dig up chromium down to groundwater about 85 feet deep was done successfully near Hanford's C Reactor, with much of the work completed this spring.

It was the first time Hanford workers have excavated that deep to

remove chemical contamination.

"We will take full advantage of lessons learned from work at C," Myers said.

Hexavalent chromium was added to cooling water at Hanford reactors used to produce plutonium for the nation's weapons program during World War II and the Cold War.

Near the D and DR reactors, which were built near each other along the Columbia River, the chromium has contaminated the soil in three places down to groundwater. The chromium there was spilled or leaked in multiple places from the system that delivered sodium dichromate by railcar and distributed it through a series of pipelines and valve boxes.

The three deep waste sites will be

excavated in two digs, one for two of the sites that are near one and other. Digging so deep creates a wide excavation site. At C Reactor, two nearby sites covered the area of about 15 football fields.

H Reactor, one of nine former Hanford production reactors along the Columbia River, is about two miles from the D and DR reactors downriver.

Because the nature of the cleanup work for the sites is so similar, it made sense to combine the work under one subcontract and save taxpayers money, Myers said.

The chrome pipelines, which were near the ground surface, already have been dug up near the reactors. But

HANFORD

Vit plant to go on

Energy Secretary Chu plans to move forward with new teams, he says

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Energy Secretary Steven Chu plans to move the Hanford vitrification plant project forward with new teams to take focused looks at technical issues and a separate evaluation of opportunities for more efficient or faster operations at the plant.

He made the announcement

Thursday in a memo to employees of the Department of Energy's Hanford Office of River Protection.

Chu has taken a personal interest in resolving issues at the plant, assembling a hand-picked group of experts that he spent several days with at Hanford in September. They helped develop the plan announced Thursday to get the project on track.

DOE earlier said that it would not be able to build the plant for the \$12.2 billion planned or have it operating as legally required by 2019 because of technical issues, some of them related to the safe

and efficient operation of the plant.

The plant is being built to treat for disposal up to 56 million gallons of radioactive and hazardous chemical waste left from the past production of plutonium for the nation's nuclear weapons program.

Construction on parts of the plant that will handle high-level radioactive waste has been slowed or stopped while technical issues are addressed.

"I am confident that with this increased focus on the resolution of technical challenges, the addition of expertise from academia,

See **VIT** | Page A2

Inner-shell leak may be up to 520 gallons

444-page report details construction problems with 42-year-old tank

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Up to 520 gallons of radioactive waste might have leaked from the inner shell of Hanford's Tank AY-102 sometime after January 2007, according to the first comprehensive report on the newly discovered leak.

The 444-page report released Tuesday by the Department of Energy details the myriad construction problems with the 42-year-old tank, which the report concluded likely led to corrosion of the tank at high temperatures.

HANFORD NEWS ONLINE

Find related stories at www.hanfordnews.com

"Tank AY-102 construction records detail a tank plagued by first-of-a-kind construction difficulties and trial-and-error repairs," the report said. The result was a tank that was not as robust as designed, it said.

However, because of construction and design improvements in the double-shell tanks built after Tank AY-102, other double-shell tanks likely don't have the same risk for leaks, the report concluded.

Tank AY-102 was the first of 28 double-shell tanks built at Hanford and the first discovered to have a leak from its inner shell. The waste is contained in the space between the inner and outer shells of the tank and has

not escaped into the environment.

Hanford has 56 million gallons of radioactive waste left from past production of weapons plutonium and held in underground tanks. Waste is being pumped from 149 single-shell tanks, many of which have leaked waste into the soil in the past, into the newer double-shell tanks.

DOE's current tank farm contractor, Washington River Protection Solutions, began working on the new leak assessment report after suspicious material was found in August between the shells of Tank AY-102.

The report estimated that 190 to 520 gallons of waste leaked from the inner tank. However, a significant portion of the liquid evaporated, leaving about 20 to 50 gallons of drying waste, according to the report.

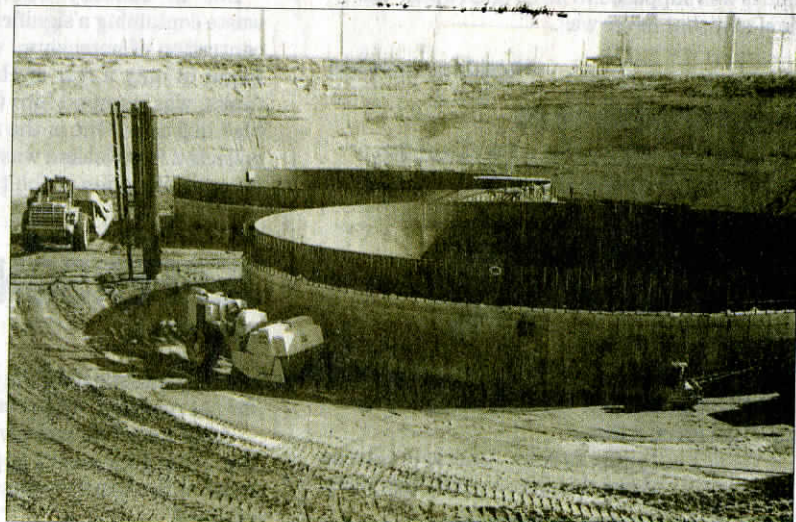


Photo courtesy DOE

Underground waste tanks AY-101 and AY-102 are shown under construction in about 1969. The double-shell Tank AY-102 is leaking radioactive waste from its inner shell into the containment area of its outer shell.

HANFORD

Pension benefits cut

Nonunion workers set up to earn less retirement in 2014, contractor says

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The Hanford pension plan for nonunion workers is being changed in 2014 to reduce benefits accrued that year and later.

Mission Support Alliance is administering the change, but said the decision to alter the plan was made by the plan's administration committee, made up of 22 current

Hanford contractors and subcontractors.

The change does not extend to workers for the Hanford Atomic Metal Trades Council and the Hanford Guard Union. However, the change for nonunion workers was made as HAMTC negotiations with contractors are expected to get down to business now that the national election is over.

"The pension plan committee reviewed the pension plan and is making adjustments to better align with competitive nationwide standards," said Todd Beyers, Mission Support Alliance vice president for human resources.

The contractors are stewards of taxpayer money, and many companies nationwide have eliminated pension benefits, he said.

The 1,691 Hanford workers who are affected were sent letters this week. In addition, the plan has 426 workers who have accrued benefits in the past but are not yet drawing pensions.

Under the changes that take effect Jan. 1, 2014, the multiplier that determines pension benefits will be reduced. Pensions now are calculated by multiplying 1.6 percent by the five highest years of

UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

Hastings urges no changes in Hanford system

Agencies require 10%
of money be spent
with small businesses

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

A change to small business requirements may have unintended consequences, costing small businesses work at Hanford, according to Rep. Doc Hastings, R-Wash.

He has sent letters to key House committee leaders and the administrator of the Small Business Administration requesting that Hanford continue with its present system.

The Department of Energy contracts out environmental

cleanup work at Hanford. Those prime contracts, or direct DOE contracts, have aggressive goals to subcontract with small businesses to do some of that work, depending on the type and complexity of the work.

The targets range from 49 percent to 65 percent of subcontracted work going to small businesses. Now all Hanford prime contractors are exceeding their targets, Hastings said.

But in the fiscal year that started Oct. 1, the Small Business Administration and the

See **HANFORD** | Page A2

HANFORD NEWS ONLINE

Find related stories at www.hanfordnews.com

New Hanford Advisory Board leader named

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

A former college dean who is a frequent volunteer living in Portland was elected Friday as the new chairman of the Hanford Advisory Board.

Steve Hudson will assume leadership of the board from Susan Leckband, who faced a term limit at the end of six years as chairwoman.

The board is made up of representatives from diverse groups — including local governments, organized labor, Han-

ford nonunion workers, tribes, public health, environmental groups and civic groups. Members reach consensus on advice for Department of Energy and its regulators on environmental cleanup at Hanford.

Hudson represents Hanford Watch, an Oregon-based group, on the board and has been chairman of the board's Public Involvement and Communication Committee. He recently served as board vice chairman after expressing interest in leading the board.

He was the only board mem-

ber nominated as chairman who agreed to serve. His election was unanimous.

"I have been stunned by the spectacular maturity shown here," Hudson said.

Members have fostered and encouraged diversity on the board, he said.

Board members with sometimes opposite views — including pro-nuclear and anti-nuclear — have learned to calmly find issues they agree on in order to reach consensus on written advice offered to DOE and its regulators.

The board has earned a reputation for developing positions that are not always popular, Hudson said.

Hudson was an English instructor, department chairman, then division dean for liberal arts and mathematics at Portland Community College's Cascade Campus from 1966 to 2006. He has experience working with budgets, people and communities to address sensitive issues, he said.

He's served as assistant

See **BOARD** | Page B2

Board wants more tanks

Hanford advisory panel,
in big shift of usual thinking,
asks DOE to construct more

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The Hanford Advisory Board is recommending the Department of Energy start work immediately to build new storage tanks for high-level radioactive waste.

The board acknowledged the recommendation was a significant shift in the board's thinking.

In the past some board members have emphasized that attention and available money should be concentrated on getting the waste treated for disposal, rather than building more tanks to store it.

But now members are concerned about the recent discovery of a leak of waste from an inner shell of one of Hanford's 28 double-shell tanks. Although waste has been contained between the shells, as the double-shell tanks were designed to do, the slow leak is a possible indication that the double-shell tanks may be deteriorating.

DOE has 56 million gallons of radioactive and hazardous chemical waste stored in underground tanks from World War II and

Cold War production of weapons plutonium.

It is working to empty waste from 149 single-shell tanks, many of which leaked in the past, into the newer double-shell tanks to be stored until it can be treated for disposal.

The board should have recommended new tanks be built a decade ago, said board member Jerry Peltier.

"This is long overdue," he said. "That the tanks will not last until all the waste is vitrified has finally been recognized."

Last month DOE confirmed that its

See **TANKS** | Page A2

Agency offers to work out differences with Hanford Advisory panel

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The Department of Energy will not impose term limits for any Hanford Advisory Board seats as appointments are made for 2013, according to David Huizenga, senior adviser for DOE's Office of Environmental Management.

He made the announcement in a recent letter to the board before its meeting Thursday and Friday in Richland.

Instead, DOE will work with the Hanford Advisory Board's Executive Issues Committee to continue discussions and consider the recommendations the board made to DOE in September concerning DOE's issues with the board.

"This is a real, positive step forward," said outgoing board Chairwoman Susan Leckband. "We are part of the solution. That's what we asked for."

In September, some DOE officials in Washington, D.C., were considering changes to the board structure, including term limits for certain seats. It is the third time since the turn of the new century that DOE has moved to impose changes on the board that some members have interpreted as an attempt to exert more control over the board or even rid it of members with opinions it disliked.

The Federal Advisory Committee Act charter that covers all DOE environmental management advisory boards requires term limits.

But the Hanford Advisory Board, at almost 19 years old, was formed before the Federal Advisory Committee Act was created.

It assigns most seats to organizations picked to represent a diverse group of people — including tribes, civic groups,

K Basins director receives DOE award

Energy Secretary Steven Chu has given Tom Teynor the Secretary's Excellence Award for reducing environmental risk at Hanford.

Chu gave four of the awards this year across the nation to individuals who demonstrated a high level of performance and outstanding leadership that significantly benefited the nation, according to DOE.



Teynor

Teynor, DOE project director for the K Basins Closure Project, oversaw the removal of used nuclear fuel and knock-out pot sludge from Hanford's K West Basin. The highly radioactive materials were stored 400 yards from the Columbia River.

Under Teynor's leadership, the sludge treatment project has been transformed into a successful project with strong project management, operations, engineering and safety culture, according to DOE.

- Herald staff and news services

Study to look at Hanford risk factors for beryllium disease

Current, past workers sought for research into chronic illness

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Researchers are hoping to find out more about the risk factors for beryllium disease at Hanford in a new study being launched this week.

National Jewish Health in Denver is conducting the epidemiological study to learn more about chronic beryllium disease at

IF YOU GO

What: Public meetings on Hanford beryllium study

When: 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. Wednesday

Where: HAMMER training center, 2890 Horn Rapids Road, Richland

Hanford and also beryllium sensitization, which can lead to development of the disease.

Chronic beryllium disease, which dam-

ages the lungs, is caused by breathing in fine particles of beryllium, a metal used at Hanford and other DOE weapons sites. There is no cure, but treatment can slow the progression of the disease.

There have been some previous studies of beryllium disease at Hanford, but this will be the first to extensively study where affected employees worked and what they did, said Mike Van Dyke, senior industrial hygienist at National Jewish Health, a non-profit medical and research institute.

See **HANFORD** | Page A2

14 Nov 12
HANFORD REACH

Center's teams all have ties to region

Design, building
competition has
6 company teams

SARA SCHILLING

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The six teams of architects and contractors vying to design and construct the first building on Hanford Reach Interpretive Center's campus all have ties to the Tri-Cities.

And this week, they're pitching their concepts to the public agency overseeing development of the long-awaited regional facility.

The first three teams — Apollo Inc. and FFA Architecture and Interiors; Randolph Construction Services and ALD Architects; and Chervenell Construction and Meier Architecture — made their presentations to the Richland Public Facilities District board Tuesday.

The final three are scheduled to appear before the board at a meeting today.

They are: DGR Grant Construction and Terence L. Thornhill Architect; G2 Construction and CKJT Architects; and Bouten Construction and MMEC Architecture and Interiors.

See **REACH** | Page B2

Hanford official leaving

DOE manager's replacement comes from Los Alamos site

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

One of Hanford's two top Department of Energy managers is leaving and will be replaced by the manager of the DOE Los Alamos Site Office in New Mexico.

Kevin Smith, a native of Olympia, will take over as manager of DOE's Hanford

Office of River Protection at the end of December. Scott Samuelson, the current manager, will leave then.

Samuelson has been in charge of the problem-plagued Hanford vitrification plant and the tank farms, where 56 million gallons of radioactive waste are held in underground tanks until it can be treated.

The management of the office has been



Samuelson

marked with turnover, with at least six managers before Smith.

Samuelson shares oversight of Hanford nuclear reservation environmental cleanup with Matt McCormick, manager of the second DOE Hanford office, the Richland Operations Office.



Smith

Hanford whistleblower to speak at Whitman

WALLA WALLA — Hanford whistleblower Walter Tamosaitis will speak Nov. 29 at Whitman College in Walla Walla as part of the Government Accountability Project's "American Whistleblower Tour."

Tamosaitis believes he was removed from the Hanford vitrification plant project for raising questions about the future safe and efficient operation of the plant now under construction. Contractors on the project have strongly denied that.

The talk will be at 7 p.m. at the college's Maxey Auditorium.

— Herald staff

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

MID-COLUMBIA

SECTION B | tricityherald.com | Tuesday, Nov. 20, 2012

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

RICHLAND PUBLIC FACILITIES DISTRICT

Reach board narrows design field to 3

One team will be chosen to create first building of Hanford Reach center

SARA SCHILLING
HERALD STAFF WRITER

Three architect and contractor teams still are in the running to design and construct the first building on the Hanford Reach Interpretive Center campus.

The Richland Public Facilities District board Monday narrowed the field as it draws closer to selecting a final design-build team.

The three teams chosen to submit full proposals are: DGR Grant Construction and Terence L. Thornhill Architect; Bouten Construction and MMEC Architecture and Interiors; and Chervenell Construction and Meier Architecture.

The board is on track to make a final selection in January. Construc-

tion of the 10,000- to 15,000-square-foot building with a 10,000-square-foot unfinished basement then could start in mid-2013 and wrap up the following year, said John Koberg, project manager.

The long-planned interpretive center will go on the west end of Columbia Park.

A total of 10 design-build teams submitted initial proposals, and the interpretive center's building committee winnowed the field to six.

Those six made pitches to the public facilities district board at meetings last week.

"The six that were given to us were all very, very good," said board President Fred Raab during Monday's meeting. "One could have thrown darts at a selection sheet and not done badly."

The public facilities district board has five members, but two — Daniel Boyd and Steven Simmons — didn't participate in the selection because of

professional ties to some of the firms.

The interpretive center project — in the works for a decade — has been delayed through the years by issues including where it will be built. The scaled-back plan now includes a phased approach, with more buildings possible in the future.

The budget for design and construction of the first building is about \$3.35 million.

► *Sara Schilling: 582-1529; sschilling@tricityherald.com*

26 NOV 12

Oxygen to be pumped into soil, boosting microbes that will reduce diesel in ground

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Hanford crews, with the help of bacteria, are attacking an 80,000-gallon spill of diesel fuel near the Columbia River at Hanford.

It's part of the final phase of environmental cleanup at Hanford's N Reactor,

where 900,000 tons of contaminated soil and building rubble have been hauled to a lined landfill in central Hanford.

Eight of Hanford's nine plutonium-production reactors that lined the Columbia River depended on coal-fired plants for auxiliary power.

But N Reactor relied on fuel oil and diesel for auxiliary power and to run a series of pumps and facilities near the reactor. N Reactor was Hanford's most modern and longest-running reactor, operating from 1963-87.

Washington Closure Hanford sub-

contractor TerranearPMC, based in Irving, Texas, recently started work to dig up fuel oil- and diesel-contaminated soil to about 15 feet deep in several places near the reactor.

Enough contamination lingers in the soil that the smell of diesel hangs in the air.

Workers have unearthed pipes buried 5 to 6 feet deep that are blackened with fuel oil. The pipes corroded and leaked. In some cases, spilled fuel would travel along the outside of the underground pipes.

"A lot of dirt is being moved. A lot of

trucks are going out," said Rob Meyer, a Washington Closure field engineer, as he stood near a 20-foot-high pile of contaminated dirt yet to be loaded onto trucks to be taken to a Hanford landfill.

"This was flat just a couple weeks ago," he said.

But where the largest spill occurred from transfer pipes and storage tanks, most of the diesel fuel is sitting about 65 to 75 feet deep above the groundwater.

See **CLEAN** | Page B2

BECHTEL

Safety issues probed

Federal investigation finds many violations at vitrification plant

ASSOCIATED PRESS

A federal investigation has found that Bechtel National might have committed a wide range of safety and health violations at the Hanford vitrification plant it is building to treat high-level radioactive

waste, a published report said Wednesday.

The Energy Department halted construction at the Hanford plant earlier this year in light of allegations involving serious design and construction flaws, the Los Angeles Times reported.

The plant being built by San Francisco-based Bechtel will treat an estimated 56 million gallons of radioactive waste created from about a half-century of

nuclear weapons production.

The waste is stored in underground tanks. At least some of those tanks are leaking radioactive sludge, posing a threat to the nearby Columbia River and making the \$12 billion Hanford plant one of the most urgent environmental projects in the nation.

The agency report obtained by the Times said Bechtel failed to follow procedures, train workers and correct items that did not meet

requirements. The problems included corrosion in pipes and containers.

The federal probe adds weight to concerns voiced earlier by scientists about the design of a sophisticated mixing and filtering system that would condense radioactive waste so it can be cast into solid glass for long-term storage.

Bechtel officials denied

See **SAFETY** | Page B3

DOE ^{25 NOV 12} says it's close to goals

However, it remains clear many deadlines of its Vision will not be met

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The Department of Energy has reduced the 586 square miles of Hanford requiring environmental cleanup to 161 square miles.

In three more years, the land requiring cleanup could be little more than the 75 square miles at Hanford's center as DOE works to complete cleanup outlined in its 2015 Vision, an ambitious plan for work to be completed by

the end of 2015.

It's been clear since at least summer that DOE won't be able to finish all the work in the plan announced about five years ago. But DOE says it is on track to come close.

Five years ago, DOE wanted to break out a scope of work that could be completed in the near term to allow the public to see tangible progress in Hanford environmental cleanup, even though completion of all cleanup will stretch out for decades to come.

Key portions of the 2015 Vision included cleaning up 210 square miles of contaminated land along the Columbia River, treating contaminated ground water closest to the river and demolishing the high-risk, highly contaminated Plutonium Finishing Plant.

The plan would go after items of immediate risk, particularly to the Columbia River, while reducing the overhead costs of continuing work across hundreds of square miles. It also would clean

See **FOOTPRINT** | Page A2

HANFORD

30 NOV 12

Contractor seeks wage, benefit cuts

CH2M Hill in talks with HAMTC;
other contractors might follow suit

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

CH2M Hill Plateau Remediation Co. has proposed a wage cut in addition to benefit cuts for Hanford Atomic Metal Trades Council workers as organized labor negotiations continue.

The wage cut proposal was made Wednesday after negotiations got down to business after the presidential election. The proposed wage cut is in addition to cuts on other matters the Hanford contractor put on the table 11 months ago and has stuck

See **CUTS** | Page A2

New website captures Hanford, other voices

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The Atomic Heritage Foundation is making the voices of those who built Hanford and other Manhattan Project sites available on a new website.

It has launched "Voices of the Manhattan Project" with the Los Alamos Historical Society, posting oral histories of those who worked on the Manhattan Project or were affected by it.

In one, the late Lawrence Denton remembered arriving at the Hanford nuclear reservation from north Idaho during World War II when he was too young to meet the minimum age of 21 to work in the plutonium-production reactors.

The construction camp where 50,000 workers lived was an eye-opening experience, he said. He initially worked as a shipping clerk and remembered walking by the recreation hall in the camp on his way to deliver some paper work and watching the fire department use fire hoses to wash construction workers "hard hats and all" out of the hall and into the street.

Initially, 26 oral histories are available at www.manhattanprojectvoices.org, including six related to the Hanford nuclear reservation. The two organizations plan to build on that with 200 oral histories in their collections and possibly include some from other organizations.

"Eventually, the site should provide a rich tapestry of people and perspectives on one of the most significant developments in modern history," the groups said in a statement.

In addition to accounts from scientists, engineers, craftsmen and laborers who built the complex that created the atomic bomb during World War II, the archive of oral histories also includes

other voices, including Native Americans whose way of life was disrupted by Hanford.

Rex Buck Jr. in an interview recorded in 2003 recounts elders saying that Col. Franklin T. Matthias came to the Wanapum's winter camp at Priest Rapids during World War II to give the band the confusing news that it could no longer go to part of its traditional area downstream on the Columbia River where it had caches of food and equipment.

The land would become the secret Hanford nuclear reservation, where plutonium was produced for the atomic bomb dropped on Nagasaki, Japan, helping end the war. But the band knew only that the restriction would be for the protection of the United States.

The band made pleas to visit sites at Hanford to keep its historic connection and was escorted under heavy military guard, Buck said.

Veronica Taylor, an elder in the Nez Perce tribe, talked of traveling to the Mid-Columbia to gather roots and berries and trade with other tribes, including the Yakamas, Warm Springs and Umatillas, in an interview taped in 2003.

But during WWII, military or police would stop them before Pasco and search their trucks and ask them their business in the area, she said.

Paul Vinther, a physicist, didn't arrive at Hanford until 1950, but in an oral history recounted why the animal farm for testing the effects of radiation on animals was located near F Reactor. It was the farthest downstream of the reactors discharging contaminated cooling water to the Columbia River, and the water there was used for a tank of fish under study, he said.

The website project is being paid for by grants from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the Kerr Foundation and the M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust.

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

“Eventually, the site should provide a rich tapestry of people and perspectives on one of the most significant developments in modern history.”

Atomic Heritage Foundation,
Los Alamos Historical Society

Area teams honored for hazardous material handling

C tank farm team among those awarded

HERALD STAFF

The Eastern Washington Chapter of the Academy of Certified Hazardous Material Managers honored achievements in the Eastern Washington, Eastern Oregon and Western Idaho area at its annual banquet Thursday in Richland.

The Hanford C Tank Farm Waste Retrieval Team of Wash-

ington River Protection Solutions received the Department of Energy Office of River Protection Manager's Award For Exemplary Service. The award was given for innovation, regulatory compliance, execution, management and waste minimization while emptying three underground tanks of high level radioactive waste.

The Environmental Permit Transitions Team of Pacific Northwest National Laboratory and DOE's Pacific Northwest Site Office received an Excellence in Hazardous Materials Management Award for accomplishments involving complex environmental air and nuclear permitting at multiple sites, multiple federal agencies and

the Washington State Department of Health. The award was sponsored by CH2M Hill Plateau Remediation Co.

An Excellence in Hazardous Materials Management Award was given to the Waste Encapsulation and Storage Facility's Capsule Alignment Team for reducing risk in the storage of cesium and strontium.

The award was sponsored by Washington River Protection Solutions.

The CH2M Hill Plateau Remediation Co. Comprehensive Environmental Management Involvement Team received a Special Achievement Award for demonstrating whole-company involvement in a new environmental manage-

ment system. The system received certification as an International Organization for Standardization 14001 system. About 50 employees were involved in planning and more than 2,800 employees were involved in waste minimization activities. The award was sponsored by the Eastern Washington Chapter.

HANFORD

Cleanup deadline changes proposed

Agencies first want to see what lessons can be learned from U Plant Canyon work

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Extending some Hanford environmental cleanup deadlines is being proposed because of newly discovered contamination and also to build experience before tackling some challenging central Hanford work.

The Department of Energy and its regulators, the state Department of

Ecology and the Environmental Protection Agency, have agreed to the revised deadlines for the Tri-Party Agreement. However, the changes will not be approved until after the public has a chance to comment.

Among changes, the deadline to set a schedule for cleaning up large processing plants in central Hanford would be postponed for a decade. Now, the deadline is March.

However, the Tri-Party Agreement agencies want to see what can be learned from the cleanup of the first processing plant on the list, the U Plant Canyon. It is expected to be the first processing canyon in the nationwide DOE

complex to be cleaned up.

Hanford has five processing plants — sometimes called canyons for their long, narrow, high and windowless interiors — that were built to chemically process irradiated fuel rods to remove plutonium for the nation's nuclear weapons program.

However, U Plant was never needed for that purpose. It was used to recover uranium from processing waste. It's expected to be the least contaminated.

Extensive work has been done to prepare it for demolition, removing equipment, piping and other contaminated

See **HANFORD** | Page B3

Draft report calls for study of Hanford plant, animal harm

Meeting planned Dec. 12 in Richland

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

A multitude of possible studies to determine harm to plants, animals, land and water at Hanford are outlined in a new draft report.

The Hanford Natural Resource Trustee's Draft Injury Assessment Plan is an early step toward a legally required assessment of how hazardous chemicals and

radionuclides have harmed natural resources at the nuclear reservation.

The trustees, who represent various governments, plan a meeting from 6 to 8:30 p.m. Dec. 12 to discuss the draft report and allow the public to ask questions and offer written comments. The meeting will be at the Richland Public Library's Gallery Room, 955 Northgate Drive.

After public input is collected, a final version of the report will be released and

See **HARM** | Page B2

Visitors from across the nation sign up for bus tours each year from spring through fall. They can tour B Reactor or take a longer tour that includes B Reactor and a look at the environmental cleanup of Hanford.

Hanford produced plutonium for the nation's nuclear weapons program during the Cold War and World War II.

"Heritage and eco-tourism is one of the fastest growing segments in the tourism industry," said Kris Watkins, president of the Tri-Cities Visitor and Convention Bureau, in a statement.

Attention from the west

side of Washington is important to build recognition that the tours are worth taking, said Colleen French, Department of Energy government affairs program manager.

Congress is considering establishing a Manhattan Project National Historical Park that would include B Reactor and possibly other historic areas at Hanford.

In 2012, almost 10,000 people visited B Reactor or took the Hanford tour, according to DOE. Mission Support Alliance manages the public tour program for DOE.

- Herald staff

Hanford makes list of best places to visit

Seattle Met magazine has named the Hanford nuclear reservation, including its historic B Reactor, one of the best places to visit in the Northwest.

HANFORD

Emptying of tanks continues after delay

New technologies
have been sidelined
by pump problems

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Pumping to empty radioactive waste from Hanford's aging underground tanks has resumed after about a three-month delay.

Department of Energy contractor Washington River Protection Solutions has had promising new technologies ready to go in single-shell tanks that are being emptied into double-shell tanks.

But there have been problems with pumps in the double-shell tanks, causing delays.

The Department of Energy has emptied waste to what it believes is the regulatory limit from three tanks this year but the delays mean it won't get a fourth tank emptied as planned.

However, it still will be a good year for tank-waste retrievals.

Washington River Protection Solutions broke a streak of

See **TANKS** | Page B2

HANFORD CLEANUP

Vit plant manager chosen

DOE leadership team
for project complete

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The Department of Energy has picked Bill Hamel as its project manager for the Hanford vitrification plant, completing the new Hanford DOE leadership team for the project.



Hamel

Hamel, the assistant manager for infrastructure at DOE's Idaho Operations Office, has first-hand knowledge of the trouble shooting of the vitrification plant's technical issues.

In addition to previously working at the plant, he served as the federal coordinator for Energy Secretary Steven Chu's technical review of the vitrification plant's black cells. Over the summer, Chu handpicked a team to study issues and then spent several days in the Tri-Cities with the team and Hamel in September.

Hamel, whose title will be assistant manager for the vitrification plant project, will fill the position that was held by

See **MANAGER** | Page B2

15 Dec 12

Research reactor to cross Hanford

It's been underground
in 300 Area and will
be taken to landfill

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Hanford's TRIGA Reactor is expected to take a slow ride out to a central Hanford landfill today, weather permitting.

Workers were removing it from below the ground in the Hanford 300 Area just north of Richland on Friday. It's the second-to-last research reactor that remained in the 300 Area, where much of Hanford research was done.

The Department of Energy once had six small research reactors there in addition to the nine reactors that lined the Columbia River to produce plutonium for the nation's nuclear weapons program.

The TRIGA Reactor — or Training, Research, Isotopes, General Atomics Reactor — operated in the '70s as part of the fuels and materials research program for Hanford's Fast Flux Test Facility. It was used to look for defects in fuel elements and fuel jackets.

It was housed below ground in the 308-A Building, and the structure above it was torn down earlier.

Friday, a gantry jack system was being used by Barnhart Crane & Rigging to lift the reactor out of the ground and roll it down about 30 feet of tracks, said Peter Bengtson, spokesman for Washington Closure Hanford. The reactor weighs about 250 tons.

Then the reactor was expected to be lowered onto a Goldhofer trailer designed to carry heavy loads for the trip to central Hanford. The plan was to drive the trailer under the gantry jack system.

Vit plant workers donate bikes

HERALD STAFF

Some 1,000 Mid-Columbia children will find bicycles under the Christmas tree this year, thanks to Hanford vitrification plant employees and Local 598 pipefitters.

The Marine Corps Reserves accepted the donation for its Toys for Tots campaign Thursday at the vitrification plant construction site. In addition

to the 1,000 bicycles, toys and nearly \$20,000 in cash were donated.

"The efforts of the vit plant employees are a huge part of the local Toys for Tots program and help us meet the rising demands each year," said Glen Carter, Toys for Tots coordinator, in a statement.

Department of Energy contractors Bechtel National and

URS contributed to the cash donation. Several senior managers attended the event dressed as Santa and his elves, a pledge they made to honor generous employee donations.

Griggs/Ace Hardware ensured the bike orders were fulfilled in time for Christmas delivery and Vintners Logistics will deliver the toys and bikes.

BRIEFS

2 UPRC 12 **Benton sheriff to stay with Hanford contract**

The Benton County Sheriff's Office will continue to provide law enforcement services to the Department of Energy at the Hanford nuclear reservation under a new contract.

The contract, valued at about \$5 million, covers five years, with a DOE renewal required at the end of each of the first four years. The sheriff's office has provided law enforcement services at Hanford since 1992, and the last

contract, which covered four years, was valued at \$4.3 million, according to DOE. It expires Dec. 31.

Services that the sheriff's office provides will remain largely the same, said Cameron Salony, DOE spokesman.

The sheriff's office will do traffic enforcement and will respond to traffic accidents, plus provide mutual aid to other agencies, as needed.

It also will investigate suspected or reported violations of the law, such as thefts. The contract includes making arrests and providing reports,

testimony and evidence for prosecution of crimes.

Mission Support Alliance, the DOE site-wide support services contractor, will continue to provide security services with the Hanford Patrol.

HANFORD

DOE drafts study on borrow pits

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The Department of Energy is proposing digging up an additional 14 million cubic yards of sand and gravel at Hanford to use as fill material.

It has prepared a draft study proposing expanding nine existing borrow pits closest to where the fill will be needed and adding one new borrow pit. Together they would provide sand and gravel over 10 years. The study does not address borrow pits for silt and soil.

The additional fill material is needed because environmental cleanup work, primarily near the Columbia River, has turned up previously unknown contam-

inated areas. In addition, other areas have had more contamination than expected.

Near the former C Reactor, soil has been dug up as deep as 85 feet to remove chromium, a chemical once added to reactor cooling water to prevent corrosion.

Contaminated soil is taken to the Environmental Restoration Disposal Facility, a lined landfill in central Hanford for waste contaminated with hazardous chemical or low-level radioactive waste. The clean fill material is needed to backfill the excavations and to allow native vegetation to be replanted.

By expanding multiple borrow pits, the distance sand and gravel would

have to be hauled would be reduced and greenhouse gas emissions would be minimized, according to the report.

The borrow pits will be recontoured to "blend stably and naturally with adjacent areas in a pattern that is both aesthetically pleasing and that would support healthy establishment of native (plant) communities" when they are closed, the report stated.

Among the largest expansions would be 35 additional acres of borrow pit up to 121 feet deep near the 100 D Reactor, where chromium-contaminated soil in the area is expected to be dug up to near groundwater. The borrow pit there now covers 64 acres.

The new borrow pit would be

between the K and N reactors and would cover 30 acres and be up to 124 feet deep.

The additional area added among all the borrow pits would total 187 acres, bringing the total borrow pit area to 704 acres.

The study, an environmental assessment, is posted at www.hanford.gov. Comments may be sent until Jan. 14 to borrowareaEA@rl.com or Paula Call, NEPA Document Manager, Borrow Area Expansion EA, Department of Energy, P.O. Box 550, Mailstop A2-15, Richland, WA 99352.

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

22 DEC 12

Thomas D'Agostino has led Hanford environmental cleanup since summer 2011

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Thomas D'Agostino, the Department of Energy under secretary responsible for Hanford environmental cleanup, is leaving the federal government, he

announced Friday.

His last day will be Jan. 18, when Neile Miller, the principal deputy administrator for DOE's National Nuclear Security Administration, will step in as the acting under secretary.

In a memo Friday, he said the decision to leave had been difficult. But the end of the first term of the Obama administration is the right time for him to step down after 36 years of federal government employment, the past five and a half as under secretary for

nuclear security, he said.

"I am a strong believer that organizations are healthier when leadership changes on a periodic basis," he said.

D'Agostino has been in charge of DOE environmental cleanup programs since a DOE reorganization by Energy Secretary Steven Chu in summer 2011.

The DOE Office of Environmental Management, which is responsible for Hanford, was moved under the direction

HANFORD

19 DEC 12

ATL gets contract extended for 1 year

Company provides
analytical services,
testing at laboratory

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The Department of Energy has extended the contract for Advanced Technologies and Laboratories through 2013 under an option in the original contract award.

ATL has provided analytical services and testing work at the Hanford 222-S Laboratory for almost eight years. The one year extension is valued at almost \$14.3 million, according to DOE.

ATL's most recent contract award was for a five-year option with a two-year-base period and three, one-year extension options.

The extension announced Tuesday was for the second one-year option.

"DOE appreciates the technical and management capabilities demonstrated by the ATL work force," Ellen Mattlin, the DOE tank farm programs division director, said in a statement.

When ATL won its first five-year contract at Hanford it was valued at \$59 million and the current one was originally valued at \$48.6 million.

However, the current contract now is valued at \$72.4 million over five years.

The value increased by

See **ATL** | Page B4

CH2M HILL

29 DEC 72

DOE audit critical of cleanup contract

Inspector General makes suggestions in report on results

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The contract for CH2M Hill Plateau Remediation Co. at Hanford was not aligned with required environmental cleanup work for three years, according to results of a Department of Energy Office of Inspector General audit.

"The extensive length of time it took is indicative of a troubling weakness in the contract administration process," said a report on the audit results.

Because of problems with cost projections, DOE has not

been able to consistently monitor CH2M Hill's cost performance on its \$5.6 billion contract for cleanup of central Hanford and contaminated groundwater, according to the office.

The Hanford nuclear reservation is contaminated from the past production of plutonium for the nation's nuclear weapons program.

DOE disagreed with several of the conclusions in the report, which the Inspector General's Office issued as a letter with suggestions for improvement rather than a more serious audit report with findings.

Recommendations in the report have been implemented and the report no longer reflects how the contract is

See **AUDIT** | Page C2

29 DEC 12

Governors want trend of budget cuts to end

Letter sent to White House
voices worry about cleanup
funding slowly dwindling

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The governors of five western states, including Washington, are asking the White House to turn around the trend of cutting federal spending for environmental cleanup of the Department of Energy's weapons production sites, including Hanford.

"While much progress has been achieved, we are now concerned that the national fiscal environment will result in the progress virtually grinding to a halt, resulting in significant environmental risk," said a letter sent Thursday to Jeffrey Zients, deputy director for management of the Office of Management and Budget.

The letter was signed by Washington Gov. Chris Gregoire, Nevada Gov. Brian Sandoval, Idaho Gov. Butch Otter, New Mexico Gov. Susana Martinez and California Gov. Jerry Brown. Their states are among 11 in the nation with contamination being cleaned up from nuclear weapons production.

CH2M HILL

Settlement close in case alleging time card fraud

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The federal government and former Hanford contractor CH2M Hill Hanford Group are close to reaching a settlement in a civil lawsuit over alleged timecard fraud, according to court documents.

The two parties filed a report Friday in federal court on the status of a tentative settlement. No details have been made public.

The CH2M Hill board of directors has voted to approve a proposed settlement, the status report said, and federal attorneys have received permission to proceed. The two sides are working on the final language.

Last fall, the federal government took over a civil lawsuit filed by former CH2M Hill worker Carl Schroeder on behalf of the United States under the False Claims Act. The act allows individuals to sue on behalf of the government and collect a portion of any damages awarded.

Schroeder is one of eight former CH2M Hill workers who have pleaded guilty in U.S. Dis-

trict Court for Eastern Washington to conspiracy to commit timecard fraud.

The eight former workers admitted to claiming a full eight hours of work when they were assigned to overtime shifts after their regular workdays or work weeks ended, even though they worked fewer than eight hours of overtime.

Schroeder filed the claim in federal court in 2009, but the case was sealed until last fall.

The lawsuit claims the contractor knowingly presented false claims to the Department of Energy for overtime payments for more than a decade.

DOE reimbursed CH2M Hill for the wages it paid to workers at the Hanford tank farms. The company's management contract for that project expired in 2008.

The farms store 56 million gallons of high-level radioactive waste in underground tanks until they can be treated for disposal. The waste is left from the past production of plutonium at Hanford for the nation's nuclear weapons program.

BRIEFS

Hanford tank farms reach safety milestone

Washington River Protection Solutions workers at Hanford have worked 6 million hours without time lost because of an injury.

It's a milestone never before reached at the Hanford tank farms, where 56 million gallons of radioactive waste are held in underground tanks, according to Washington River Protection Solutions.

The record was set in late December. The tank farm team includes 1,400 workers.

BRIEFS

9 PFP workers checked for radioactive exposure

Nine workers at the Hanford Plutonium Finishing Plant are being checked as a precaution to determine whether they may have breathed in radioactive material.

Last week, radiation release alarms sounded as workers were completing the removal of contaminated material from within a glovebox. No contamination was found on the skin or personal clothing of those workers, who were using respirators.

However, nasal smears indicated radioactive material might have been breathed in by some of the workers who helped the glovebox workers remove the protective clothing worn over their personal clothing after the alarm sounded, according to CH2M Hill Plateau Remediation Co.

The four workers who were at the glovebox and the five workers who helped them remove their protective clothing will have further tests. Results should be available within two weeks.

Board asks DOE to review cleanup carefully

Decision on environmental study could come as soon as Jan. 14, but advisers want time for issues to be raised

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The Hanford Advisory Board has asked the Department of Energy not to make a quick decision on a new

environmental study covering a wide range of Hanford cleanup decisions.

The earliest DOE could issue a decision on the Hanford Final Tank Closure and Waste Management Environmental Impact Statement is

Jan. 14. In about 10,000 pages, the study, released a month ago, discusses and lists DOE preferences for Hanford environmental cleanup projects that could be adopted as DOE policy when a final decision is issued.

The advisory board is asking DOE to wait until at least March 14 to make any decision.

That much time is needed for the

HANFORD NEWS ONLINE

Find related stories at www.hanfordnews.com

advisory board and the public to adequately review and discuss issues and concerns raised in the study, the board said in a letter to DOE officials. The study, which was released Dec. 5, cost \$85 million.

The advisory board is concerned that the study does not identify a preferred way to treat all 56 million gallons of radioactive waste now held in underground tanks. The waste is left from the past production of plutonium for the nation's nuclear weapons program.

See **CLEANUP** | Page B2

EnergySolutions to be sold

Company becoming private in transaction valued around \$1.1B

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

EnergySolutions, which does work at Hanford, has reached an agreement to be purchased by Energy Capital Partners and become a private company, it announced Monday.

EnergySolutions' shareholders will receive \$3.75 in cash for each share of common stock, a premium of about 20 percent above the average closing share price of EnergySolutions' common stock over the last month.

The transaction has an estimated value of \$1.1 billion, according to EnergySolutions.

Energy Capital plans to operate EnergySolutions as a standalone business operation with the current management team remaining in place, according to EnergySolutions.

At the Hanford nuclear reservation, EnergySolutions owns Washington River Protection Solutions, the Hanford tank farm contractor, with URS Corp. At the tank farms, 56 million gallons of radioactive waste from the past production of weapons plutonium are held in underground tanks.

It also built the EnergySolutions Engineering Laboratory with NuVision Engineering. The \$3 million laboratory dedicated in August was donated to Washington State University Tri-Cities, and EnergySolutions is leasing it back at a nominal fee to continue testing of mixing systems for the Hanford vitrification plant.

The company is based in Salt Lake City but its engineering and technology division is based in Richland. About 120 people are employed by EnergySolutions in Richland.

Energy Capital is a private equity firm with offices in New Jersey and California that invests in energy and energy infrastructure companies and projects.

“

We look forward to investing capital in support of management's strategic vision to continue to expand the company's business both in North America and internationally.

Tyler Reeder,
partner at Energy Capital

”

“We look forward to investing capital in support of management's strategic vision to continue to expand the company's business both in North America and internationally,” Tyler Reeder, a partner at Energy Capital, said in a statement.

Energy Capital sees opportunity for growing the decommissioning and disposal business in the United States and for bidding on work in Europe, he said.

The deal will provide investment capital to expand and grow business, David Lockwood, president of EnergySo-

lutions, said in a statement.

As part of the Energy Capital network of portfolio companies, EnergySolutions also will be able to use the firms' management and operational expertise, Lockwood said.

Under terms of the agreement, EnergySolutions will continue to solicit purchase proposals from other companies through Feb. 6.

The EnergySolutions board has approved the purchase by Energy Capital, but stockholders still must approve it.

► *Annette Cary: 582-1533; acary@tricityherald.com*

HANFORD

DOE engineer files police report alleging incident at meeting

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

A Department of Energy engineer has filed a police report alleging she was physically prevented from leaving a Hanford meeting in December.

The report was filed Dec. 20 about a Dec. 19 meeting at an office building at 3000

George Washington Way, Richland police confirmed. The confrontation reportedly happened between two DOE employees and involved a disagreement about how much money should be paid to Bechtel National, which is building the Hanford vitrification plant.

See **REPORT** | Page B2

3 FINALISTS FOR PROJECT

Reach center board expected to select build team

Richland council also might approve contractor for work

SARA SCHILLING

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The public board guiding the Hanford Reach Interpretive Center project is expected to decide Monday on an architect and contractor team to handle the first building on the center's campus.

The Richland City Council next week also will consider approving the contractor for site work — another milestone in the years-long effort to build a center to tell the story of the Mid-Columbia region.

"It will be a very big week, an exciting week," said Lisa Toomey, the Reach project's chief executive officer.

Several design-build teams submitted proposals for the first Reach building, and the Richland Public Facilities District board last fall narrowed the field to three finalists.

The three teams submitted detailed proposals in late December. A group, including board members and Reach staff, is evaluating and scoring them. John Koberg, Reach project manager, said he'll tabulate the scores and present them to the board Monday to help members make a decision.

The three design-build

“

It will be a very big week, an exciting week.

Lisa Toomey,
Reach project CEO

”

team finalists are: DGR Grant Construction and Terence L. Thornhill Architect; Bouten Construction and MMEC Architecture and Interiors; and Chervenell Construction and Meier Architecture.

The day after the public facilities district board meets to consider selecting one of them, the Richland City Council is expected to give its blessing to Apollo Inc. as the contractor for site work. The Kennewick company made the low bid.

The site work will include building some roads and paths, and extending water and sewer infrastructure.

The long-delayed Reach project has been in the works for about a decade. A larger facility once was envisioned, but the scaled-back plan now starts with a 10,000- to 15,000-square-foot building with a 10,000-square-foot basement.

More buildings could come in the future. The campus will be at the west end of

Tank probe comes up negative on leak

Leak found in Hanford tank raised concerns about possible problems in others

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

An inspection of Hanford's second-oldest double-shell tank holding

radioactive waste has found no evidence of a leak.

The result of the inspection was good news for taxpayers as the Department of Energy works to assess the extent of deterioration in massive underground tanks that are expected to be needed to hold radioactive waste for decades to come.

"Confirming the integrity of AY-101 is a positive step," Tom Fletcher, DOE

HANFORD NEWS ONLINE

Find related stories at www.hanfordnews.com

assistant manager of the Hanford tank farms project, said in a statement. "We are continuing to accelerate surveillances of other tanks in an effort to ensure the protection of the workers, public and environment."

In October a leak of radioactive

waste from the inner shell of Hanford's oldest double-shell tank, Tank AY-102, was confirmed. It was the first leak detected within one of Hanford's double-shell tanks and raised concerns about whether other double-shell tanks might be deteriorating.

Hanford has 56 million gallons of radioactive waste left from the past production of weapons plutonium being held in underground tanks.

Waste from 149 leak-prone, single-shell tanks is being pumped into newer double-shell tanks, some of which may need to hold waste for 40 more years until all of it can be treated for disposal.

But already the first of the double-shell tanks have been in use for four decades, the amount of time they

See **PROBE** | Page A2

Ex-Hanford manager starts business

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Shirley Olinger, a former top Hanford Department of Energy manager, has launched a management and technical consulting business in Richland.

Olinger was the manager of the DOE Hanford Office of River Protection from 2007-10, overseeing work by more than 5,000 employees to operate the Hanford waste tank farms and build the \$12.2 billion vitrification plant.

Since then she has worked for DOE headquarters and was given the energy secretary's Exceptional Service Award as she retired from 32 years of work for the federal government in September.

She's recruited a team of 21 experts, many of them well-known in the DOE complex, who will work as needed on projects for the new company, Independent Strategic Management Solutions, or ISMSolutions.

They include Ines Triay, the former

DOE assistant secretary of environmental management, who also will continue to serve as the executive director of the Applied Research Center at Florida International University.

The ISMSolutions team also includes former DOE headquarters officials and former Hanford officials.

They include Nick Ceto, the former Hanford program manager for the Environmental Protection Agency; Herb Berman, the former chief engineer for Washington River Protection Solutions, and Rich Holten, DOE's former deputy assistant manager for central Hanford.

All are people Olinger has worked with through her career and all share her emphasis on executing work in an effective and safe manner, she said.

"We've created a highly motivated team of industry professionals with proven track records of obtaining solutions to difficult challenges in complex and heavily regulated work environments," she said.

The new company will provide professional technical consulting services initially in areas Olinger knows well, environmental cleanup and the nuclear industry. In addition to seeking work at Hanford and other DOE cleanup sites, Olinger also is interested in opportunities as cleanup continues from the Fukushima, Japan, nuclear disaster.

ISMSolutions also will be offering services in the national security, energy, electrical utility and defense sectors.

Olinger expects ISMSolutions to be needed during temporary workload peaks, when government organizations and contractors do not want to hire full-time staff, she said. It also will be available for assessments to prevent problems or for troubleshooting when independent and experienced technical experts are needed, she said.

The new company's strategy is to offer superior expertise at a competitive price because of its low operating costs during a time of uncertainty in the federal budget. Members of the team she has assembled will work as their expertise is needed for specific

projects, and many are retired from contracting or government jobs and do not need health insurance or retirement benefits.

Olinger, the founder and president of the company, allows the company to qualify as a woman- and minority-owned business under federal guidelines. Her great-grandparents were living in Nagasaki when the atomic bomb fueled by Hanford plutonium was dropped there at the end of World War II.

Olinger is married to Matt McCormick, the manager of the DOE Hanford Richland Operations Office. Olinger said she would work with DOE legal counsel to clear any potential conflict of interest issues that might arise for work at Hanford.

The new company will help ensure that federal dollars stay in Eastern Washington, said Carl Adrian, president of the Tri-City Development Council, in a statement.

► *Online: ismsinc.com*

► *Annette Cary: 582-1533; acary@tricityherald.com*



Olinger

Construction can resume

Radioactive waste might bypass Pretreatment Facility until work finished

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

A limited ramp-up of construction can begin at a key facility where work has been slowed at the Hanford vitrification plant, Energy Secretary Steven Chu and Washington Gov. Chris Gregoire announced late Tuesday afternoon.

In addition, the Department of Energy is considering sending radioactive waste directly to the

plant's treatment facilities before the Pretreatment Facility, which is plagued with technical issues, is completed.

INSIDE

Gregoire wants focus on education, transportation.

| A2

Construction remains on hold at the Pretreatment Facility, the largest building on the vitrification plant campus. But at a second key facility where construction was slowed, the High Level Waste Facility, building could resume in some areas.

Gregoire, who leaves office today

HANFORD NEWS ONLINE

Find related stories at www.hanfordnews.com

after eight years as governor, had pledged to get the \$12.2 billion vitrification plant on track toward completion before leaving office.

"Over the past several months, the Department of Energy and the state of Washington have worked together closely to ensure the Waste Treatment Plant is on a stable path to resolving the technical issues, completing construction and beginning to treat waste in the coming years," Chu and Gregoire said in the joint statement.

See **VIT PLANT** | Page A2

Japanese cleanup officials see how Hanford does it

Tokyo Electric Power Co. tours site to gain wisdom on how to clean up their reactors' meltdown

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

On opposite sides of the Pacific Ocean, similar work to clean up radioactive contamination is planned to be carried out during the next 40 years.

Thursday, officials from the Tokyo Electric Power Co., the utility that operated the Fukushima, Japan, nuclear reactors, toured Hanford to see how work is being done there to clean up contamination from the past production of plutonium for the nation's nuclear weapons program.

The Tokyo company, or TEPCO, is responsible for decommissioning and cleanup after a magnitude-9 earthquake was followed by a tsunami that caused a full meltdown at three reactors in 2011.

"We have extensive experience in environmental cleanup," said Steve Schneider, director of the Office of Tank Waste for the Department of Energy. "They want to come here to learn from the U.S. experience."

TEPCO has a contract with Pacific Northwest National Laboratory in Richland and the Savannah River National Laboratory to see how expertise developed at Hanford and other Department of Energy nuclear weapons cleanup sites could apply to cleanup of the Fukushima site.

Fukushima and Hanford have contaminated

GAO slams Hanford vit plant project

Office unsure project can be built, operated successfully

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The Hanford vitrification plant has not been well planned, well managed

or well executed, according to a Government Accountability Office review requested by Congress and released Friday.

“Daunting technical challenges

that will take significant effort and years to resolve combined with a near tripling of project costs and a decade of schedule delays raise troubling questions as to whether this project can be constructed and operated successfully,” the GAO said.

“Additional cost increases amount-

ing to billions of dollars and schedule delays of years are almost certain to occur,” it said.

Among GAO’s recommendations to improve management of the project is determining if incentive payments were made by DOE to its contractor, Bechtel National, for project mile-

stones that were not met. Erroneous payments should be recovered, the report said.

DOE will perform a review of all milestones and incentive fee payments between January 2009 and now, said

See **GAO** | Page A2

HANFORD BUDGETS**'FLAT IS THE NEW UP'**

Officials say they expect no growth or declines amid federal uncertainty

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The uncertain federal budget has Department of Energy officials in the Tri-Cities looking for flat or slightly declining

budgets ahead.

"Flat is the new up," said Roger Snyder, manager of the Department of Energy Pacific Northwest Site Office, at the Tri-Cities Regional Economic Outlook conference in Ken-

newick on Thursday.

He has prepared for budgets for Pacific Northwest National Laboratory in Richland to have a slight downward drift, he said. His DOE office oversees work at the national lab.

INSIDE

\$40M contract for landfill given to out-of-state company. | **C12**

Hanford's budgets could continue to be around \$2 billion annually in the foreseeable future with some ups and

See **FLAT** | Page A2

HANFORD REACH INTERPRETIVE CENTER

Financial issues in question

Review finds construction costs might be higher, expectations of revenue may be overly optimistic

SARA SCHILLING

HERALD STAFF WRITER

A review of the long-awaited Hanford Reach Interpretive Center's financial feasibility concludes officials might be underestimating construction costs and may be overly optimistic about some revenues.

The 25-page independent review also says the center may "be limited by its staffing capabilities and reliance on in-kind services and volunteers," according to a draft provided to the Herald. It urges the city of Richland and Richland Public Facilities District to "consider what they will do in case revenue expectations and continued support are not met."

Reach officials say the review paints an unfair picture of the project, at times relying on inaccurate numbers and making apples-to-oranges comparisons. Rick Jansons, vice-president of the public facilities district

board, called it "sloppy" during a board meeting Monday, and said it "overstated the risk."

The state Department of Commerce hired the technology and management support firm AECOM to complete the review, required under a new state law.

Among other things in the review:

► The cost of building the interpretive center may be higher than the \$240 per square foot that Reach leaders anticipate. Several other interpretive centers built around the U.S. have cost more, the draft says.

See **FINANCIAL** | Page A2

HANFORD

-30 JAN 13

Oregon governor wants DOE to add more tanks

Letter to Energy Secretary Steven Chu comes
after leak found last year in double-shell tank

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The Department of Energy needs to immediately begin work on adding more tanks to hold Hanford's high-level radioactive waste, Oregon Gov. John Kitzhaber said in a letter to Energy Secretary Steven Chu.

The request comes after DOE found a leak last year in the interior shell of Hanford's first double-shell tank.

The leak, combined with issues at the Hanford vitrification plant being built to treat the waste and the need to

See **TANKS** | Page B2

DELTA HIGH SCHOOL

Bechtel National donates \$250,000

31 JAN 09

Project manager urges Hanford contractors to help build STEM school

TY BEAVER

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Standing in a crowded classroom at Delta High School, Frank Russo threw down a gauntlet Wednesday aimed at other Hanford site contractors.

The Bechtel National project manager donated \$250,000 on behalf of his company to the Washington State Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, or STEM,

Foundation to help build a new facility for the STEM-focused high school in Richland.

"We all need engineers in the future and this is where engineers are born," Russo said, calling on other Hanford contractors to step up to the plate for Delta High.

School and foundation officials said the donation is one of the first large contributions to the project so far. They said it could go far in building a new home for Delta High, both in rallying state lawmakers and donors to the cause.

"There have been others who have been interested so we're hoping it will open the floodgates,"



Richard Dickin | rdickin@tricityherald.com

Frank Russo, Bechtel National project manager, left, shares a story Wednesday as he presents a \$250,000 check to help build a new Delta High School. Holding the check are Delta students Jessica Moss and Jesus Mena, with former president of the STEM foundation's board, Phil Ohl, right.

HANFORD

1 Feb 13

Inslee wants more tanks at Hanford

Request comes after
Oregon, HAB ask
for more to be created

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

New Washington Gov. Jay Inslee wants more waste tanks built at Hanford to keep environmental cleanup on schedule, his staff said Thursday.

The Hanford Advisory Board and Oregon Gov. John Kitzhaber already have told

the Department of Energy that more double-shell tanks must be built.

Their concern comes after a leak was confirmed in October in the inner shell of Hanford's oldest double-shell tank, which already has been used for the 40 years for which it was designed.

Hanford's 28 double-shell tanks are needed to hold radioactive waste emptied from 149 leak-prone single-shell tanks until 56 million gallons of waste can be

See **TANKS** | Page A2

REACH INTERPRETIVE CENTER

7 Feb 13

Firm backs off strong wording used in review

‘Fragile balance’ for
covering debt not in
report’s final version

SARA SCHILLING

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The firm hired to review the financial feasibility of the long-planned Hanford Reach Interpretive Center said the agency behind the project is in a better position to cover its debt than previously estimated.

And the firm, AECOM,

backed off some of the stronger language used to describe the Richland Public Facilities District’s ability to make debt payments.

A draft version of the review said there appears to be “a fragile balance” for covering the debt service. The phrase isn’t in the final version released late last week.

AECOM took another look at the review and factored in some updated numbers, leading to the revision, company

See **REVIEW** | Page B2

after she served six years as chairwoman. The position has a six-year term limit.

She agreed to continue serving with new chairman Steve Hudson, but said she plans to work with board members interested in leadership positions to prepare them to eventually serve as chairman or vice chairman.

Leckband represents the Washington League of Women Voters on the board.

... Elementary School.

Hanford board picks new vice chairwoman

10 FEB
2013

The Hanford Advisory Board has picked Susan Leckband to serve as vice chairwoman

vivors has reached \$1 billion, according to the U.S. Department of Labor.

The program pays \$150,000 for workers who likely developed cancer because of radiation exposure or who developed chronic beryllium disease and up to \$250,000 for impairment and wage loss for exposure to hazardous chemicals. Medical costs also are reimbursed.

The program has been paying more claims after eased rules for many cancer cases were approved in 2012 for Hanford workers from July 1972-83. More than 800 pending or previously denied claims for workers with can-

cer were put on a fast track because of the eased rules.

According to Department of Labor statistics, \$851 million has been paid to Hanford workers or their survivors in 5,756 cases. In addition, almost \$150 million has been paid to PNNL workers or their survivors in 997 cases.

If workers were employed by Hanford and PNNL, their cases may have been counted twice.

For more information about filing a claim, call the Hanford Resource Center in Richland weekdays at 946-3333 or 888-654-0014.

- Herald staff

4 FEB 13

Payout to Hanford, PNNL workers hits \$1B

The total compensation paid to ill Hanford and Pacific Northwest National Laboratory workers or their sur-

HANFORD ADVISORY BOARD

Panel wants to speed cleanup of waste spill

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The Department of Energy should not delay work to clean up the highly radioactive spill from a hot cell in a Hanford building just north of Richland, the Hanford Advisory Board said Friday.

DOE and its regulators, the Washington State Department of Ecology and

10 FEB 13

the Environmental Protection Agency, have proposed revised deadlines to the legally binding Tri-Party Agreement.

They include extending the deadline for tearing down the 324 Building, where concentrated cesium and strontium spilled into the soil beneath it, for three years past the current deadline

See **SPILL** | Page B3

HANFORD

Relationship with union grows tense

4 contractors to stop deducting union dues from their paychecks

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The relationship between the Hanford Atomic Metal Trades Council and several Hanford contractors has grown tenser since a collective bargaining agreement covering 2,600 Hanford workers expired.

Four contractors have notified workers they will no

longer deduct union dues from worker paychecks, according to Dave Molnaa, HAMTC president. In addition, they will no longer pay hourly wages for time spent by workers negotiating a new collective bargaining agreement as delegates for the 15 unions under the HAMTC umbrella.

"In our opinion, this latest attack has tipped the balance of fair play by injuring the collective bargaining agent — HAMTC and its negotiating committee," Molnaa said.

It limits HAMTC's capacity

2 workers' radiation levels low

They likely breathed in contaminated air in January incident

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Two Hanford Plutonium Finishing Plant workers have very low levels of radioactive contamination in their bodies after an incident in early January, an investigation concluded.

One worker will receive 3 millirems of radiation throughout 50 years from material he likely breathed in and the other will receive 1 millirem, according to estimates developed with bioassays.

The Department of Energy limit is 500 millirems per year, said Dee Millikin, spokeswoman for CH2M Hill Plateau Remediation Co.

"Ingestion is a very serious event," said Mike Korenko, a Hanford Advisory Board member, as the incident was discussed at the board's meeting Thursday. It is a matter of good conduct of operations and work discipline, he said.

"Obviously, we don't want any contamination to occur," Millikin said.

Several workers were removing portions of a highly contaminated HEPA filter attached to a glovebox in the Plutonium Finishing Plant, when the continuous air monitoring alarm sounded. They had been cutting the connection between a bag

inside the glovebox and a bag outside the glovebox when one end slipped out from under a wet towel placed over the connection, and the alarm sounded.

They left the room and no contamination was found on their skin or personal clothing. They were wearing respirators and protective clothing over their personal clothing.

However, another alarm sounded in a room that was not planned to have airborne radioactive material where workers without respirators were helping remove the protective clothing of the glovebox workers. Nasal smears indicated radioactive material might have been inhaled by some of the workers.

Ten workers were further tested for plutonium ingestion, with two of them showing evidence of breathing in radioactive material.

CH2M Hill is focusing on the response to the alarm, Millikin said. Workers have had many briefings and every supervisor in the plant has been required to meet with the plant's deputy vice president, conduct of operations mentor and radiological control director to discuss expectations for the response to an alarm.

CH2M Hill also is looking at its rules for leaving contaminated areas when an alarm sounds and how to minimize contact with workers wearing less-protective gear.

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

DOE weighs furloughs

8 FEB 13

Sequestration-driven slashing could hit Tri-Cities on March 1

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The Department of Energy is closely examining contracts as the threat looms for sequestration-driven spending cuts March 1, according to a new memo from Daniel Poneman, deputy energy secretary.

It's also considering placing employees

on furlough — a temporary unpaid leave — or taking other actions to slash personnel costs, the memo said.

Unless Congress amends the law, President Obama is required to issue a sequestration order in three weeks to cut about \$85 billion from fiscal 2013 spending.

At Hanford, the cut could range from 7 percent to 10 percent of spending.

The DOE Hanford Richland Operations Office has received no direction for formal action for sequestration, but that could come in the next few weeks, said Jonathan "J.D." Dowell, DOE assistant manager for river and plateau. His comments came Thursday at the Hanford Advisory Board meeting in Richland.

DOE will try to avoid cutting jobs, but budgets already are tight and there are not

See **FURLOUGHS** | Page A2

Members say better outreach may be needed

Federal officials have expressed concerns about composition

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Better outreach to the public may be the key to resolving concerns of Department of Energy officials in Washington, D.C., about the diversity of the Hanford Advisory Board, some members said Friday.

For the third time since 2000, DOE headquarters officials pushed to change the composition of the board in 2012.

The citizen board advises DOE and its regulators, the

Washington State Department of Ecology and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, on environmental cleanup of the massively contaminated Hanford nuclear reservation, where plutonium was produced for the nation's nuclear weapons program. That means questioning government policy and taking stands that sometimes are at odds with DOE.

Some federal officials believe some turnover on the board is needed, and ethnic, racial and gender diversity can benefit boards, said Cate Alexander, the designated federal officer for DOE's eight Environmental Management Site Specific Advisory

14 FEB 13

Official criticizes vit plant red tape

Former chairman
urges decisive action

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Decisive action is needed to get on with work to finish the Hanford vitrification plant and start treating radioactive waste for disposal, said Nils Diaz, former chairman of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Diaz sent a letter Tuesday to outgoing Energy Secretary Steven Chu calling for decisions to be made.

"Although the Department of Energy has expended major efforts directed at resolving the myriad of technical and policy issues at Hanford, a lack of consistent decision-making has impeded completion of the waste treatment project, delaying immobilization," he wrote in the letter to Chu.

The plant languishes because prioritizing safety issues has been obscured by a laundry list of technical and management decisions, Diaz said in the letter. That causes multiple changes in design and direction, which are then

See **CRITICIZES** | Page B2

WHISTLEBLOWER LAWSUIT

14 FEB 13

Vit plant official claims retaliation

Bechtel, URS say
lawsuit has no merit

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

A key Hanford vitrification plant manager, Donna Busche, has filed a whistleblower lawsuit in federal court against contractor Bechtel National and subcontractor URS Energy and Construction.

Busche claims that URS and Bechtel are working to fire her in retaliation for raising safety issues concerning the operation of the \$12.3 billion plant being built by Bechtel for the Department of Energy. A URS employee, she

is the manager of environmental and nuclear safety for the project.

Bechtel and URS have reviewed the legal complaint and found no merit in it, said Frank Russo, Bechtel project director, in a message Wednesday to employees.

"We intend to defend ourselves against the allegations," he said. "Ms. Busche has not been subjected to retaliation, nor will we tolerate retaliation or harassment in any form against anyone who raises a concern."

Busche filed a whistleblower complaint with the Department of Labor in November 2011. But with no decision from

14 FEB 13

Oregon senator to visit Hanford on Tuesday

U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden plans his first fact-finding visit to Hanford on Tuesday since taking over as chairman of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee.

As chairman, he'll play a key role in legislation to create a Manhattan Project National Historical Park, which would include Hanford's historic B Reactor. The Oregon Democrat supports formation of the park, said his spokesman, Tom Towslee.

In addition to touring B Reactor, Wyden also will see the tank farms — where 56 million gallons of radioactive waste are stored in underground tanks — and the vitrification plant being built to treat the waste for disposal.

As the new committee chairman, Wyden wants it understood that Hanford environmental cleanup is a priority, Towslee said.

In addition, Wyden wants to make clear that he's been to Hanford recently when he talks about Hanford with whomever is nominated as the next energy secretary, Towslee said.

— Herald staff

12 Feb 13 Armory proposed on Hanford land

Proposal part of plan to close older facilities where upkeep is costly

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The Washington National Guard is proposing to use 5,000 acres of Hanford land to develop an armory and training grounds.

It has requested a 25-year or longer license from the Department of Energy that would give it permission to use land on the southern end of Hanford. The acreage is immediately west of the Hanford Patrol Academy and HAMMER training center and east of Hanford's Route 10.



Bob Brawdy | bbrawdy@tricityherald.com

The National Guard is interested in building an armory on Hanford land west of the HAMMER training facility and the Hanford Patrol Academy.

The proposal is part of a larger plan for closing down older armories that are more costly to maintain and could include classrooms, offices and storage in addition to land for

training maneuvers, said Capt. Joseph Siemandel in Spokane.

The Guard would build helicopter landing pads and develop gravel roads and personnel staging areas, Major

General Bret Daugherty said in a letter to DOE sent early this month. The gravel roads would be used for wheeled vehicles, but not heavy tracked equipment.

The location would provide opportunities for DOE and the National Guard to share training resources, the letter said. A memorandum of understanding would be developed to coordinate activities between the agencies.

"The opportunity to work with DOE is huge to us," Siemandel said.

The Guard already trains at DOE's HAMMER. There also is potential for the Guard to use the Hanford Patrol Training Academy, which includes weapons bunkers, a driving

BRIEFS

Smoke at tank farm prompts evacuation

The Hanford C Tank Farm was evacuated Tuesday when smoke was seen near an exhauster about 3 p.m.

Chemical vapors vented from underground tanks holding radioactive waste go into exhausters to help filters keep particulates from the tanks from being vented into the air.

The Hanford Fire Department responded, initially using cameras installed in the area to monitor the situ-

ation and then entering the tank farm about 3:45 p.m. There was no evidence of flames and no more smoke was seen, said Rob Roxburgh, spokesman for Washington River Protection Solutions.

A survey found no release of radioactive contamination, he said.

The exhauster has been secured to prevent it from operating and troubleshooting is planned for this morning. Workers were allowed back into the tank farm, which has 16 underground tanks, about 5 p.m., Roxburgh said.

HANFORD

16 FEB 13

TANK LEAK FOUND

Waste from single-shell prompts strong remarks from Inslee

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

An underground single-shell tank at Hanford is leaking up to 300 gallons of radioactive waste a year, Washington Gov. Jay Inslee said Friday.

"I am alarmed and deeply concerned by this news," Inslee said in a press conference. "This is a problem we thought was under control."

Tank T-111 is the first of Hanford's 149 single-shell tanks to apparently leak since pumpable liquids were removed from the last of those tanks in 2004. As many as 67 of the tanks are believed to have leaked in the past.

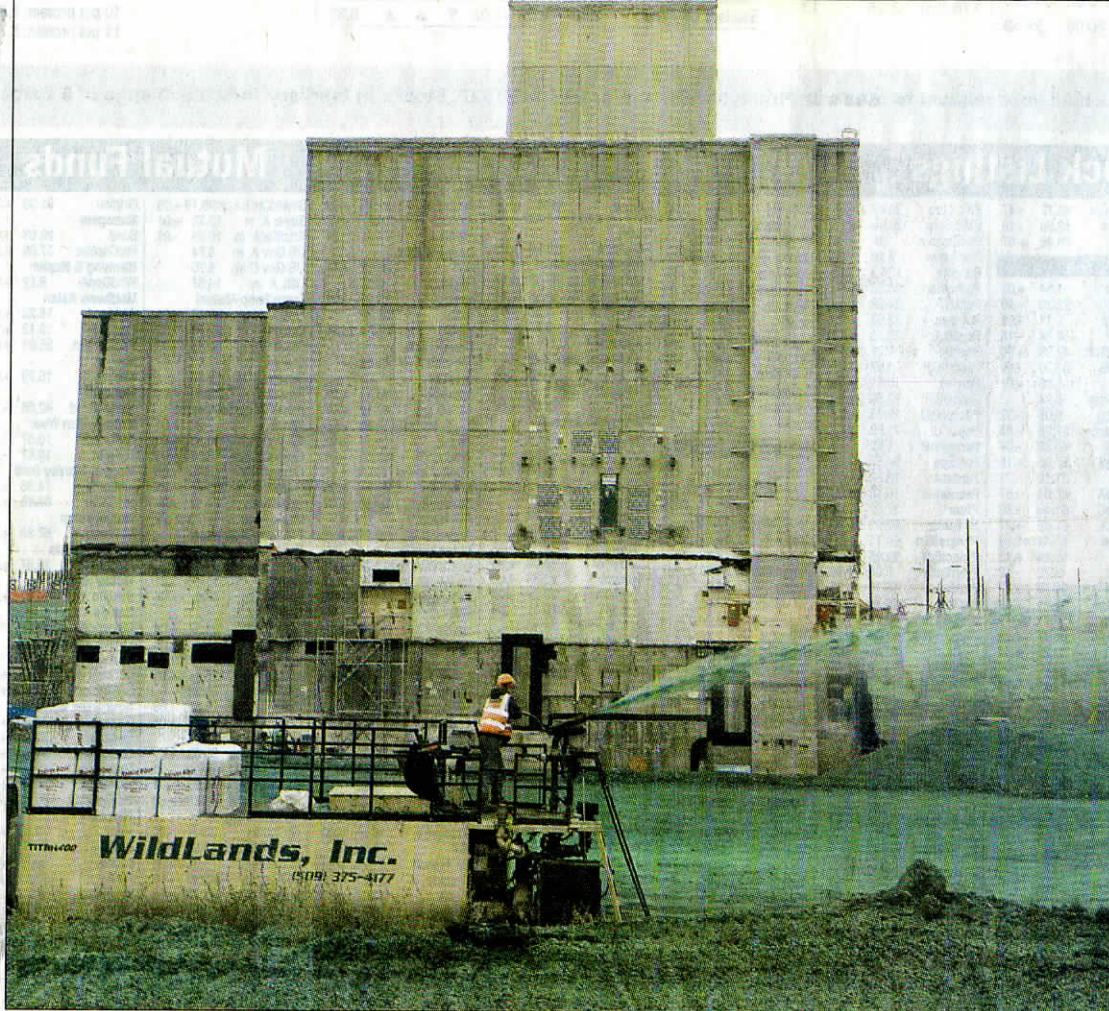
The tanks contain a mix of high-level radioactive and hazardous chemical waste left from chemically processing fuel irradiated at Hanford reactors to remove plutonium for the nation's

nuclear weapons program.

"Washington state has a zero tolerance policy on radioactive leaks," the governor said. "We will not tolerate any leaks of this material into our environment."

The state is willing to take legal action if needed, but that will not be necessary if Congress does its job and meets the nation's legal and moral obligation to clean up Hanford, he said.

The Department of Energy said Friday



CH2M Hill Plateau Remediation Co. has finished work to tear down the Hanford K East Reactor to little more than its radioactive core and has sealed up more than 50 openings. It also has dug up some contaminated soil near the reactor and subcontractor Wildlands Inc. has sprayed seed to grow plants on disturbed land.

Courtesy
Department of
Energy

Down to the core

K East Reactor to be in surveillance mode to await cocooning

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The K East Reactor at Hanford has been torn down to little more than its radioactive core and more than 50 openings have been sealed up.

The reactor will remain that way, in what the Department of Energy calls temporary surveillance mode, possibly for several years.

"Visually, the reactor is almost unrecognizable from when we started, and you can see that cleanup is taking place," said Carroll Phillips, project director for DOE contractor CH2M Hill Plateau Remediation Co., in a statement.

The K East Reactor is one of three of Hanford's nine plutonium-production reactors lining the Columbia River yet to be cocooned, or placed in storage for up to 75 years to let radiation decay to lower levels.

B Reactor is planned to be saved as a museum. The remaining two, the K East Reactor and the nearby K West Reactor, would be cocooned at the same time to save money, under a proposed change to the legal deadlines of the Tri-Party Agreement. DOE and its regulators, the state Department of Ecology and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, support the change.

In the past, Hanford reactors have been cocooned by sealing up their core area and reroofing them. But a new method is proposed for the K East and West reactors. A steel shell would be built around each, topped with an angled roof to direct rainwater runoff away from adjacent soil waste sites.

However, the K West Reactor cannot be cocooned until radioactive sludge is

HANFORD NEWS ONLINE

Find related stories at www.hanfordnews.com

removed from containers in its cooling basin and the basin is demolished.

The proposed new deadline for cocooning both reactors is December 2019.

At the K East Reactor, crews have used concrete to close openings and penetrations in the exterior of the reactor building, including doorways, tunnels and stairwells. Crews also have cleaned out hazardous and flammable materials from the building.

Outside the reactor, some of the contaminated soil has been dug up and subcontractor Wildlands Inc. has sprayed seed on an area immediately surrounding the reactor to grow native plants on disturbed land.

Since October 2008, CH2M Hill has dug up 36 waste sites near the two reactors, removing about 613,440 tons of soil, and has torn down 61 buildings



SEQUESTRATION AND HANFORD

1,000 workers, 6 weeks unpaid time

15 FEB 13

Automatic federal cuts would cause delays, report states

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Hanford would place more than 1,000 workers on unpaid leave for about six weeks if the automatic federal budget cuts known as "sequestration" occur March 1, according to a report by the House Appropriations

Committee Democrats.

Hanford has close to 9,000 workers. Hanford and other DOE defense sites undergoing environmental cleanup would be forced to suspend and/or delay cleanup activities and shut down facilities, the report said. Affected facilities would be placed in a safe standby condition.

At Hanford, the retrieval of radioactive waste from leak-prone underground tanks would be delayed, the report said. In addition, disposition of the waste would be delayed, evidently a reference to work to build the \$12.2 billion vitrification plant to treat the waste. Decontamination projects at Hanford also would be delayed.

See **TIME** | Page A2

EFFECTS ON PNNL NOT YET CLEAR

Pacific Northwest National Laboratory in Richland would be affected by sequestration, but it's unclear how cuts would be distributed across the many Department of Energy and other agencies that provide money for its \$1 billion annual budget.

However, PNNL reduced its size by

428 positions in fiscal 2012, which will help it prepare for possible sequestration. The Department of Energy lab now employs about 4,500 workers, most of them in Richland. The lab is better positioned than most national

See **PNNL** | Page A2

MID-COLUMBIA

SECTION B | tricityherald.com | Friday, Feb. 22, 2013

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

Waste might be sent to New Mexico

Sen. Ron Wyden says move would be one possibility for material in leaking tank

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Radioactive waste from the newly discovered leaking tank at Hanford could be shipped to New Mexico by the Department of Energy, rather

than treated at the vitrification plant.

That's one solution for Tank T-111 that may be discussed today when Washington Gov. Jay Inslee meets with Energy Secretary Steven Chu in Washington, D.C.

After touring Hanford on Tuesday, Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore., said one possibility DOE mentioned is to send waste from some tanks, including T-111, to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant, or WIPP, in the Chihuahuan Desert outside Carlsbad, N.M. It is a national

repository for "transuranic" waste — waste contaminated with plutonium.

DOE is considering a range of options to retrieve waste from underground tanks, treat it and package it so it could be designated transuranic waste for WIPP disposal, DOE said in a statement after the Herald requested more information.

In 2003, DOE proposed sending waste from eight Hanford tanks to WIPP instead of processing it at the vitrification plant, saying that would

save taxpayers \$500 million.

However, in 2004, New Mexico barred tank waste from Hanford, Idaho and South Carolina nuclear sites unless DOE proves the material never has been "high-level" waste.

"This is about so much more than a fight over labels on drums," said Bill Richardson, then New Mexico's governor, as he directed his staff to address the issue of tank waste in 2003. "It is about promises that were made to the people of New Mexico

when WIPP opened, and making sure those promises are kept."

High-level waste is required to be sent to a deep geological repository. Officials originally planned to send the vitrification plant's high-level waste to the Yucca Mountain site in Nevada, but the federal government shut down the Yucca Mountain project in 2010.

The current New Mexico governor

See **WASTE** | Page B3

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Hanford's 222-S Laboratory, where some of the nation's most hazardous radioactive material is handled and analyzed, is a mix of contradictions.

Its primary job is to analyze samples of waste left from the past production of plutonium for the nation's nuclear weapons program.

But once a sample of waste is collected from Hanford's underground tanks holding 56 million gallons of radioactive waste, it becomes precious material.

"These are very important, very valuable samples," said Dan Hansen, the lab operations manager for Department of Energy contractor Advanced Technologies and Laboratories, or ATL.

The central Hanford lab is old, dating from 1951 when it was the process lab supporting the REDOX plutonium separations plant. But it has the newest large hot cells in the Department of Energy complex and DOE plans to use the lab for decades to come.

With work at Hanford now focused on environmental cleanup, the lab is one of only two operating nuclear facilities at the site.

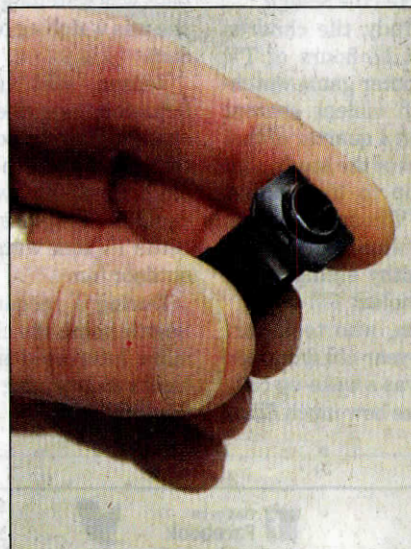
And it is the only continuously operating nuclear facility. The other, the 242-A Evaporator, operates only periodically to reduce the amount of liquid waste in some of the tanks to make more space available.

In 70,000 square feet managed by DOE contractor Washington River Protection Solutions, ATL performs about 25,000 inorganic, organic and radionuclide analyses a year at the 222-S Laboratory.

Samples can be very small, almost forensic, like a wipe of difficult-to-reach material between the shells of one of Hanford's underground double-shell tanks. Or they can be large, like the multiple 19-inch-long



Above: Heavy containers called "pigs" are used to transport some high-level radioactive waste samples collected in underground tanks to the 222-S Laboratory. These pigs are empty and waiting to be taken back to the tank farms.



Left: Advanced Technologies and Laboratories employees who work with small samples of radioactive waste under fume hoods wear ring dosimeters to measure radiation.



HANFORD'S HOT CELLS



Photos by Richard Dickin | rdickin@tricityherald.com

David Jackson, an Advanced Technologies and Laboratories chemical technician, operates a manipulator inside one of the 12-by-12-foot hot cells at Hanford's 222-S Laboratory as Mike Purcell supervises. The lab is used to analyze Hanford's high-level radioactive waste.

HANFORD CLEANUP

Estimated cost now at \$114.8B

With annual budgets unlikely to be funded, costs likely to go up

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The estimated price tag is \$114.8 billion for remaining environmental cleanup at Hanford, plus some post-cleanup oversight, according to a new Department of Energy report.

That's an increase from the 2012 estimate of \$112 billion.

However, even the new \$114.8 billion estimate might not be enough. It's based on annual budgets large enough to meet Hanford cleanup obligations, but those budgets are unlikely to be funded, and costs typi-

cally increase when projects are delayed.

The DOE report, entitled "2013 Hanford Lifecycle Scope, Schedule and Cost," includes annual budgets of more than \$3 billion for five of the years between now and 2020. Two of those years, the budget figure is more than \$3.5 billion.

Hanford typically receives a little more than \$2 billion annually for environmental cleanup. DOE has said it expects that level of funding for the foreseeable future.

The annual report is required by October 2010 changes to the legally binding

See **ESTIMATED** | Page A2

HANFORD NEWS ONLINE

Find related stories at
www.hanfordnews.com

23 FEB 13

Inslee says 6 tanks leaking

Energy secretary tells governor he will study data himself

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Six of Hanford's underground waste storage tanks are leaking radioactive and hazardous chemical waste into the ground, Washington Gov. Jay Inslee announced Friday afternoon.

Last week, the state said one single-shell tank was leaking up to 300 gal-

lons of waste a year. But after meeting Friday with Energy Secretary Steven Chu, Inslee said he's been told five more are leaking.

Whether there could be more than six tanks leaking has not been determined, Inslee said. Chu wants to personally study the data, according to the state of Washington.

The amount of waste leaking from



Inslee

Tank T-111 was discovered to be leaking last week.

DOE has not confirmed that six

each tank varies. Several tanks date from the World War II era, with five built in 1943-44 and the sixth in the 1950s.

Three are in tank farms other than the T Tank Farm, the grouping of 16 tanks where

tanks are leaking, but said Friday in a statement that they do have declining levels of liquid.

The discovery of additional leaking tanks "is disturbing news," and raises more concerns about the condition of the rest of Hanford's 149 single-shell tanks, the governor said. But there is no imminent health danger to the public from the leaks, he said, and DOE agreed.

See **LEAKING** | Page A2

“
Compounding these concerns are the way in which we continue to learn about them.

Bob Ferguson,
state attorney general

”

26 Feb 13

Hanford tour signup begins Monday online

Seats expected to go quickly since fewer seats being offered

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Signup for Hanford bus tours this year starts at 6 p.m. Monday on the internet.

Fewer tours are being offered this year, so expect seats to go quickly. Last year, all seats were claimed in five hours and fifteen minutes.

To sign up, go to www5.hanford.gov/public tours. Signup is offered only on the internet. Those without home internet service may use public library internet access.

Although just 40 tours instead of 60 tours are being offered this year, the Department of Energy expects almost as many people to participate because of a change in the registration policy, said Cameron Salony, DOE spokesman.

Too many people were not

HANFORD

Wyden seeks tank leak timeline

Oregon senator asks federal watchdog to probe when DOE knew of leaks, reported them

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore., is asking when the Department of Energy knew underground tanks were leaking radioactive waste at Hanford and whether the issue immediately was reported.

He asked the Government Accountabil-



Wyden

ity Office to investigate those and other issues Tuesday in his new role as chairman of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee.

Also Tuesday, the Washington State Senate Energy, Environment and Telecommunications Committee said it would hold a hearing at 8 a.m. Thursday to learn more about Hanford's leaking tanks.

DOE announced Feb. 15 that the level of waste in one of Hanford's single-shell

tanks, T-111, was dropping by up to 300 gallons a year. It was the first suspected leak since as much liquid as possible was pumped from the enclosed tanks in 2004.

Then last week, Washington Gov. Jay Inslee said he had learned after meeting with Energy Secretary Steven Chu that five more tanks are leaking.

Wyden is asking the GAO to look into how the recent tank problems were identified and whether changes need to be made in the monitoring program for single-shell tanks.

See **TIMELINE** | Page B2

More barriers option for Hanford tanks

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Covering the ground with a durable plastic or asphalt barrier is one possible option to stop the spread of radioactive waste leaking from Hanford's underground tanks, said Jane Hedges, manager of the Department of Ecology's nuclear waste program.

Other options being considered are

a second round of pumping of as much liquid waste out of single-shell tanks or possibly using new technology to get liquid and solid wastes out of the tanks and to treat it, Hedges said. She spoke Thursday in Olympia at a work session hearing of the Washington State Senate Energy, Environment and Telecommunications Committee.

The committee said it wanted the information to understand what the

Legislature could do to address the problems.

In the past an estimated 1 million gallons of radioactive waste have leaked or spilled from as many as 67 of Hanford's single-shell tanks or their piping systems. Some have held radioactive waste since World War II.

When the last of the pumpable liquids were removed from the tanks in 2004, the Department of Energy

believed all 149 single-shell tanks at Hanford temporarily were stabilized and that none were leaking. A new look at data on the level of waste in the tanks showed that was not the case, and the state announced this month that six of the tanks are leaking.

The waste left in the tanks now is sludge the consistency of peanut butter, with liquid trapped among solid particles, Hedges said.

Trying to pump more of the liquid out might be a possibility, she said. Just as liquid separates from organic peanut butter over time, some of the tank liquid might have become more accessible with time.

However, the tanks do not have pumps in place, and the Department of Energy would need a place to put

Work complete at 300 Area

Hanford site was used to test almost everything done for plutonium production

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Furrowed rows of rocky soil covered with straw are all that remain in the north portion of Hanford's 300 Area,

the nuclear reservation's industrial complex a mile north of Richland.

Gone are 60 buildings and 53 contaminated soil waste sites north of Apple Street, a street familiar to Hanford workers because it divides the center of the 300 Area east to west.

Completing the work and replanting the area with native grasses, which will sprout beneath the straw, meets a legally binding Tri-Party Agreement

deadline a month early.

"This is what 'all done' looks like," said Larry Gadbois, a scientist for the Environmental Protection Agency, the regulator on the project. "Ten years ago this was a very ugly, old, contaminated industrial area."

The 300 Area was used for almost 60 years to fabricate uranium fuel for Hanford's production reactors that produced plutonium for the nation's

nuclear weapons program. It also was used for research, and almost anything that was done elsewhere at Hanford to produce plutonium was tested first at the 300 Area.

That left highly contaminated buildings for workers to demolish and radioactive and chemical waste buried undocumented in unexpected places.

Hanford's first reactor and the

See **300 AREA** | Page B2

BRIEFS

3 MAR 13

Chemical society plans talk on Hanford vit plant

A discussion of the Hanford vitrification plant being built to treat up to 56 million gallons of radioactive waste is planned at 10 a.m. Saturday.

The Richland Section of the American Chemical Society is sponsoring the program in Room S-145 of the Columbia Basin College's Math/Science Building on its Pasco campus.

Dan McDonald of the Washington State Department of Ecology will discuss the status of tank waste treat-

4 MAR 13

Fluor may settle lawsuit alleging improper lobbying

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The federal government has negotiated a tentative settlement agreement in a whistleblower lawsuit accusing Fluor Hanford of using federal money to lobby for funds for the HAMMER training center at Hanford, according to court documents.

Significant progress has been made in resolving the case, with a tentative settlement agreement reached but not yet approved, the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern Washington District told U.S. Judge William Fremming Nielsen last week in court documents.

"The parties need a limited period of time to complete their negotiations and finalize the proposed settle-

ment," said court documents filed by the U.S. Attorney's Office. "Specifically, the United States is in the process of seeking authority to resolve this matter for the proposed amount. The parties also need some additional time to negotiate and finalize settlement agreement language."

Nielsen, an Eastern Washington U.S. District judge, agreed to give the U.S. Attorney's Office until April 15 to either resolve the case or file a complaint against Fluor Hanford and its parent company, Fluor Corp.

In November, the Department of Justice announced it would take over a previously sealed whistleblower lawsuit accusing Fluor of

SEQUESTRATION AND HANFORD

Workers stuck in limbo

Contractors tell employees they don't know what result will be, as DOE hasn't said

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Hanford contractors have told their employees they don't know what to expect with forced budget cuts, called sequestration, that are set to start today.

However, some employees might get

news soon of layoffs or unpaid leave.

"We're currently assessing the potential impacts at Hanford and will know more early next week," said Cameron Hardy, DOE Hanford spokesman. "We anticipate impacts to our contractor work force, various projects and programs and a number of subcontracts for cleanup work at Hanford."

A letter is expected to be sent from DOE to Washington Gov. Jay Inslee early next week giving more details on the effects of sequestration at Hanford.

Then, contractors might be sent letters

detailing cost cuts, which should result in better information about potential delays to environmental cleanup and impacts to contractor workers and subcontractors.

Inslee has said that the sequestration could not come at a worse time, given news that six Hanford underground tanks have newly been discovered to be leaking underground waste.

The Tri-Cities, because of its economic dependence on Hanford, will be disproportionately affected by the across-the-board

6 MAR 13

Bechtel engineer Olson named Engineer of Year

Bechtel engineer John Olson was named 2012 Tri-Cities Engineer of the Year as part of National Engineers' Week.

Olson was recognized for his significant technical contributions to the Hanford Waste Treatment Plant and his active involvement in the American Institute of Chemical Engineers at the local and national levels. He was picked for the honor by a committee appointed by the Tri-Cities Engineers Week Coalition and Washington State University Tri-Cities.

Olson is a deputy technical manager at the Hanford Waste Treatment Plant, also known as the vitrification plant. Olson is responsible for executing the engineering associated with pulse jet mixing, one of the most complex technical questions facing vit plant engineers.

Hanford bus tours filled up for 2013

6 MAR 12

All seats on Hanford sitewide bus tours for 2013 have filled.

Registration opened at 6 p.m. Monday on the internet and seats were filled by 8:32 a.m. Tuesday.

If you didn't get a seat on the tours, which include a stop at B Reactor and a look at environmental cleanup work, you still could get a seat as cancel-

3 MAR 17

Reach center tours starting soon

SARA SCHILLING

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The Hanford Reach Interpretive Center won't open its doors until next year, but residents and tourists will be able to explore its themes long before that through a series of guided tours the center is launching this spring.

The tours will touch on everything from the Mid-Columbia's natural history to its flora and fauna, agriculture and hydropower. They

fit with the Reach center's mission of education, said Lisa Toomey, chief executive officer.

"While we're working on bricks and mortar, we're going to be delivering. We're going to deliver programs that we hope the community will embrace," Toomey told the Herald.

The full schedule, with dates and prices, is on the Reach's website, www.visitthereach.org.

There's a variety. Among the highlights:

▶ Three separate tours focusing on the ice age floods that shaped the region; including one

tour that will serve as a professional development opportunity for teachers.

▶ A jet boat trip to Sacajawea State Park, a pass through the locks at Ice Harbor Dam and stops at Broetje Orchards and a Boise Cascade tree farm.

▶ A hike led by naturalists who'll provide expertise on the birds and flowers.

▶ A tour showing "the system of beer from hops to bottle" with visits to hop fields, a drying plant and the American Hop Museum in

See **TOURS** | Page A2

BRIEFS

Signup for Hanford tours begins today ^{4 MAR} _{20 13}

Signup for Hanford sitewide tours starts today at 6 p.m. on the internet.

Seats could go quickly since fewer tours are being offered this year.

Seats also remain available for tours of Hanford's historic B Reactor, after signup for those tours started at noon Saturday. However, the weekend tour seats available by phone and the internet have all been taken for 2013.

The Hanford sitewide bus tours include a briefer look

inside B Reactor plus a tour of environmental cleanup work across the nuclear reservation. Tours are available from April 9 to Sept. 12.

Participants must be U.S. citizens and at least 18 years old for the sitewide tours. For B Reactor tours, available April 1 to Sept. 21, there is no citizenship requirement and participants must be at least 12 years old.

To sign up for a sitewide tour, go to www.hanford.gov and click on "Hanford Tours" under "Quick Links" on the right-hand side of the page. Information to sign up for B Reactor tours is available there also. No telephone

signup for sitewide tours is available, but B Reactor tour reservations are available by calling 509-376-1647.

\$171 million must be cut at Hanford

Governor receives updated data
on the effects of sequestration

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The Department of Energy needs to cut \$171 million from Hanford spending because of forced federal budget cuts called sequestration, according to updated information given Tuesday to Washington Gov. Jay Inslee.

That does not include some possible impacts to subcontractors, Inslee was told in a letter from DOE Deputy Secretary Daniel Poneman.

The largest cut will be to work managing 56 million gallons of radioactive waste held in aging underground tanks and to build the \$12.2 billion vitrification plant to treat the waste for disposal. Those projects, both under the DOE Hanford Office of River Protection, will see an estimated reduction of \$92 million.

The rest of the \$171 million will come from a \$79 million cut in spending on projects under the DOE Richland Operations Office, which is responsible for Hanford cleanup along the Columbia River, central Hanford cleanup except for the underground tanks, cleanup of contaminated groundwater and the overall operation of the nuclear reservation.

The estimate of the number of employees affected has remained unchanged from the start of the week. Up to 4,700 workers out of almost 9,000 at Hanford can expect to be forced to take furloughs or might be laid off, according to the letter.

5 MAR 13

Forced cuts may hit hard at Hanford

Sequestration could
have effect for more
than half of workers

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Hanford will need to cut more than \$156 million from its spending between now and the end of the year under forced federal budget cuts, or sequestration, that took effect Friday.

The cuts are estimated to affect up to 4,700 of Hanford's almost 9,000 employees, either with forced time off or, in some cases, layoffs.

The Department of Energy Hanford Richland Operations

HANFORD NEWS ONLINE

Find related stories at
www.hanfordnews.com

Office needs to cut \$78 million from its spending. The other DOE Hanford office, the Office of River Protection, is expected to have to cut its spending by at least \$79 million and most likely more.

The Richland Operations Office expects the budget cut to translate to furloughs — or additional time off — for an estimated 1,700 contractor employees and layoffs for an estimated 200 contractor employees.

That could affect employees at CH2M Hill Plateau

Inslee makes Hanford stop

Governor, DOE want to send some tank waste to New Mexico

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

A proposal to send some of Hanford's tank waste to the nation's repository for transuranic waste is a first step to address aging, underground tanks that are leaking radioactive waste into the ground, Gov. Jay Inslee said Wednesday.

He spent the day touring Hanford to learn more about plans for six underground tanks discovered to be leaking radioactive and hazardous chemical tanks in the past two weeks. Although 67 of Hanford's 149 single-shell tanks are



suspected of leaking in the past, DOE had believed that emptying the last of the pumpable liquids from them in 2004 had stopped the problem.

DOE announced Wednesday morning that it would like to send 3.1 million gallons of the 56 million gallons of tank waste to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant, or WIPP, in New Mexico for disposal.

That would be done without sending the waste to the Hanford vitrification plant, which is

See **INSLEE** | Page A2

HANFORD NEWS ONLINE

Find related stories at
www.hanfordnews.com

6 MAR 13
HANFORD HISTORY PARTNERSHIP

Project aims to preserve heritage

People who have stories about the years from 1907-67 being sought

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Sarah St. Hilaire, a Washington State University Tri-Cities intern, grew up steeped in Hanford history.

Her grandfather worked on the Manhattan Project and her mother was born in 1945 in Richland, then newly taken over by the federal government.

But she wondered why there was not more publicly available history on the early years of the nuclear reservation — when settlers were forced off their land to make way for a secret World War II project and a construction camp for 50,000 people sprang

up in the desert.

Now she'll be part of collecting the history of the Hanford area and making it more accessible to researchers, students, families with ties to Hanford and local residents as part of a new project organized by 11 Tri-City agencies.

The Hanford History Partnership plans to preserve and showcase the Hanford story.

"The Tri-Cities heritage in inextricably intertwined with the his-

tory of Hanford," Michael Mays, assistant vice chancellor of the College of Arts and Sciences programs at WSU Tri-Cities, said as the new partnership was announced Tuesday.

"This collaboration will capture, compile and document the diverse stories of life in our region before they are lost to time," he said. "And the public's help is needed to make

See **HERITAGE** | Page A2

7 MAR 13

CH2M Hill agrees to settlement

Contractor to pay \$18.5M
in civil, criminal liability

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

CH2M Hill has agreed to pay \$18.5 million to settle civil and criminal allegations of defrauding taxpayers through widespread timecard fraud at the Hanford nuclear reservation.

It's the largest-ever penalty for a Hanford contractor and possibly the largest settlement ever negotiated by the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Washington, said U.S. Attorney Michael Ormsby on Wednesday.

The settlement includes \$16.55 million to resolve civil liability under the False Claims Act and a refund of \$1.95 million in wrongfully obtained profits by CH2M Hill Hanford Group, the Department of Energy's Hanford tank farm contractor until 2008. It managed 56 million gallons of radioactive waste from the past produc-

tion of weapons plutonium held in underground tanks.

CH2M Hill also will pay \$500,000 toward a timekeeping system to better monitor timecards for workers on its current Hanford contract. CH2M Hill Plateau Remediation Co. is responsible for environmental cleanup in central Hanford and cleaning up contaminated groundwater.

It will hire a corporate monitor at a cost of up to \$80,000 to develop policies, procedures and employee training, the settlement agreement said.

In addition, CH2M Hill will continue to cooperate in the Department of Justice's ongoing fraud investigation. To date, eight former workers for CH2M Hill at the Hanford tank farms have pleaded guilty to timecard fraud.

However, the settlement agreement lists 24 additional people, including managers and supervisors whom the Department of Justice reserves the right to possibly hold liable.

CH2M Hill has agreed that certain members of upper management and

supervisors of hourly workers did not take steps to discipline workers claiming unworked overtime and in some cases supervisors helped hide the fraud, according to the Department of Justice.

"This sort of systemic fraud is an appalling abuse of the trust we place in our contractors at Hanford and it simply will not be tolerated," Ormsby said.

As part of the settlement, the Department of Justice has agreed there will be no criminal prosecution of CH2M Hill.

It announced in September that it was taking over a civil whistleblower lawsuit filed against CH2M Hill Hanford Group and its parent corporation, CH2M Hill, alleging timecard fraud. Former CH2M Hill worker Carl Schroeder, who has pleaded guilty to timecard fraud, filed the lawsuit in federal court under the False Claims Act, which allows individuals to sue on behalf of the government.

CH2M Hill acted responsibly, stepped up and admitted the fraudulent activity, Ormsby said.

HANFORD SEQUESTRATION

Union offers plan to help save jobs

Some workers may be asked to volunteer to go on leave

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Hanford Atomic Metal Trades Council workers at three Hanford contractors are being asked to consider taking time off to help save the

jobs of fellow workers.

The three Department of Energy contractors plan a combination of furloughs, or time off, for nonunion workers and layoffs for union workers to cut costs because of forced federal budget cuts, or sequestration.

Collective bargaining agreements prevent contractors from furloughing HAMTC workers, leaving layoffs as the remaining option for those workers.

However, HAMTC proposed a memorandum of understanding that could save some jobs if enough HAMTC workers volunteer to take paid and unpaid leave, said Dave Molnaa, HAMTC president. A similar

agreement more than eight years ago saved HAMTC jobs, helping Molnaa persuade contractors to sign on now, he said.

HAMTC is a labor organization representing 15 unions working at Hanford.

CH2M Hill Plateau Remediation Co., Washington River Protection Solutions and Mission Support

Alliance all have signed the agreement or expect to sign, committing to using the savings to preserve jobs.

CH2M Hill told its employees Wednesday that it needs to cut \$29.8 million by Oct. 1, a 16 percent reduction in its budget for the remaining seven months of fiscal 2013.

8 Feb 13

\$300,000 donated for amphitheater, solar system model

Sculptures will be set up for several miles along the Columbia

SARA SCHILLING

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The Columbia Center Rotary Charity is donating \$300,000 for an amphitheater at the planned Hanford Reach Interpretive Center and a student-designed solar system project.

The outdoor amphitheater will have large, criss-crossing arches representing the sun.

Sculptures representing the other planetary bodies will be set up along the Columbia River, with Pluto miles away by the boat launch to the Han-

ford Reach National Monument near Othello.

"It's a red-letter day," said Lisa Toomey, the Reach center's chief executive officer, on Thursday. The rotary charity announced the donation that day and presented a check during an evening meeting of the Richland Public Facilities District Board, which is developing the long-awaited center.

Mike Rader, the charity board president, noted the Reach center's transformation in the last 14 months from a project that was "too big and too expensive" to one that's "affordable, practical (and) sustainable."

"We believe in investing in the future and present this gift

Cantwell offers bill to create park

Site's preservation would be secured, she says

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Senate legislation to create a new Manhattan Project National Historical Park that would include Hanford's B Reactor was introduced Thursday by Sen. Maria Cantwell, D-Wash., and Sen. Lamar Alexander, R-Tenn.

Senate and House bills also were introduced last year, but

the session ended before they could be passed. The Senate bill introduced Thursday is similar to last year's bills, and a House bill could be introduced as soon as next week.

"Designating the B Reactor as a National Historical Park would secure its long-term preservation while expanding visitor access to a key site in

W. MARCH 13

Shane Fast pleads guilty to kickbacks

Gave \$40,000 of gifts to several purchasers; he says he never asked for anything in return

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Shane Fast pleaded guilty Thursday in federal court to a single felony count of violating the anti-kickback law after giving \$40,000 worth of gifts to purchasers at the Hanford nuclear reservation.

Fast, a former congressional candidate, owned Fast Pipe and Supply in Pasco and gave gifts that federal attorneys said were intended to influence buyers to do business with him for almost three years.

During that time, the 14 Hanford purchasers who federal attorneys believe accepted gifts ordered \$3.9 million in goods from Fast Pipe, according to court documents.

Fluor Hanford was reimbursed by the Department of Energy for items purchased for use at Hanford.



Fast

"I've said from the start that I gave tickets, gifts and gift cards to customers and never asked for anything in return," Fast

told the Herald.

However, he was concerned he could not win the case at a trial because the federal government had to prove only that he knew what the gratuity limits were for purchasers and gave them gifts above that value, he said.

At least nine purchasers for former Hanford contractor Fluor Hanford have reached settlement agreements with the Department of Justice in the kickback scheme from November 2005

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

MID-COLUMBIA

SECTION C | tricityherald.com | Saturday, March 16, 2013

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

B Reactor bill introduced in House

Plan for historical park has bipartisan support in both houses of Congress

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

A bill to create a new Manhattan District National Historical Park that would include Hanford's B Reactor was reintroduced Friday in the U.S.

House, announced Rep. Doc Hastings, R-Wash.

Similar legislation was introduced in the Senate last week, after time ran out in the last congressional session to debate and vote on the bills.

Not only is the bill in both the House and the Senate, it has bipartisan sponsors in each, said Gary Petersen, vice president of the Tri-City Development Council.

TRIDEC, the Tri-Cities Visitor and Convention Bureau, the B Reactor

Museum Association, Hanford Communities and leadership at the Department of Energy's Richland Operations Office have worked toward getting legislation written and passed for three years.

The plan for a historical park also has the support of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, which recently named Manhattan Project historic sites at Hanford and in two other states one of its designated National Treasures. The combined

sites are one of 32 National Treasures in the nation.

"As a National Treasure, the Manhattan Project will be among other irreplaceable, critically threatened places across the country that the National Trust is taking direct action to protect," the nonprofit organization said in a statement. The trust was created by federal legislation in 1949 and can provide legal, community and fundraising help to save historic sites.

A multistate park is proposed that

would include sites at Hanford; Oak Ridge, Tenn., and Los Alamos, N.M., where military and scientific resources combined in a top secret race to create nuclear weapons during World War II. It changed the world, ushering in the Atomic Age.

"The establishment of this park will ensure that this history is preserved and that facilities, such as Hanford's B Reactor, will remain open and

See **B REACTOR** | Page C3

Hanford pink slips coming today

Majority of layoffs will be among union employees

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Hanford workers to be laid off because of budget cuts caused by sequestration should begin being notified today.

Department of Energy contractors were continuing to work on adjusted budgets late last week, including the

number of layoffs that would be required.

More union than nonunion employees face job losses because collective bargaining agreements prevent contractors from forcing them to take time off, or furloughs, leaving layoffs as the remaining option for those workers.

However, the Hanford Atomic Metal Trades Council, which represents 15 unions working at Hanford, negotiated a memorandum of understanding with several Hanford contractors that allows HAMTC workers

to volunteer for paid and unpaid leave. If enough volunteer, some HAMTC jobs could be saved.

The deadline for signing up for voluntary leave was Thursday. With Friday a day off for most of Hanford, information on how many jobs have been saved is not available yet.

Hanford contractors continued to update their employees last week as they learned more about sequestration impacts.

CH2M Hill Plateau Remediation Co. told its employees that it expected to

notify the Hanford Atomic Metals Trade Council that 73 union positions would be cut. Those would include jobs

for nuclear chemical operators, stationary operating engineers, electricians, plumbers/steamfitters, insulators, radiological control technicians and chemical technicians.

HAMTC reductions are based on seniority, with workers laid off at one contractor eligible to claim the jobs of

HANFORD NEWS ONLINE

Find related stories at
www.hanfordnews.com

less-senior HAMTC workers at other contractors in a "bump and roll" system.

In addition, up to 10 nonunion employees are expected to be laid off at CH2M Hill. Other nonunion employees are expected to be required to take 160 to 200 hours of paid and unpaid time off by Oct. 1, the start of a new federal fiscal year.

Hanford contractors outline delays

Cleanup work at site to slow because of forced cuts to federal budget

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Environmental cleanup of the Hanford nuclear reservation will slow as a result of the forced federal budget cuts called sequestration.

In some cases, layoffs and furloughs will mean fewer employees available to do cleanup work. And in other cases, work that Department of Energy's primary contractors had subcontracted out to other companies will be reduced or postponed at least past the Sept. 30 end

of the current fiscal year.

Slowdowns will hit work to prepare for the treatment of radioactive sludge, to pull contaminated glove boxes and other equipment out of the Plutonium Finishing Plant, and to clean up contaminated soil at the 300 Area just north of Richland.

INSIDE

Senators protest sequester cuts. | **A4**

However, the Department of Energy has yet to brief its regulators on what effects the slowdowns will have on meeting legally binding deadlines in the Tri-Party Agreement as it continues to assess work delays.

CH2M Hill Plateau Remediation Co.'s top priority is to keep facilities it is responsible for, such as the Plutonium Finishing Plant, in a

HANFORD NEWS ONLINE

Find related stories at www.hanfordnews.com

safe condition, said spokeswoman Dee Millikin. After that it will concentrate on preparing the plant for demolition, treating contaminated groundwater and preparing to treat radioactive sludge in the K West Basin.

But those projects will see some cutbacks in work accomplished, as it must cut \$29.8 million from its budget, or 16 percent, in just the last half of the fiscal year.

At the Plutonium Finishing Plant, CH2M Hill is cutting the number of crews removing glove boxes and other contaminated

See **DELAYS** | Page A2

235 Hanford workers lose their jobs

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Layoff notices went out to 235 Hanford workers Monday because of sequestration, or automatic federal budget cuts.

That does not include workers who may lose their jobs as some Department of Energy contractors scale back on work assigned to their subcontractors.

Most of the 235 jobs cut were union positions, but it also included 27 nonunion positions. Several contractors are cutting spending by furloughing about 2,500 nonunion workers —

requiring them to take paid or unpaid time off — but that cannot be required of union workers under collective bargaining agreements.

However, at least nine jobs were saved because of time some union workers volunteered to take off under an agreement proposed by the Hanford Atomic Metal Trades Council, or HAMTC.

The last day of work for most laid-off employees is March 28.

Here's the breakdown by Department of Energy contractor:

► **Mission Support Alliance** is laying off

See **JOBS** | Page A2

21 MAR 13 Kurion pitches new vitrification system for Hanford tank waste

Richland company offering additional technology to treat low-activity material

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Kurion is proposing tank-side vitrification of radioactive waste as a way to address Hanford's issues with leaking underground tanks.

The small company, which has opened a 13,000-square-foot testing facility in Richland, is not proposing to replace the \$12.2 billion vitrification plant being built at Hanford to treat up to 56 million gallons of radioactive waste now held in underground tanks.

Instead, it is offering a supplemental treatment technology that it says could be ready to treat the low-activity radioactive waste that makes up the majority of the tank waste by late 2014.

Kurion believes its system is a more flexible way to treat waste, because waste is vitrified into a stable glass form in small, customized batches.

Perhaps its biggest selling point is its argument that its technology would be ready faster.

The recent discovery that six single-shell tanks appear to be leaking radioactive waste into the ground in central Hanford has increased the urgency to get single-shell tanks emptied and the waste treated for disposal.

The vitrification plant is not required to start vitrifying waste until 2019, although the Department of Energy is considering whether it could start treatment of low-activity waste earlier. Treatment of high-level

More information

► **What:** Kurion open house for its modular vitrification system

► **When:** From 2 to 3 p.m. today

► **Where:** 2579 Stevens Dr., Space 8, Richland

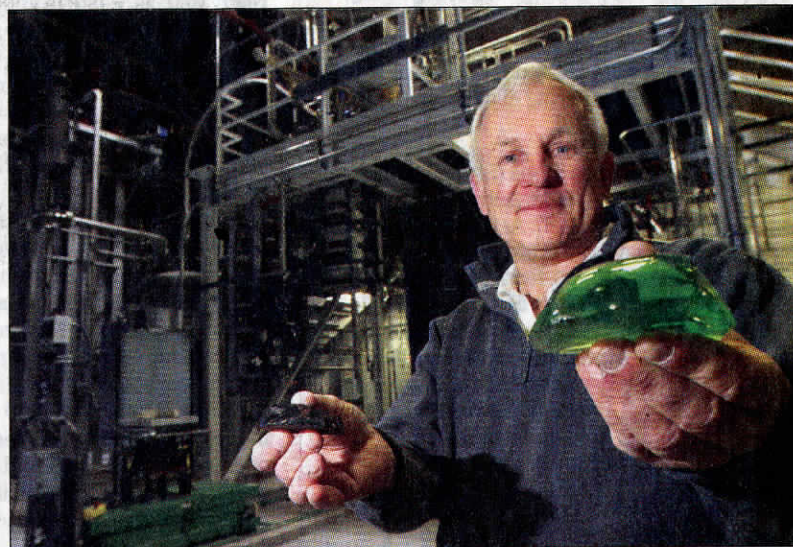
waste, which is plagued by technical questions, could start later.

The Department of Energy has been working to empty the waste from 149 single-shell tanks into 28 newer double-shell tanks.

However, it's running out of space in the double-shell tanks, and one of the tanks has been discovered to be leaking waste from its inner shell into its outer shell.

DOE has counted on getting waste treated at the Waste Treatment Plant to free up double-shell space to allow more waste to be emptied from older single-shell tanks.

DOE also is considering whether a limited amount of the waste could be sent to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant, a national repository for transuranic



Paul T. Erickson | perickson@tricityherald.com

Richard Keenan, vice president of Kurion Inc. in Richland, shows two examples of glassified simulated waste at the vitrification facility in Richland. Keenan's company was contracted to do cleanup of radioactive waste following the explosion at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant after the tsunami struck Japan in 2011. **See a video at tricityherald.com.**

HANFORD

28 MAR 13

Groups oppose sending waste to New Mexico

Letter sent to energy secretary saying that move costly, illegal

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Sending up to 3.1 million gallons of radioactive waste to New Mexico for disposal is no solution to Hanford's leaking underground tanks, according to Hanford Challenge and two other groups focused on environmental issues.

Hanford Challenge of Seattle, the Southwest Research and Information Center of Albuquerque, N.M., and the Natural Resources Defense Council's nuclear program in Washington, D.C., have sent a joint letter to Energy Secretary Steven Chu.

A Department of Energy proposal to send some of Hanford's tank waste to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant, or WIPP, near Carlsbad, N.M., is costly, unwise and illegal, said the letter.

Instead, DOE should be working to build sound tanks both to get waste out of leaking tanks and also to prepare

HANFORD NEWS ONLINE

Find related stories at www.hanfordnews.com

to eventually feed the waste into the vitrification plant. That plant is being built to glassify up to 56 million gallons of radioactive waste left from the past production of weapons plutonium.

Sending waste from up to 20 of Hanford's 149 single-shell tanks to WIPP "may provide DOE with an additional method to expedite the overall tank waste retrieval effort at Hanford," DOE said in a statement Wednesday.

It's previously said that before waste could be sent it must convince the state of New Mexico to modify the WIPP permit to allow certain tank waste to be sent there.

WIPP is the nation's repository for transuranic waste — which typically is contaminated with plutonium — but does not accept high-level radioactive waste.

DOE also would need to prove to regulators that certain tank waste could be classified as transuranic, rather

See **OPPOSE** | Page A2

Hastings urges DOE not to shift Hanford money

Reprogramming
package for cleanup
programs expected

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Don't shift money from Hanford to other Department of Energy environmental cleanup sites, Rep. Doc Hastings, R-Wash., has warned DOE.

That would be "met with my strongest opposition," he said in a letter sent Monday to Dave Huizenga, DOE senior adviser for environmental management.

DOE is expected to submit a reprogramming package for environmental cleanup programs to Congress, proposing switching money among specific programs or sites for the remaining months of fiscal 2013. The year ends Sept. 30.

The change in how money previously appropriated by Congress is spent does not require a congressional vote.

Hanford will lose 235 workers to layoffs this month and about 2,500 workers will be forced to take weeks of leave by October because of automatic federal budget cuts, called sequestration. But

HANFORD TIMECARD FRAUD SCHEME

21 MAR 13

Manager pleads guilty

Employee knew that workers weren't working full shift but claimed 8 hours of overtime

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

A Hanford worker with some management responsibilities has pleaded guilty to felony conspiracy to violate the federal anti-kickback act in the Hanford timecard fraud scheme.

Eight workers previously pleaded guilty in the scheme, admitting they falsified their timecards to claim more hours of overtime than they actually worked.

Thomas Lee Huebner was a lead radiological control technician who offered overtime to workers in eight-hour blocks under upper management's direction, according to documents filed in Eastern Washington District U.S. Court.

He knew many workers routinely would stop work prior to the end of the overtime shift, leaving the job site early, but claiming pay for eight hours of overtime, according to court documents.

Huebner and others understood the practice as a way to provide additional



incentives or perks for hourly workers to obtain their cooperation to work overtime or reward them for agreeing to work, according to court documents.

The timecard fraud occurred under former

Department of Energy contractor CH2M Hill Hanford Group, which was in charge of Hanford's underground tanks holding radioactive waste until its contract expired in 2008. Huebner continues to work at Hanford in a nonmanagement position, according to current

SAVING HANFORD

T Plant, piece by piece



Tom Watson, left, with Mission Support Alliance, and Connie Estep, of the CREHST museum, catalog and prepare to tag a sign for preservation during a tour earlier this year of T Plant at Hanford. Photos by Bob Brawdy | bbrawdy@tricityherald.com

DOE teams tag items to preserve

Work being done across site as buildings are torn down

ANNETTE CARY
HERALD STAFF WRITER

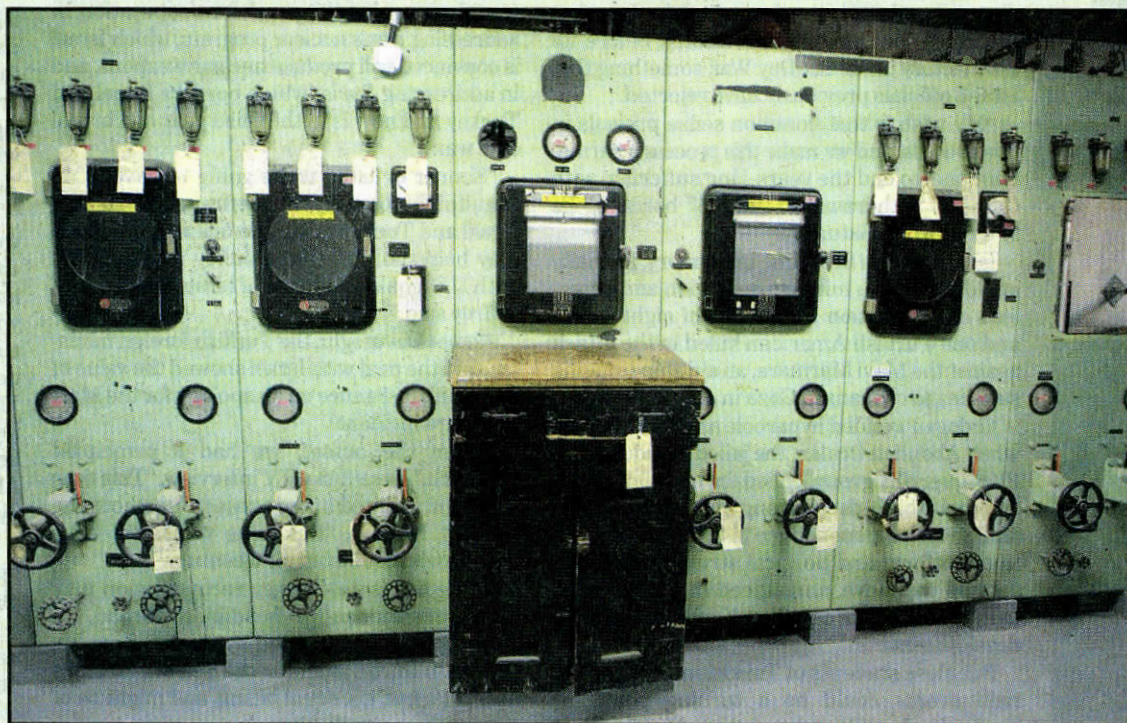
Two domed lights guard a narrow doorway deep inside Hanford's T Plant, protecting workers since World War II.

If the red light is shining, workers beware.

If the green light flashes, they pass the concrete shielding and enter the work area.

When workers inside need help, they reach around the entrance and press a call button. The ringing echoes the length of the building, which is longer than the Space Needle is tall.

"We're going to need that bell," said Colleen French, the DOE government affairs program manager, on a recent treasure hunt at T Plant.



Components of the government-green panels used to operate T Plant's chemical processes are destined to be preserved for their historic value.

See **PIECE** | Page A4

SEE A PHOTO GALLERY AND VIDEO
AT TRICITYHERALD.COM

HANFORD

Fluor ends lawsuit for \$1.1M

Contractor accused of using money to lobby for HAMMER

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Fluor Corp. has agreed to pay \$1.1 million to settle a lawsuit accusing it of improperly using federal money to lobby for new government customers for the HAMMER training facility from 2005 to 2008.

Fluor denied that it did anything wrong in the settlement agreement, which had been signed but not filed in federal court Tuesday. Fluor was following instructions in its contract, it said.

"No false claims were submitted to the government and no lobbying or other laws were violated," Fluor said in the statement.

A former contracting official for HAMMER, Loydene Rambo, filed a whistleblower lawsuit against Fluor in 2011. The federal government took over the case last

year and will pay Rambo \$200,000 of the \$1.1 settlement it receives.

She filed the lawsuit under the False Claims Act, which allows private parties to sue on behalf of the United States and share in any recovery.

Fluor Hanford operated the Hanford training center for the Department of Energy from 1996 to 2009.

Rambo said in her claim that initial efforts by HAMMER to grow by marketing

See **LAWSUIT** | Page B2

HANFORD

Tanks at risk for explosion

Sen. Ron Wyden says letter highlights continued risk of buildup of flammable gases

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Flammable gases in Hanford's underground tanks holding radioactive waste continue to pose a possible risk of an explosion, according to a letter from the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board.

Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Oregon, asked

the defense board for a rundown of current issues at Hanford as he prepares for a confirmation hearing Tuesday for Ernest Moniz, the energy secretary nominee. Wyden is the new chairman of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee.

"The next secretary of energy — Dr. Moniz — needs to understand that a major part of his job is going to be to get the Hanford cleanup back on track, and I plan to stress that at his confirmation hearing next week," Wyden said in a statement.

Of particular concern to Wyden are the safety of Hanford's underground

tanks, the technical issues plaguing the vitrification plant and the safety culture at the nuclear reservation.

Twenty years ago, the senator passed legislation creating the "Wyden watch list" of Hanford tanks that posed a risk of hydrogen explosions, and a plan to address them. Safety issues, which covered 56 tanks then, were resolved in 2001, and Wyden joined Hanford workers to celebrate.

"Now in this letter, the board says that the high-level waste tanks continue to present a risk of hydrogen explosions," Wyden said.

In September, as reported in the

Herald, the defense board issued a formal recommendation to the Department of Energy, saying DOE needed to do more to guard against a buildup of flammable gases in its 28 double-shell tanks.

"A significant flammable gas accident would have considerable radiological consequences, endanger personnel, contaminate portions of the tank farms and seriously disrupt the waste cleanup mission," the September report said.

DOE has a ventilation system

See **TANKS** | Page A2

Hanford contractor gives to Delta

Washington River Protection Solutions donates \$150,000 to help Tri-City students make strides in STEM education

TY BEAVER

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The president of a Hanford contractor said Thursday that the United States has fallen far down the list in its leadership in

science and technology-based fields.

And Mike Johnson and others at Washington River Protection Solutions hope a \$150,000 check will help future graduates of Delta High School in Richland reverse that trend.

Johnson, president and project manager at WRPS, presented the check to two students of the science, technology, engineering and math, or STEM, school at Columbia Basin College in Pasco.

Hundreds of students, already on CBC's Pasco campus for the annual STEMcon event, applauded the donation, along with

See **DELTA** | Page C3

DOE cuts furlough time for 1,800

CH2M Hill, MSA benefit, but WRPS not reduced

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The Department of Energy is cutting the furlough time for about 1,800 Hanford workers from five weeks to one week, employees were told late Thursday afternoon.

The furloughs — paid or unpaid leave — were required to meet federal budget cuts, called sequestration.

However, the 235 mostly union workers who were laid off because of sequestration in March will not get their jobs back.

In addition, furloughs for Washing-

ton River Protection Solutions have not been reduced. About 900 of its workers still must take 2.5 to 6.5 weeks of leave to reduce Hanford spending.

Washington River Protection Solutions is under DOE's Hanford office, the Office of River Protection.

But the change of plans was good news for the employees of contractors

planning furloughs under the DOE Hanford Richland Operations Office — CH2M Hill Plateau Remediation Co. and Mission Support Alliance.

The DOE Richland Operations Office is moving about \$5 million out of non-cleanup accounts to reduce the amount of money that must be saved by furloughs, said DOE spokesman Cameron Hardy. The money comes

from a wide range of accounts, including janitorial, laundry, utilities and record management, he said.

However, detailed information was not available Thursday.

"I understand that the roughly \$5-6 million needed to shorten these furloughs is coming from RL (Richland

See **FURLOUGH** | Page A2

4 APR 13 Hanford workers find time capsule in walls near D Reactor

Newspapers collected from 1955 folded into coffee can

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Usually the surprises Hanford workers find as they clean up old buildings and burial grounds at the nuclear reservation are bad: undocumented, stray containers of danger-

ous radioactive or chemical materials.

So Randy Young and Sean O'Neal were cautious when they spotted a sealed coffee can tucked inside a wall behind asbestos-board paneling at a building they were preparing for demolition near D Reactor.

Young, dressed out in white cover-

alls and a respirator, gingerly picked it up. It was heavy enough that he knew something was tucked inside — maybe bits of the asbestos-laden paneling, he guessed.

But when their supervisor at Washington Closure Hanford, Dustin Cooper, unpeeled the electrical tape



and popped off the metal lid, he found a gift from past workers. He could see immediately that it was a time capsule, he said.

The green MJB coffee can was packed with newspapers from September 1955. Out of one fell a note on

the "Don't say it ... Write it!" memo form used for decades at Hanford.

The form was dated "9-26-1955 A.D." and addressed "to whom it may concern." That's all, other than three signatures — K. Edward Thomas, Monte D. Dickinson and Henry L. Matear.

See **CAPSULE** | Page A2

BRIEFS

Kennewick blinds cleaner buys out other company

Blinding Clean, doing business as A Blinds Services Company, bought Blinds Cleaning & Sales Specialists on March 22. The companies are in Kennewick.

Blinding Clean will expand its services to include sales of various brands of blinds.

Hanford officials seek feedback through survey

9 APR 13

The Hanford Tri-Party Agreement agencies are asking for input on how the public receives information on Hanford topics.

The Department of Energy, Washington State Department of Ecology and Environmental Protection Agency have posted online a survey at www.surveymonkey.com/s/7TDX23S.

BRIEFS

B Reactor park hearing in Senate set for April 23

A Senate subcommittee hearing has been scheduled for April 23 on a bill to create a Manhattan Project National Historical Park that includes Hanford's B Reactor.

The Energy and Natural Resources Subcommittee on National Parks will consider the bill, said Sen. Maria Cantwell, D-Wash.

A companion bill in the House has its first hearing Friday before the House National Resources Subcommittee on Public Lands and Environmental Regulation.

Historic facilities at Hanford, and in New Mexico and Tennessee, would be part of the new national park.

Similar House and Senate bills were not passed before the end of the last congressional session.

The bill has bipartisan support in the House and Senate.

HANFORD TANKS

Video shows no more leaks

6 oldest double-shell tanks were inspected

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

A video inspection of Hanford's oldest double-shell tanks holding radioactive waste is finished with no more leaks found.

Hanford's oldest double-shell tank, Tank AY-102, was discovered to have a leak from its inner shell in October, prompting concerns about the soundness of all of Hanford's 28 double-shell tanks.

The Department of Energy responded with a

10 APR 13

plan for video inspections of the six additional double-shell tanks that began holding waste in the '70s. Video cameras were lowered down risers that extend from the surface of the ground into the space between the shells of the six tanks to check for leaks.

"No leaks found in these six tanks is good news for the department," said DOE spokeswoman Lori Gamache. "These visual inspections confirm the integrity of these tanks and provide us with a baseline for future assessments."

The underground tanks

See **LEAKS** | Page A2

Foldtrack gets second chance

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Hanford workers are giving the Foldtrack a second try after a brief and unsuccessful performance inside a radioactive waste tank five years ago.

It's a grown-up combination of a Transformer and remote-control bulldozer, engineered to move waste around the bottom of enclosed, underground tanks.

Outside the tank, the 800-pound machine extends to 12 feet long to fit through the narrow risers that provide the only access into the tanks.

Before it's lowered completely onto the floor of

the tank, it folds in half, placing its two crawling tracks in parallel with a plow blade for pushing waste in the front.

During practice runs in a mock-up of the 75-foot diameter tank in 2007, the device worked well, using its blade to push aside heavy pipes and rocks and then using its four nozzles to sweep the concrete floor clean with a spray of water.

But when it was lowered into radioactive waste

HANFORD NEWS ONLINE

Find related stories at
www.hanfordnews.com

Bechtel considers 2-week summer closure to save money

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Bechtel National is considering closing down the vitrification plant project for two weeks this summer because of a possible lack of money.

Nonunion employees would be furloughed — required to take paid or unpaid time off — for those

two weeks. Union employees in most cases would not be allowed to work and earn pay, either.

However, if the Department of Energy moves ahead with reprogramming money in the fiscal 2013 budget, the furloughs might be avoided.

Because Congress did not pass a budget for the current year, spending reverted to the level approved in the previous year, with money allocated specifically for work at the vitrification plant's Pretreatment

See **FURLOUGHS** | Page A2

Nuclear review board hears local concerns

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The vitrification plant will not address all of Hanford's high-level radioactive waste, including waste that has leaked from tanks, officials told the U.S. Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board on Tuesday.

The board met in Richland and spent much of the day focused on vitrification of waste, including what to do with vitrified waste and used

nuclear fuel with no national repository for high-level waste available. The board was formed in 1987 to offer technical advice on nuclear waste management to Congress and the energy secretary.

But with the focus on vitrification, other Hanford waste is at risk of slipping under the radar, said Ken Niles, representing the state of Oregon, as he and other regional

See **BOARD** | Page A2

stoppers.org.

77 APR 13

Sirens to sound for drill Thursday at Hanford

Emergency sirens will sound just north of Richland near the Columbia River for a Hanford drill between 2 p.m. and 2:45 p.m. Thursday.

People near the Hanford 300 Area might hear the sirens, but no response is required.

Public address systems will announce that a test is being conducted.

DOE clarifies Hanford furloughs

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The Department of Energy is emphasizing that just one week of furlough is required of Hanford workers at Mission Support Alliance and CH2M Hill Plateau Remediation Co.

Human resource directors are meeting with supervisors of those two contractors to make clear the policy, according to DOE. There is no mandatory time off beyond one week and supervisors should not tell employees that more time is mandatory, according to DOE.

However, the furlough time was reduced to one week on the assumption that workers would also take the average amount of vacation or other leave time this summer.

Progress toward that goal will be

revisited in July, DOE said.

CH2M Hill employees were sent a memo Tuesday clarifying the policy after many questions were being asked, the memo said.

Employees use an average of 120 hours of personal time bank between April and the end of September. The time bank includes vacation, holidays, sick time and military leave.

Sequestration, or the federal budget cuts, will require employees to take one week off. That may be paid time if they have it in their personal time bank.

If additional time off is the same averaged over all employees, CH2M Hill will remain within budget, the memo said.

On March 6, CH2M Hill nonunion workers at Hanford were sent a message saying that “we are planning on

furloughing all non-bargaining ... employees 160 to 200 hours of paid or unpaid time between April 1 and September 30.”

The policy was revised by DOE and communicated in an employee memo Thursday.

“Instead of five weeks of furlough, each CHPRC employee will now only need to take one week of mandatory furlough,” the new memo said.

The revised policy provides relief particularly for employees with few hours in their personal time bank.

About 1,800 employees at the two contractors, plus CH2M Hill’s primary subcontractors, must take the one week furlough.

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

Feds give money to Washington to help laid-off Hanford workers

The Department of Labor has given \$285,804 to the state of Washington as part of a National Emergency Grant to continue re-employment help for about 400 workers laid off at Hanford.

The workers were employed by CH2M Hill Plateau Remediation Co., Mission Support Alliance, Materials and Energy Corp. and 13 other contractors or subcontractors at Hanford.

The money will be used by the state for support services and training for former Hanford workers.

A year ago the Labor Department awarded a National Emergency Grant of \$1.34 million to Washington, with the \$285,804 the final money in that grant to be released.

— Herald staff

Soil bacteria may be answer to cheatgrass battle on Reach

Field trials show way to keep annual grass in check, cut fire risk

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

A naturally occurring soil bacteria could give native bunch grasses at the Hanford Reach National Monument the competitive advantage they need to edge out cheatgrass.

The invasive cheatgrass is the scourge of the monument, carpeting the ground like a lawn and providing the contin-

uous fuel that allows wildfire to spread quickly. Native grasses, in contrast, dot the ground in clumps.

"Now we're seeing fires that are bigger and are burning more acres," said Michael Gregg, a land management research and demonstration biologist at the Mid-Columbia River Refuges Complex.

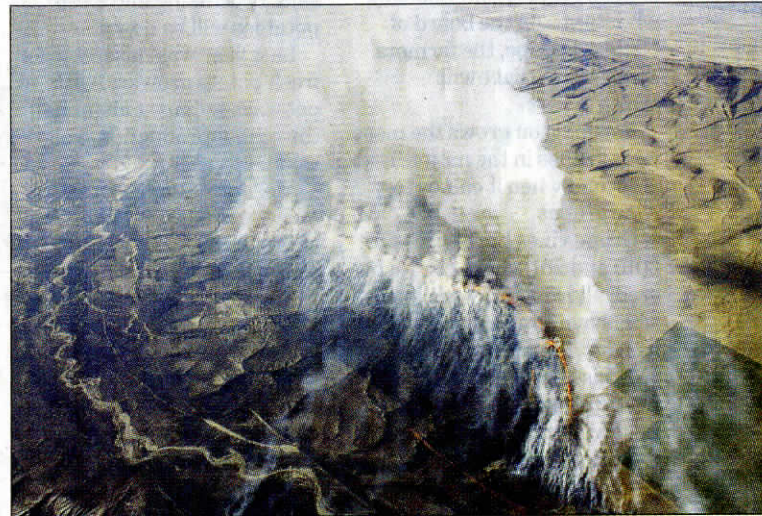
The wildfires kill the sagebrush and convert the historic shrub steppe land to annual grass lands composed mostly of cheatgrass, he said. It's a cycle that leads to more frequent, quickly spreading wildfires.

But field trials on the Saddle Mountain area of the Hanford Reach National Monument and elsewhere in the state, spraying with a carefully selected strain of the *Pseudomonas fluorescens*, has caused cheatgrass almost to disappear.

It doesn't happen quickly, said Ann Kennedy, a soil microbiologist with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Research Service at Washington State University Pullman.

Over three years in test plots up to 10 acres, about half of the

See **REACH** | Page B2



Scientists have tested a strain of bacteria at the Hanford Reach National Monument that inhibits the growth of invasive cheatgrass, which allows wildfires, such as this 2007 fire on Rattlesnake Mountain, to spread quickly. The bacteria is found naturally in soil and research has narrowed down specific strains that limit cheatgrass's competitiveness without harming native grasses.

Herald File

DOE starting to implement small business requirement

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The Department of Energy is starting to implement a new requirement that it award 7 percent of the approximately \$2 billion of work done each year at Hanford to small businesses.

As much as \$485 million of work annually already is subcontracted to

small businesses some years. But it does not meet new Small Business Administration goals because the work is subcontracted by DOE contractors at Hanford rather than directly by DOE.

The change has raised concerns about whether fewer small businesses will be awarded Hanford work and whether Hanford-area companies will

face more competition for the work from companies across the nation.

Most Hanford work is awarded by DOE to five large prime contractors — Bechtel National, Washington River Protection Solutions, CH2M Hill Plateau Remediation Co., Washington Closure Hanford and Mission Support Alliance.

Just 1.3 percent of Hanford work is

awarded directly by DOE to small businesses, said Greg Jones, Hanford DOE chief financial officer, at the Bridging Partnerships Small Business Symposium in Pasco on Thursday.

To increase that, bids are being sought for a small business to provide laundry services currently provided to DOE by a large business.

Bids might be sought later this year

from a small business for commodity purchases which could be used by all the major contractors.

The plan would help DOE meet its new Small Business Administration goals and might allow commodities to be purchased at a lower cost, Jones said. DOE is considering commodities

See **DOE** | Page C2

Hanford parks bills advance in House

Measures approved by committee under Hastings' leadership

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Bills to create a new national park that would include Hanford's B Reactor and to provide access to the summit of Rattlesnake Mountain advanced Wednesday in the U.S. House.

The bills, introduced by Rep. Doc Hastings, R-Wash., were approved by the House Natural Resources Committee, which is under Hastings' leadership.

"Today the Manhattan Project National Historic Park is one step closer to becoming a reality," Hastings said in a statement.

The next step will be to bring the bill to the House floor, where he said he believes it has enough support to be approved. Last year the bill failed on the House floor, but had been brought forward under special rules, which required two-thirds approval for passage.

The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee's National Parks Subcommittee heard a similar bill Tuesday, and the bill next must be approved at a business meeting of the committee before advancing to the full Senate.

The Senate version of the bill was introduced by Sen. Maria Cantwell, D-Wash., with Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., among the cosponsors.

Under the House and Senate bills, the new historical park would be established within one year, with the park service and Department of Energy working together to ensure safe and secure access to Manhattan Project facilities.

The proposed park would include facilities and areas at

Oak Ridge, Tenn., and Los Alamos, N.M., in addition to historic areas at Hanford. The three sites worked together to produce the bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan, as the United States raced to produce an atomic weapon before Nazi Germany during World War II.

Most of the facilities that would be included in the three-state park already are owned by the federal government and under DOE control.

At Hanford, the park would include B Reactor, the world's first full-scale production reactor, and possibly other facilities, such as T Plant and buildings left by residents who were forced to leave their homes, farms and businesses with little notice to make way for the secret nuclear reservation during WWII.

The bill to allow access to the summit of Rattlesnake Mountain, passed the House last Congress with broad bipartisan support. Hastings' challenge also will be to get Senate support of the bill.

The bill would require Fish and Wildlife to provide reasonable public access to the summit of the mountain, the tallest point of the Mid-Columbia, for educational, recreational, historical, scientific, cultural and other purposes, according to Hastings' staff.

The summit is part of the Hanford Reach National Monument, formed from the security zone around the production portion of the Hanford nuclear reservation. Public access now is not allowed, although wildflower tours next month may allow up to 80 people to visit the summit, weather permitting. All seats on the wildflower tours filled within seconds of registration opening.

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

18 APR 13

Hastings criticizes DOE for poor communication

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The Department of Energy is not answering Rep. Doc Hastings' questions on the Hanford vitrification plant, he said in prepared remarks for a speech to the Energy Communities Alliance.

DOE must increase transparency and be prepared to answer basic questions about the \$12.2 billion plant under construction if Congress is to continue investing taxpayer money in the plant, he said.

He also questioned why DOE was taking so long to release its reprogramming plans, which could affect Hanford jobs, and the slow process to

transfer unneeded Hanford land for economic development. He delivered the speech Friday in Washington, D.C. His remarks were distributed this week.

For almost a year, Hastings has asked for details in writing to outline the schedule, cost and work to be done associated with DOE's plan to test and resolve vitrification plant technical issues, Hastings said. Questions have been raised about the safety and efficiency of eventual plant operations, including whether there could be an uncontrolled nuclear reaction or a buildup of flammable gases.

Most recently DOE said that outgoing Energy Secretary Steven Chu's

See **HASTINGS** | Page B2

18 APR 13

Budget boost possible in 2014

Tank farms, finishing plant targeted under proposed budget

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Work at Hanford's tank farms and Plutonium Finishing Plant would ramp up under the Obama administration's proposed budget for fiscal 2014.

The overall proposed budget was released April 10, but on Wednesday, the administration released details of how money it is requesting would be spent on individual Hanford nuclear reservation projects.

Department of Energy officials refused to discuss the budget proposal, despite information in it that apparently contradicts other recent information from DOE.

17 APR 13

CH2M Hill's groundwater cleanup work recognized

CH2M Hill Plateau Remediation Co.'s work to clean up contaminated groundwater at Hanford has been honored as Project of the Year by the Columbia River Basin Chapter of the Project Management Institute.

"We were given a significant problem, we applied project delivery solutions and we're now seeing the results of significant cleanup," said Bob Popielarczyk, CH2M Hill vice president.

Work was done at the new 200 West Groundwater Pump and Treat System in central Hanford and a new treatment system near the D and DR reactors along the Columbia River. Work also included installing 265 new wells and bore holes and decommissioning 280 wells and bore holes.

The project demonstrated sustainable and cost efficient design and engineering, according to the Project Management Institute. The central Hanford project's energy system design will cut costs 70 percent and the treatment system at the reactors will save \$32 million by using a new resin to remove contaminants.



Budget cuts put Hanford deadlines at risk

Even if DOE gets money, delays could put projects too far behind to catch up

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Budget cuts and other issues have put about 10 legally binding deadlines at Hanford at risk of not being met,

Department of Energy officials said Wednesday during a public budget meeting.

Those deadlines include work on such key projects as cleaning out and demolishing the Plutonium Finishing Plant and moving radioactive sludge now stored near the Columbia River to central Hanford.

Given mandatory budget cuts called sequestration of about \$156 million at Hanford this year and generally tight

budgets since the end of Recovery Act spending, DOE will need significantly more money for many Hanford projects in fiscal 2015.

And even if it gets that money in the difficult federal budget environment, delays this year may put some projects too far behind to meet future deadlines under the legally binding Tri-Party Agreement.

Sequestration cuts are delaying the building of an annex to load radioac-

tive sludge from the K West Basin, making the start of removal of the sludge by a deadline of fall 2014 unlikely.

If work to remove the sludge starts late, then the deadline to have the sludge removed from the basin in 2015 might not be met, said Jon Peschong, DOE deputy assistant manager for cleanup along the Columbia River and in central Hanford.

Because of sequestration, DOE also

may not meet February 2014 deadlines to submit draft schedules and plans for certain soil waste sites and a group of landfills, both in central Hanford.

DOE also will not be able to drill all the wells required in 2014. Wells are used to monitor and pump up contaminated groundwater.

Work at the Plutonium Finishing

See **HANFORD** | Page A2

HANFORD CLEANUP

DOE pushes to prevent vit plant furloughs

Reprogramming would move money within sites

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Congressional committees have begun considering a Department of Energy request that could prevent

furloughs at the Hanford vitrification plant and help meet a key legal deadline for emptying underground waste tanks.

DOE's reprogramming request would move federal money available this fiscal year for environmental cleanup among and within its sites.

Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., and Rep. Doc Hastings, R-Wash., have been working to make sure that Han-

ford does not lose money in the reprogramming and that money for Hanford is moved to projects that most need it.

At Hanford, the reprogramming would move \$115 million budgeted for the vitrification plant's Pretreatment Facility to work elsewhere at the plant. Construction has been stopped at the Pretreatment Facility until technical issues have been worked

out, leaving unneeded money in that account this year.

Bechtel National told vit plant workers in April that it was considering closing down the project for two weeks this summer because of a possible lack of money for work ready to be done.

Nonunion employees would be furloughed — required to take paid or unpaid time off — for those two

weeks. Union employees in most cases would not be allowed to work and earn pay, either.

Reprogramming unneeded money from the Pretreatment Facility to other work at the plant could eliminate the need for furloughs, although Bechtel National is waiting to see whether the reprogramming request

See **FURLOUGHS** | Page B2

DOE talks budget switch

Proposal would move money around for use in other programs

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The Department of Energy is aggressively working with the Office of Management and Budget to get a reprogramming proposal to Congress, said David Huizenga, DOE senior adviser for environmental management.

Bechtel National workers have been warned that they might be furloughed — required to take paid or unpaid time off — for two weeks this summer because of a possible lack of money. However, that could be avoided if money is reprogrammed, or shifted from projects where it is not needed to other work.

Huizenga talked Thursday at the first of the 2013 Nuclear Cleanup Caucus briefings organized in Washington, D.C., by Rep. Doc Hastings, R-Wash., and then a meeting of Environmental Management Site-Specific Advisory Board leadership.

The advisory board meeting had been planned for the Tri-Cities but was held as a virtual meeting on the internet because of a tight federal budget.

At both meetings, Huizenga was asked about reprogramming.

He did not give a projected date, but said he hopes the proposal will be available soon.

DOE would like to move some money budgeted for the vitrification plant's Pretreatment Facility to other buildings at the plant, which would avoid furloughs, he said.

Construction has stopped on the Pretreatment Facility until technical issues are

16 MKY B Vit plant windows arriving

HERALD STAFF

Bechtel National has begun receiving the final shipments of specially designed, leaded-glass shield windows for the Hanford vitrification plant.

The project has purchased 87 shield windows for four buildings — the Pretreatment Facility, the High Level Waste Facility, the Low Activity Waste Facility and the Analytical Laboratory.

Nine windows have arrived in the past two weeks, and four

or five more windows are scheduled to arrive each week until all 87 are at the plant, according to Bechtel. The first shipment of 22 windows arrived in October 2012.

The shield windows are designed to work as a barrier between the radioactive and nonradioactive areas of the facilities and will allow operators to safely observe the work going on in the radioactive hot cells.

Each shield window weighs 7,200 pounds, is 16 inches thick

and measures 75 inches wide by 65 inches tall. The windows have a yellow tint and are made of borosilicate glass and lead.

The final shipments of shield windows are arriving from Premier Technology of Blackfoot, Idaho. The first shipment of windows were manufactured by Hot Cell Services Corp. of Kent.

The shield windows will be stored until they are installed as part of the completion of each facility. Once installed, the windows will go through yearly maintenance and testing.

Website used to help Hanford workers hacked

A Department of Labor website used to help Hanford and other Department of Energy workers who are ill was hacked Wednesday, according to AlienVault Labs, an internet security company.

Malware apparently was spread to the computers of some people using the Site Exposure Matrix, a database providing information on exposure to toxic chemicals and related illnesses. It is used by Hanford workers and their survivors who are applying for compensation under the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program.

Calls to the Department of Labor were referred to its public information offices, which either said no information was available or did not respond to messages left by the Herald.

- Herald staff

CH2M HILL

Company's vice president departs

President steps in to oversee Plutonium Finishing Plant

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The president of CH2M Hill Plateau Remediation Co. is stepping in to oversee operations at Hanford's Plutonium Finishing Plant after the departure of vice president Jerry Long.

Long no longer works at Hanford. "It's a sensitive issue, a personnel issue," said CH2M Hill spokeswoman

Dee Millikin.

John Fulton, the contractor president, will be filling the role as Plutonium Finishing Plant vice president as well as his regulator duties, with chief operating officer John Ciucci backfilling him in those roles, Fulton told employees in a memo this week.

He will be looking for the right person to serve as vice president, Millikin said.

Mike Swartz will continue as deputy vice president at the Plutonium Finishing Plant, which once processed plutonium for nuclear weapons and is now being decontaminated and demolished.

"Mike has the vision, experience and

collaborative mindset necessary to lead our workforce to safely and compliantly meet the TPA (Tri-Party Agreement) milestone for demolishing PFP by 2016," Fulton said in the memo.

Work has been going well at the plant, Millikin said. Next week workers are expected to pull out three contaminated gloveboxes.

The plant has had some issues with radioactive and hazardous chemical contamination of workers, most recently in January, when two workers breathed in radioactive contamination. However, progress has been made on safety, Millikin said.

Performance was not the reason for Long's departure, she said.

Long was named vice president for the Plutonium Finishing Plant closure project in summer 2011. Before that he was vice president of nuclear operations for CH2M Hill's nuclear business group in Denver. He also served as chief operating officer and project manager for the Hanford tank farms for CH2M Hill Hanford Group in 2007 and 2008.

► Annette Cary: 582-1533; acary@tricityherald.com; Twitter: @Hanford News

HANFORD

10 MAY 13

Man gets probation, fine for concealing kickbacks

Skyler Hamm serving prison sentence on unrelated drug charge

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

An employee of a former Hanford supplier was sentenced in federal court Thursday to three months probation and a \$500 fine for concealing and failing to report kickbacks given to Hanford purchasers.

Skyler Hamm already is serving a prison sentence after pleading guilty in November in Benton County Superior Court to two counts of delivering heroin. The cases are not related.

Hamm worked for his uncle, Shane Fast, who is accused of providing about \$40,000 in kickbacks and gratuities to Fluor Hanford purchasers through Fast Pipe and Supply from December 2006 through October 2008.

Hamm was charged in late 2011 in federal court with conspiracy to violate the Anti-Kickback Act, which carries a penalty of up to 10 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. However, in a plea agreement with the U.S. Attorney's Office of the Eastern District of Washington, he pleaded guilty to covering up a felony.

The sentencing guidelines that apply in the case are imprisonment for zero to six months, his attorney, Todd Harm, said in court documents.

Hamm has limited means to pay a fine, is indigent, and will have limited employment opportunities when he is released from prison on the drug charges because of his new criminal history, documents said.

Hamm has struggled with drug abuse, but his family has been trying to help, including Fast,

who gave him a job, documents said.

Fast, who has pleaded guilty to violating the anti-kickback law, owned Fast Pipe and gave gifts — including tickets to professional sporting events and restaurant gift cards — to Hanford purchasers.

Fast has said he does not believe he did anything wrong and that he thought it was OK to offer tickets and gift cards to his best customers.

Hamm knew that an investigation into kickbacks was underway when he was contacted by a Fluor Hanford purchaser who had agreed to conduct a monitored phone conversation with Hamm, documents said. The purchaser asked Hamm if his uncle would back his story if the purchaser lied to investigators and said he paid for the tickets.

Fast has indicated in court documents that he cooperated in the investigation into kickbacks.

But Hamm, who was grateful to Fast, saw what looked like an opportunity to preserve his uncle's standing with contractors he relied on for purchases, according to Hamm's attorney. Hamm told the purchaser that he could tell the investigators that he paid for the tickets.

"Skyler Hamm committed this crime out of a sense of loyalty to his uncle," Hamm's attorney wrote in court documents. "He was not motivated by any personal gain. This was a unique set of circumstances and is unlikely to occur in the future."

In related cases, several Hanford purchasers have reached settlement agreements with the federal government, agreeing to pay amounts that generally range between \$10,000 and \$15,300.

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

BRIEFS

18 May 13 No furloughs for vit plant workers during July

Workers at the Hanford vitrification plant will not be furloughed for a week in July, they were told Friday.

They were warned last month that Bechtel National might need to shut down the project for two weeks this summer because of a lack of money for work that is ready to be done.

This week, congressional committees approved a Department of Energy request for reprogramming, or moving money already bud-

geted for this year among DOE sites and projects.

The changes include moving \$115 million budgeted for the Pretreatment Facility at the plant to work at the plant's other buildings. Construction is on hold at the Pretreatment Facility until technical issues are resolved.

The reprogramming request still has to go through administrative channels, moving from the Office of Management and Budget to the Department of Energy for implementation. After Bechtel receives direction from DOE, it will complete its work plan for fiscal 2013, which ends Sept. 30, and turn its

attention to fiscal 2014, said Frank Russo, Bechtel project director, in a memo to employees.

Bechtel has not made a decision on the second week of furlough, which has been considered for the week before Labor Day to give employees the maximum amount of days off in a row.

The contractor will continue to reduce travel and overtime to minimum levels and review open positions on a case-by-case basis.

BRIEFS

Richland nanny retrial scheduled for Aug. 5

The retrial for a Richland nanny accused of causing a 1-year-old boy's fatal injuries has been set for Aug. 5.

However, Kelli A. Jacobsen's lawyer told the court Thursday that late October or early November is more realistic.

Scott Johnson has represented Jacobsen since she was charged months after Ryder Morrison's death, including in her recent trial that ended in a mistrial.

Johnson's law partner, Sal Mendoza Jr., was sworn in ear-

lier this month as a Benton-Franklin Superior Court judge.

As a result, Johnson's workload at his Kennewick law firm is backed up, he said.

Jacobsen, 28, is charged in Benton County Superior Court with first-degree manslaughter with aggravating circumstances.

BRIEFS

16 MAY 13

Senate committee to consider B Reactor bill

The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee will consider a bill today to create a Manhattan Project National Historical Park that would include Hanford's B Reactor.

The next step would be consideration by the full Senate.

The bill was introduced by Sens. Maria Cantwell, D-Wash., and Lamar Alexander, R-Tenn., with the support of Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash.

A similar House bill, intro-

duced by Rep. Doc Hastings, R-Wash., has passed out of committee.

Committee approves DOE budget request

Changes may lead to furloughs being avoided at vit plant

ANNETTE CARY
HERALD STAFF WRITER

A Department of Energy request that could prevent furloughs at the Hanford vitrification plant has received the final congressional committee approval it needed.

Changes in funding levels requested by DOE still must go through an administrative process that starts with the Office of Management and Budget before Hanford contractors may make changes.

DOE had requested that federal money available this fiscal year for

HANFORD NEWS ONLINE

Find related stories at www.hanfordnews.com

environmental cleanup to be moved among and within its sites.

Four House and Senate committees agreed that at Hanford, \$115 million budgeted for the vitrification plant's Pretreatment Facility could

be moved to other vit plant buildings under construction. Construction is on hold at the Pretreatment Facility until technical issues are resolved.

With more money to spend on construction elsewhere at the plant, Bechtel National may be able to avoid a furlough, or required time off for workers, this summer. It had warned

workers that it might have to shut the project down for two weeks because of lack of money for work ready to be done.

In addition, \$46 million would be transferred from the vitrification plant budget to the Hanford tank farms, which hold 56 million gallons of

See **BUDGET** | Page B2

HANFORD TIMECARD FRAUD

14 May 13

Former worker won't receive part of settlement

Attorney says man who filed whistleblower lawsuit entitled to part of \$18.5M

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

A former Hanford worker convicted of timecard fraud will not receive any money from a settlement with the government, U.S. Judge Lonny Suko ruled Monday.

Carl Schroeder's attorney had argued that Schroeder was entitled to a portion of an \$18.5 million settlement collected by the U.S. government for helping to expand the fraud investigation from four people to hundreds. The former worker stood to receive a multimillion-dollar recovery had the judge agreed, according to court documents.

Schroeder filed a civil whistleblower lawsuit in June 2009 against former Hanford contractor CH2M Hill Hanford Group under the False Claims Act,

which allows whistleblowers to collect a portion of any damages awarded.

The federal government took over the civil lawsuit, as provided by the act, in fall 2012. In March, CH2M Hill agreed to pay \$18.5 million to settle civil and criminal allegations of defrauding taxpayers.

Under the scheme, workers — including Schroeder — would work overtime offered by CH2M Hill in eight-hour shifts, even though the work often could be done in less time. Employees would leave when their

work was completed, but claim overtime pay for a full eight hours, which ultimately was paid for with tax dollars, according to the Justice Department.

Schroeder is one of nine current or former Hanford employees to plead guilty to charges related to timecard fraud. Ten current or former upper managers and supervisors at Hanford have been indicted by a grand jury on accusations they enabled timecard fraud.

Suko dismissed Schroeder from the

whistleblower lawsuit, agreeing with the Department of Justice that the law is clear that anyone convicted of criminal conduct not receive any part of a settlement that resulted from the fraud.

Schroeder knew of the fraud when he started working at the Hanford tank farms in January 2002, the judge said in his ruling, quoting from Schroeder's plea agreement. Schroeder participated in the timecard fraud from May

See **SETTLEMENT** | Page B2

Reach center CEO to manage CREHST

Lisa Toomey will be director as museum closes

SARA SCHILLING

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The CEO of the Hanford Reach Interpretive Center is adding management of a Richland museum to her duties.

Lisa Toomey will act as interim executive director of the CREHST museum for the next year or so as it closes.

The Richland Public Facilities District Board, which is developing the Reach center, on Monday approved an agreement with the group that operates CREHST.

“The important thing is to preserve the legacy that CREHST created with their facility and with their stories, to make sure that the facility runs in a positive way over the course of the next

several months and that we do our part to effectively integrate and provide continuity,” Toomey said. “I think continuity is a huge part of this.”

Fred Raab, president of the Richland PFD board, described the arrangement as “a unique opportunity” that makes good sense.

The Columbia River Exhibition of History, Science and Technology — better known as CREHST — was created in 1996. A main focus is telling the story of the Hanford nuclear reservation.

The museum is operated by the Environmental Science Technology Foundation, which some time ago agreed to start integrating

Chromium work ahead of schedule

New systems allow more groundwater to be treated than in previous years

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The Department of Energy and CH2M Hill Plateau Remediation Co. have exceeded DOE's fiscal 2013 goal to remove 500 pounds of hexavalent chromium from groundwater six months ahead of schedule, they announced in a press release this week.

However, the goal was set at half of last year's work, when more than 1,000 pounds of chromium were removed from contaminated groundwater along the Columbia River.

The five pump and treat systems along the river have helped DOE dou-

ble the amount of chromium removed from groundwater each year, according to the announcement. The systems pump up contaminated water from a system of wells, treat it and then return it to the ground.

Two of the systems, one near the D and DR reactors and one near H Reactor, began operating in 2011. They both use a new resin that can hold up to 15 times as much chromium as the resin that was being used at other Hanford pump and treat systems. The resin also strips more of the chromium out of the water.

The previous resin could absorb no more chromium after a month of use, requiring about 100 change-outs total among the tanks in a pump and treat plant in a year.

The new resin requires less down time, allowing more water to be

treated. The other pump and treat systems on the Columbia River have since been converted to also use the new resin, contributing to the increased efficiency in removing chromium.

DOE set a more modest goal for the total amount of chromium to be removed this fiscal year because the amount of contamination in the groundwater decreases as cleanup progresses, said DOE spokesman Geoff Tyree.

"Based on forecasting seen at the end of the year for contaminant removal, it was a good goal," he said. "The overall goal of restoring groundwater to beneficial uses is a good goal for the environment and protecting public health."

The primary concern about chromium-contaminated groundwater near the Columbia River is risk to

aquatic species that live among the gravel below the water where Hanford groundwater enters the river. Fish are more sensitive than people to chromium.

"Every amount of contamination removed is significant to the cleanup mission," said Bob Popielarczyk, CH2M Hill vice president of groundwater remediation, in a statement. "Just a small amount of hexavalent chromium with a weight equivalent to one grain of salt could contaminate eight gallons of water above aquatic standards, which is more stringent than drinking water standard."

Chromium plumes cover about five square miles along the Columbia River. More than 5,700 pounds of chromium have been removed from groundwater.

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

HANFORD

Huge vault to be moved

22 MAY 13
1,100-ton facility used to hold contaminated radioactive waste

ANNETTE CARY,

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Washington Closure Hanford is preparing for one of its largest and most challenging lifts — hoisting an underground vault weighing an estimated 1,100 tons.

The vault, once used to hold two tanks that collected highly contaminated liquid radioactive waste, must be picked up by a crane and then hauled by a trailer designed for heavy loads to the central Hanford landfill for low-level radioactive waste.

The vault, just north of Richland, is about a quarter-mile

from the Columbia River, and workers discovered as they started preparing to move it that radioactive waste had leaked from the vault, probably from a sump at its center.

The vault is large at 40 feet long, 29 feet wide and 25 feet high. But it isn't just its size and weight that make the lift a challenge.

"It's complicated to get under something that sits on soil," said Don McBride, Washington Closure technical services manager for decommissioning and demolition.

The vault is one of just three complex radioactive facilities that still need to be demolished or removed at the Hanford 300 Area.

The 340 Building, also called the Waste Neutralization Facility, next to the vault was torn

down in 2011, and in 2012 about 54,000 tons of soil were dug up, leaving the vault in a hole on a pedestal of soil.

To prepare to lift the vault, workers are driving four steel pipes horizontally through the soil platform underneath it. As the 3-foot diameter pipes are pushed through, an auger mines the soil out of the pipe.

The plan is to fill the pipes with concrete to help sustain the weight of the vault, which is made of steel-reinforced, high-density concrete, McBride said.

Washington Closure knew that there was a risk of encountering radioactive material and was carefully checking as the pipes, or casings, were placed. An alarm sounded about

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

MID-COLUMBIA

SECTION C | tricityherald.com | Friday, May 24, 2013

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

PNNL workers assisting in Oklahoma

Hanford Mission Support Alliance employees also helping clean up

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The two-mile wide path of the tornado through Moore, Okla., looked like a garbage disposal had been at work, grinding up houses, said Jim Spracklen of Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, in a phone call from near the disas-

ter area Thursday.

He's one of four PNNL and Hanford Mission Support Alliance workers providing emergency support to the disaster area as part of the Department of Energy's energy response team.

He stood Wednesday in front of Plaza Towers Elementary School, where seven children died.

"I was just amazed it was not 100," he said. "There was nothing left."



Spracklen

In any direction he looked he saw only the rubble of houses, he said. You could not see where the debris from one house ended and another started. Nothing remained standing more than 5 feet tall but broken tree trunks, with their limbs ripped off, he said.

"You cannot imagine how many vehicles were destroyed," he said. They were upside down and mangled, he said.

He's a veteran of responding to disasters, most often after hurricanes that cause damage with flooding. But this was his first tornado.

Not only have at least 24 people died, but the

people who lived in the area have lost their homes, possessions, vital records and contact with their neighbors, he said.

He walked through what was left of the neighborhoods near the school, where residents were allowed in briefly to collect a few items before cleanup begins and bulldozers start piling up the debris.

People usually were escorted out of the destroyed neighborhoods, but he met one elderly man who was alone at his mostly

See **OKLAHOMA** | Page C3

24 MAR 73

Energy secretary says cleanup is moral obligation

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The Department of Energy has a moral and legal obligation to clean up Hanford, Ernest Moniz told DOE employees on his second day as energy secretary.

But the nationwide cleanup program has made tremendous progress in the last 20 years and that is often forgotten, he said.

"It's also not surprising that some of the really hard ones are left to do and it's going to be more than 20 years to finish that program," he said, in an employee town hall meeting Wednesday that took questions from employees across the nation.

During his confirmation questioning, concerns about Hanford played a large role, but DOE has a plan to resolve issues, he said. Teams are looking at technical issues at the vitrification plant, where some construction has stopped until more is known.

He pledged open communication with workers when asked about his commitment to safety and the integrated safety management system used at Hanford and other projects.

"I want transparency," he said. "No balls are to be hidden. No messengers will be shot, assuming that they are coming forward in a constructive manner, which I think is the case, typically."

Issues brought forward need

“

It's also not surprising that some of the really hard ones are left to do and it's going to be more than 20 years to finish that program.

Ernest Moniz,
U.S. secretary of energy

”

to be responded to quickly, he said.

"All I can promise is if you talk to us, we will listen," he said.

Low morale was brought up by two workers, with one saying that pay freezes, negative press and criticism from Congress have contributed.

Moniz said he could not address budget limitations. But he will work as hard as the workers he was addressing and would listen with other DOE leaders to them and gather ideas, he said.

If people do their best on an exciting DOE agenda that is important to the president and the country, and "that leads to low morale, we got to talk," he said.

Video of the employee town hall is posted at energy.gov.

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

BRIEFS

2 JUN 13

Hanford vit workers to be spared furloughs

Hanford vitrification plant workers will be spared furloughs this summer.

Bechtel National warned in April that the plant might have to be shut down for two weeks this summer because of a lack of money for work that is ready to be done.

In May it told workers that the first week of mandatory time off, being considered for July, would not happen. On Friday, workers learned that the week of furlough being considered for August, also would not be required.

The Department of Energy received expected reprogramming money, said Frank Russo, Bechtel National project director, in a memo to employees. Congressional committees approved a request in May for reprogramming, or moving money already budgeted for this year among DOE sites and projects, but the change had to move through the administrative process.

The reprogramming changes include moving \$115 million budgeted for the Pretreatment Facility at the plant to work at the plant's other buildings. Construction is on hold at the Pretreatment Facility until technical issues are resolved.

Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash.,

HANFORD TANK FARM

6-3-13

Furloughs canceled

Washington River Protection Solutions gets \$48M from DOE moved from other projects

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

More relief for furloughed Hanford workers was offered Tuesday as the tank farm contractor canceled plans for mandatory time off this fiscal year.

Nonunion workers at Washington River Protection Solutions had been required to take 2.5 to 6.5 weeks of time off between spring and the end of September because of

the forced federal budget cuts called sequestration.

However, it has received \$48 million of additional money already budgeted by the Department of Energy but switched from other projects in a process called reprogramming.

That puts the final tally of furloughed workers at about 1,800 across the site, far less than the 3,000 furloughs once

See **FURLOUGHS** | Page A2

30 MAY 13

Tank farm manager to retire

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The head of the Hanford tank farms announced his retirement to employees Wednesday afternoon after 42 years in the nuclear field.

Mike Johnson, president and project manager of Washington River Protection Solutions, will work through June.

He will be replaced by Lyden "Dave" Olson, the president and project manager of Savannah River Remediation at the Department of Energy site in South Carolina.

Johnson plans to stay in the Tri-Cities, where his wife, Carol Johnson, will continue as president of Washington Closure Hanford, another DOE contractor. He said he will be available to do part-time work for URS Corp., the owner of Washington River Protection Solutions with EnergySolutions.



Johnson



Olson

Murray calls for tank farm plan

Senator says Hanford visit left her confident proposal will come in a few months

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The Department of Energy soon should have a clear and comprehensive plan in place to get leak-prone,

underground waste tanks emptied and the vitrification plant ready to treat the waste for disposal, said Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., on Thursday.

She toured Hanford, seeing work at the tank farms, where 56 million gallons of radioactive waste are held in underground



Murray

tanks, and at the vitrification plant being built to treat the waste.

For a year she's called for a comprehensive plan, she said, and is confident she will see it in a matter of months.

"I left feeling everyone is focused on this," she told the Herald after the tour.

New Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz has made Hanford a top priority and is spending a great deal of

energy on its issues, she said. He is expected to visit the nuclear reservation very soon, she said. Days in mid to late June are being considered, but no date is confirmed.

Hanford officials are contending with six single-shell tanks, some dating back to World War II, newly discovered to be leaking radioactive waste into the ground. The waste in the site's 149 single-shell tanks is being emptied into 28 newer double-

shell tanks.

However, the oldest of the double-shell tanks, which has held waste for more than the 40 years it was designed to last, has developed a leak that is contained within the two walls of the tank.

DOE is expected to provide a report to the Washington state Department of Ecology by June 14 on

See **MURRAY** | Page C2

Plant may lack space for Hanford waste

At issue is radioactive materials that only can be handled by remotely operated equipment

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

A national repository may run out of space for the hottest radioactive waste it was designed to store if changes are

not made, according to an audit by the Department of Energy Office of Inspector General.

That could be an issue for Hanford, which is expected to be one of the last DOE sites to be shipping waste to the

nation's transuranic repository, the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant, or WIPP, near Carlsbad, N.M.

At issue is space for remote-handled transuranic waste. At Hanford that is typically debris or other waste contaminated with plutonium that is so radioactively hot that it has to be handled with remotely operated equipment.

WIPP already has accepted 649 shipments of transuranic waste from Hanford, but all the waste has been contact-handled rather than remote-handled waste. Legally binding deadlines are expected to be set in 2016 for how much Hanford waste suspected of being remote-handled transuranic waste DOE must treat for dis-

posal each year through 2030.

DOE also legally is required to have a conceptual design of facilities to treat remote-handled transuranic waste in 2016, although it could instead propose sending the waste to the nearby Perma-Fix Northwest plant for treatment.

WIPP disposes of transuranic waste from multi-

ple DOE sites in underground units with remote-handled waste placed into the walls of the units and control-handled waste on the floor, according to the audit report released Friday. Once units are filled with control-handled waste, the remote-handled capacity in the

CONTAMINATED BIRDS' NESTS AT HANFORD

DOE tracks mud source

Some contamination could be from water storage basins where swallows were seen

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The Department of Energy has eliminated one potential source of mud contaminated with radioactive waste that swallows may be spreading at Hanford.

Besides the contaminated nest that stopped work at part of the Hanford vitrification plant Wednesday, other contaminated nests have been found this spring, said JD Dowell, DOE assistant manager for central Hanford and the river corridor.

Hanford workers tracked the possible source of at least some of the contaminated nests to the Liquid Effluent Retention Facility, after watching swallows moving back and forth from their nests to the facility.

The facility has three storage basins

designed to hold about 23,000 gallons of waste water. Contaminated water is piped or trucked to the basin from several projects, including the 242-A Evaporator and groundwater cleanup projects. It's then routed to the Effluent Treatment Facility to be cleaned.

The three basins are covered, but contaminated water was standing on top of the covers and enough dust had blown in that vegetation was growing.

8 JUN 13

Timetables cover work on emptying tanks, building vit plant

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The Department of Energy has notified the state of Washington it is at serious risk of missing two more Hanford environmental cleanup deadlines required by a court-enforced consent decree.

The deadlines were set less than three years ago and are the third and fourth that DOE has told the state it may not be able

to meet.

The latest two deadlines cover work critical to a long-term plan to protect the Columbia River — emptying leak-prone underground tanks of radioactive waste and building the vitrification plant to treat the waste.

Four deadlines at risk is “unacceptable,” Gov. Jay Inslee said in a statement.

“We expect the federal government to do everything within its power to avoid or minimize any possible delays in meeting all its legal and moral requirements to protect the

HANFORD

Birds spread nuclear waste

60 UN 13
Contamination might
be caused from mud in
bird's nest at vit plant

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Work stopped Wednesday morning at parts of the Hanford vitrification plant after radioactive contamination was detected under a bird's nest, according to Bechtel National.

The contamination is suspected of coming from mud used for the nest, which may have belonged to a swallow, said Bechtel spokesman Todd Nelson. Only a small amount of contaminated soil was found, and the contamination was at a low level.

About 130 workers were surveyed for contamination, but none was found, Nelson said. They had been working in two buildings, the High Level Waste and Pretreatment facilities, that are not yet enclosed.

Union construction workers at the two buildings were sent home early Wednesday. Radiological surveys of the plant were continuing Wednesday afternoon, and any affected areas were planned to be barricaded before workers return to the construction site today.

The vitrification plant is being built to treat up to 56 million gallons of radioactive waste. None of the waste has been pumped to the plant's campus as construction continues.

Routine radiological surveys are conducted, however, to monitor

See **BIRDS** | Page A2

HANFORD CLEANUP**DOE officials give
resin high marks**

Product helps strip chromium from groundwater at site

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

A new resin used to strip chromium from Hanford groundwater near the Columbia River is saving about twice as much money as estimated, according to Hanford officials.

The Department of Energy and CH2M Hill Plateau Remediation Co. began using the resin at a new plant near the former D and DR reactors in late 2010 and then at a second new treatment facility near the former H Reactor.

It proved so successful that by a year ago, all five "pump and treat" plants removing chromium from groundwater near the river were using it. They pump up groundwater contaminated with hexavalent chromium, treat the water and reinject cleaned water back into the ground.

Sodium chromate used to be added as a corrosion inhibitor to river water used to cool reactors that produced weapons plutonium at Hanford during World War II and the Cold War. It leaked and spilled from transfer systems and piping for decades

to contaminate soil and then groundwater near many of the reactors.

When DOE expanded the resin use to all five plants, the switch was projected to save up to \$1.6 million a year. But now it is saving more than \$3 million annually, officials say.

The new resin, manufactured by ResinTech, has not had to be changed since it was loaded into the first pump and treat groundwater plant at Hanford.

"This means our systems can continue to operate, and we can treat more groundwater," said Dan Neshem, CH2M Hill pump and treat operations and maintenance engineer, in a statement.

It also saves the \$10,000 each resin replacement costs.

CH2M Hill estimates that in the last 2.5 years, as all the plants have been switched over, about 600 resin changes have been avoided. That has saved \$6 million that can be used for other environmental cleanup at Hanford.

The resin also allows for higher treatment capacity with existing equipment at the older plants. It has increased treatment capacity at one plant by 40 percent, officials say.

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

Hole in Hanford tank to allow vacuuming of radioactive waste

Mobile Arm Retrieval System to be installed

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Hanford workers have cut a large hole in an underground tank holding radioactive waste for the second time since waste began to be added to the tanks in World War II.

The first cut was three years ago to install a larger pipe called a riser to insert a new robotic arm that's much bigger, tougher and more versatile than other technologies used to empty waste from enclosed underground tanks.

The second hole, which was cut early Wednesday, will allow another of the new robotic arms, the Mobile Arm Retrieval System, or MARS, to be installed in one of Hanford's 149 single-shell tanks.

This MARS is equipped with a waste vacuum system, rather than a sluicing system, to limit the liquid added to leak-prone tanks.

The 17-inch thick concrete and rebar-reinforced dome of Tank C-105 plus the 6 feet of soil above it serve to protect workers from radiation from the 132,000 gallons of high-level radioactive waste in the tank.

But the hole was cut without spreading radioactive waste from the tank and with a negligible radiation dose to workers, according to Hanford officials.

It sets the stage to try the

HANFORD NEWS ONLINE

Find related stories at
www.hanfordnews.com

vacuum-equipped MARS, which shows promise to remove waste efficiently, particularly from tanks known to have leaked that could leak more if sluicing waste retrieval systems are used. In sluicing, liquid waste is sprayed to break up waste or move it toward a central pump.

The Department of Energy faces a September 2014 deadline under a court-enforced consent decree to have all 16 tanks in the group called C Tank Farm emptied to regulatory standards.

It has seven tanks to go, including Tank C-105, and it notified Washington state this week that it is one of two tanks that may not be emptied by the deadline. The MARS system is not expected to be ready to begin work to empty the tank until next year.

Work to empty tanks has been slow, in part, because waste retrieval systems inserted into many tanks have been unable to empty all the waste, requiring several technologies to be used to empty a single tank.

But in hundreds of hours of testing on a mock tank, the MARS equipped with a vacuum retrieval system has shown it can remove sludge,

10 JUN 13

Advisory board recommends evening sessions, mentoring

Panel seeks increase in diversity so that it hears from all groups

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

More evening sessions and mentoring of new members are being proposed by the Hanford Advisory Board to increase the diversity of the board and those participating in its activities.

Department of Energy officials in Washington, D.C., announced in 2012 that DOE would be instituting term limits for some members of the board and making other unspecified changes. Changes could ensure ethnic, racial

and gender diversity on the board and allow more working parents to participate, DOE said then.

It was the third time DOE has pushed to change the composition of the board since 2000, which some members have interpreted as an attempt to exert more control over the board or even rid it of members with opinions it disliked.

Instead of DOE making unilateral changes, the board proposed looking at ways that it could make sure it was hearing from and representing diverse groups. No term limits have been instituted.

"The board is effective," said Susan Leckband, who represents the Washington League of Women Voters on

the board, at its Friday meeting in Richland.

"But as I look around the table, there are some voices that are not here. We want to include those groups," she said.

Board members have had limited success in recruiting and retaining Hispanics on the board. The volunteer board also tends to attract retirees and other older members who have time to attend committee and board meetings organized in daylong sessions because participants come from across Washington and Oregon.

The board was formed almost two decades ago with most seats assigned to interest

15 JUN 13

National park gets House OK

Another amendment
to defense bill would
transfer some land

GEOFF FOLSOM

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The U.S. House of Representatives passed a bill Friday that includes an amendment for establishing a Manhattan Project National Historic Park at Hanford's B Reactor, as well as at sites in Oak Ridge, Tenn., and Los Alamos, N.M.

The 2014 National Defense Authorization Act passed the House by a 315-108 vote, with all Washington representatives voting in favor. It still needs to be approved by the Senate.

The amendment calls for the Department of Energy — within a year of the bill's passage — to enter an agreement with the Department of the Interior to establish the park, with an eye toward enhancing public access, management, interpretation and historic preservation.

The amendment was authored by Rep. Doc Hastings, R-Pasco.

Another amendment would transfer 1,641 acres of Hanford land DOE no longer needs to the Tri-City Development Council. The land is designated for industrial use.

TRIDEC's lobbyist, Tim Peckinpaugh, pushed for both amendments. He said the

See **PARK** | Page A2

Ernest Moniz to visit Hanford

Energy secretary promises Cantwell he does not object to national park

GEOFF FOLSOM

HERALD STAFF WRITER

New U.S. Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz will visit the Hanford site Wednesday.

While testifying Thursday before the House Subcommittee on Energy and Power, Moniz called Hanford “one of our most challenging environmental management projects.”

“I have committed to a plan to address the serious issues at hand, and I look forward to visiting Hanford next week and determining the path forward on the project,” he said.

During his April confirmation testimony before the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, Moniz promised Sen. Maria Cantwell, D-Wash., he would visit Hanford soon and that he had no objection to the creation of a national park

there that includes the historic B Reactor.

He also said he would work with Cantwell, Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., and energy committee Chairman Ron Wyden, D-Ore., on quickly putting together a plan for Hanford.

Moniz was sworn in as the 13th energy secretary May 21 after being approved 97-0 by the Senate on May 16.

Moniz, a nuclear physicist, previously had served as undersecretary of energy in President Bill Clinton’s administration. He also was a long-time faculty member at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

In a statement issued Thursday, Cantwell praised Moniz for putting Hanford cleanup, one of the world’s largest and most complex projects of its kind, at the top of his to-do list.

Along with getting to see the progress and challenges facing Hanford cleanup firsthand, a spokesman for U.S. Rep. Doc Hastings, R-Pasco, said the chairman of the House Committee on Natural Resources would like the secretary to meet with members of the Tri-City community.

◆ Geoff Folsom: 509-582-1543; gfolson@tricityherald.com; Twitter: @GeoffFolsom



Moniz

BRIEFS

Vit plant director Russo taking new position

Bechtel National's project director for Hanford's massive vitrification project is moving on.

While he's not retiring, Frank Russo, 63, said he wants to let someone else take over the construction project at Hanford to lead it into its next phase.

"This project is at a state



Russo

14 JUN 14
now where they will have to make a lot of decisions about the path forward," Russo told the Herald.

The massive plant is being built to treat up to 56 million gallons of radioactive waste from past plutonium production for the nation's nuclear weapons program.

Russo, who has been with Bechtel for 40 years, said he will stay with the company until his retirement, taking another position doing what he called a "trade secret."

In a memo sent to employees Thursday, Russo said he will address his new position and his replacement in a

future message.

"We have thoughtfully been working with DOE to transition leadership," he said. "This is part of normal Bechtel progression that many of you know and experience. However, there is nothing official yet as many of the details are still being finalized."

19 JUN 13

Report faults Washington for oversight

EPA audit comes as DOE also criticized for delays, rising costs

SHANNON DININNY

ASSOCIATED PRESS

YAKIMA — A new report released Tuesday faults Washington for lax oversight at the nation's most contaminated nuclear site, saying the state employs too few inspectors and gives advance notice of inspections to the federal agency charged with managing the cleanup.

The report by the Environmental Protection Agency sharply criticizes the state at a time when the U.S. Department of Energy, which manages the cleanup at Hanford,

has been the target of intense criticism of its own amid delays, rising costs and complaints of mismanagement.

The report was released by the watchdog group Hanford Challenge.

The report resulted from a 2011 EPA audit conducted every four years of the state's enforcement of clean air, water and hazardous waste laws.

EPA sent the draft report to the Ecology Department on April 30 and received the state's responses on June 14, EPA spokesman Mark MacIntyre said Tuesday.

The draft report pans Washington officials for giving the Energy Department prior, written notice of inspection plans at Hanford and for limit-

Hanford downwinder hopes for settlement

Woman drank milk from family cow, later had thyroid cancer

KAREN DORN STEELE

THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW



Jesse Tilinsley | Spokesman

Jacklyn O'Neil, shown at her home in Spokane Valley, is a thyroid cancer survivor who has secured a settlement for radiation exposure but is not likely to get any money. She believes, like many downwinders do, "they're just waiting for us to die."

was filed in 1990 after the government admitted the Iodine 131 emissions likely harmed some infants and children in the Inland Northwest.

Now, with her memory and health faltering and with dim prospects for a trial date, O'Neil is hoping for a modest settlement.

Kirkland & Ellis of Chicago, the lead law firm for the nuclear contractors, offered her \$15,000 two years ago.

She rejected that offer after consulting her husband James O'Neil, a club manager and a former drummer with the Billy Tipton Trio who died of bladder cancer last year.

“

And yet, for me, (the lawyers) offered only \$15,000 and then, knowing I was desperate, dropped it to \$10,000. Where is even just a little empathy for what thousands of innocent victims suffered?

Jacklyn “Jackie” O’Neil,
Spokane Valley

”

After her husband’s 2012 diagnosis of terminal cancer, Jacklyn O’Neil asked her lawyer, Richard Eymann of Spokane, to accept the earlier settlement offer.

In response, the firm offered \$10,000, saying the previous

Energy secretary visits Hanford

Moniz says DOE will develop plan by end of summer to fix technical issues at vit plant

GEOFF FOLSOM

HERALD STAFF WRITER

New U.S. Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz showed support for Hanford-related projects Wednesday in his first visit to the area, officials said.

Moniz met with several Tri-City mayors and county and port commissioners at the Red Lion Hotel in Richland for an hour and a half before touring Hanford.

Kennewick Mayor Steve Young said Moniz was the first energy secretary to meet with area elected officials in the 30 years he has been involved with the nuclear reservation.

"It was a very positive visit," said Young, who is chairman of the Hanford Communities group. "It's

been a long time since I've been this positive about what I was hearing out of D.C., but this man really gets it."

Moniz backed proposals for a national park site at the B Reactor and using cleaned-up land for economic development, local officials said. He also criticized federal small-business requirements.

Young said he was pleased with the secretary's reaction when asked about a new Small Business Administration goal that at least 7 percent of the approximately \$2 billion in federally funded work done at Hanford each year be



Moniz

Hanford Challenge worried about contamination from glovebox sent from Hanford

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Hanford Challenge is concerned that a glovebox shipped from Hanford to nearby Perma-Fix Northwest may have released radiological contamination.

However, the Department of Energy says contamination was contained within the shipping box enclosing the glovebox.

"There was no risk to the public or

travelers on the roadway because the contamination was contained in the shipping container," DOE spokesman Geoff Tyree said.

The glovebox was removed from the Plutonium Finishing Plant, where plutonium was processed into metal buttons the size of hockey pucks to be shipped off Hanford for use in the nation's nuclear weapons program during the Cold War.

It was wrapped in plastic, then placed into a shipping container to be sent to Perma-Fix on Battelle Boulevard to be cut into smaller pieces for disposal. A small amount of contamination was found on the plastic, according to Hanford officials.

HANFORD NEWS ONLINE

Find related stories at www.hanfordnews.com

Perma-Fix notified the Washington State Department of Ecology on Friday, although the company said in its letter to the state that the incident did not rise to the level that required notification. None of its workers was exposed and the contamination did not spread to the environment, it said.

The shipment was made June 19. Further tests were planned Tuesday to confirm what type of radiological

See **RELEASE** | Page B2

Committees OK budget

House would keep spending at current level; Senate raises it

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

A House subcommittee has approved a Hanford budget for next year that would keep spending at the same level as this year, when sequestration caused layoffs and furloughs.

However, the Senate Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittee has approved spending about \$82 million more than the

House Energy and Water Development Appropriations Subcommittee.

While getting a final budget of that amount is unlikely given the federal budget climate, the higher amount proposed in the Senate could increase funding prospects if the House and Senate approve Hanford budgets and they are reconciled in a conference committee.

"I'm proud that I was able to work with my colleagues to include a strong funding level in the Senate appropriations bill in an extremely difficult budget climate," said Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash.,

in a statement.

"I will continue working to ensure Hanford has the federal resources needed to get the job done, but the significant differences between the funding levels proposed by the House and Senate will make it a tough task," she said.

The House subcommittee proposed increasing spending at the Hanford tank farms to \$520 million, the largest increase in defense environmental management spending proposed for fiscal 2014.

The money is needed to address newly discovered leaks of radioactive waste

from underground tanks and degraded ventilation and level monitoring systems in the tanks, according to the report accompanying the bill.

However, it would drop spending at the vitrification plant, being built to treat the waste for disposal, from the long-planned steady funding of \$690 million to \$675 million.

The reduction reflects the halt on construction at the plant's Pretreatment Facility until technical issues are resolved and "the lack of a clear overall plan to complete the facility, the continued

Vit plant gets new director

Outgoing leader says project will be 'in good hands' under replacement

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Peggy McCullough, currently working on a Bechtel project in Australia, has been named the new project director for the Hanford vitrification plant.

Frank Russo, who has served as the Bechtel National project director for the plant since January 2010, announced earlier this month he would be leaving. He told employees Wednesday that he would be taking a new assignment with Bechtel in the United Kingdom on July 15.

McCullough is a principal vice presi-

dent completing an assignment as project director of the Daunia Coking Coal Project in Queensland, Australia. She took the project to greater than 95 percent completion under budget and ahead of schedule, according to an announcement made by Craig Albert, president of Bechtel Systems and Infrastructure, which includes all of Bechtel's government work.

"I am confident that Peggy's experience and outstanding leadership on complex projects, her commitment to safety in both the design process and field work, her technical expertise, and her dedication to execution excellence will be invaluable assets as she leads (the vit plant project) forward," Albert said.

McCullough has three decades of engineering, procurement, construction, startup and commissioning, as

well as management and operations experience, according to Albert.

She worked for the Nuclear Regulatory Commission before joining Bechtel in 1988 and took on leadership roles in projects covering environmental cleanup, demilitarization, nonproliferation and global security.

From 2003-06 she was deputy general manager of Bechtel SAIC, the management and operations contractor for the Department of Energy's Yucca Mountain, Nev., nuclear repository project. She then worked for Bechtel Systems and Infrastructure before becoming project director of the Daunia Coking Coal Project.

"I leave you in good hands," Russo said in an employee message Wednesday. McCullough is an outstanding leader and highly effective manager, he said.

She will lead the vitrification plant project as it is "about to embark on a series of strategic decision," he said. Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz is expected to announce a plan by fall to address technical issues at the vitrification plant, and decisions are pending on when parts of the plant may start operating to turn up to 56 million gallons of radioactive waste into a stable glass form for disposal.

Russo will provide senior-level leadership as Bechtel ramps up its work and business development efforts in the United Kingdom, according to Albert.

As vitrification plant project director, Russo "advanced the project through challenging times and laid a strong foundation for continued progress," Albert said.

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

BRIEFS

10 JUL 13

Hanford waste hearings planned in New Mexico

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — The state of New Mexico has declined the Department of Energy's request for quick approval of a proposal to bring radioactive waste from the Hanford Nuclear Reservation to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant near Carlsbad.

Instead, the New Mexico Environment Department said it will hold public hearings before any decisions are made.

Environment Secretary Ryan Flynn in a statement Monday evening said that the decision will ensure that "the public's views are carefully considered" before the state acts on the Department of Energy's request to modify the WIPP permit to allow the waste to be brought from Washington.

The DOE in March asked the department for a quick approval of a change in the WIPP permit so it can bring 3.1 million gallons from leaking waste tanks at Hanford.

HANFORD

Bechtel pay criticized in hearing

U.S. Senate subcommittee looks at DOE policies for environmental contracts

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

A U.S. senator criticized incentive pay given to Bechtel National for its work at the Hanford vitrification plant during a hearing Thursday on Department of Energy environmental

cleanup contracting policies.

Cleaning up radioactive waste and contamination left from past production of nuclear weapons, much of it at Hanford, is important work, said Sen. Claire McCaskill, D-Mo., chairwoman of the Homeland Security and Government Affairs Subcommittee.

DOE environmental cleanup work is estimated to cost \$270 billion through 2087, she said.

"When hundreds of billions of taxpayer dollars are at stake, we need to

make sure those dollars are not just being squandered," she said.

Across the DOE environmental cleanup complex, almost \$4 billion in performance pay was awarded to contractors between 2002 and 2012 despite poor performance and, in some cases, before required work had been completed, she said.

She used Bechtel as an example. Between 2009 and 2012 the Department of Energy paid the company \$24.2 million of the \$38.6 million in

award payments possible, in part because it met cost and schedule targets and resolved technical challenges associated with keeping radioactive waste well-mixed in the plant to avoid an unplanned nuclear reaction or buildup of flammable gases.

But in 2012, the Government Accountability Office found the project was at serious risk of cost overruns and schedule delays and that waste mixing issues had not been resolved, she said.

DOE's reliance on contracts that reimburse costs causes the government to bear the risk of overruns, she said. The cost overrun just on the Hanford vitrification plant is approaching \$10 billion, she said.

Until a few months ago DOE's environmental cleanup office did not require a cost estimate and there still is no requirement that the estimate be well-documented or accurate, she

See **HEARING** | Page A2

Perma-Fix loads to pause for now

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The Washington State Department of Health is considering whether Hanford shipments of plutonium-contaminated gloveboxes to Perma-Fix Northwest in Richland should be temporarily suspended.

The temporary ban is being considered after a June 19 incident with a container holding glovebox sections, in which radioactive contamination was spread at the plant.

However, it remains unclear if the contamination was on the shipment when it arrived. The Department of Energy surveyed the glovebox sections before they were shipped and believed they were free of external radioactive contamination.

The Department of Health said in a report on the incident released by Hanford Challenge late Friday afternoon that the state has concerns about Perma-Fix opening shipping containers outside in the open air and moving equipment without a containment system. Hanford Challenge is a Seattle-based Hanford watchdog group.

A department employee recommended to state managers that shipments be suspended until Perma-Fix submits an incident report that

includes an analysis of the cause, the state reviews the report and Perma-Fix develops a procedure to off-load waste shipments that minimizes the spread of contamination.

It also wants Perma-Fix to take air samples when waste shipments are off-loaded.

On June 19, work started to unload a shipping container with two glovebox sections removed from Hanford's Plutonium Finishing Plant on an outdoor pad outside a Perma-Fix truck bay. The glovebox sections had been sent to Perma-Fix, which is near Hanford, to be cut into smaller pieces, Hanford officials said.

Before the shipment was unloaded and moved to a ventilated building, radioactive contamination was found on one of the glovebox sections, according to the Department of Health report.

Workers had been required to enter the shipping container to slip the rigger under the glovebox sections so they could be lifted and workers were not wearing protective equipment, according to the report.

Preliminary air sample results, surveys of workers and nasal smears of workers did not indicate any of the radioactive material had

DOUBLE-SHELL TANK

20 JUL 13

DOE

says

results

lacking

Tests to determine if waste has reached soil have been inconclusive

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Further tests to determine whether the first Hanford double-shell tank is leaking waste into the soil have been inconclusive, the Department of Energy said Friday.

DOE has known since at least October that underground Tank AY-102, which holds 857,000 gallons of radioactive and hazardous chemical waste, has an apparently slow leak from its interior shell. But until a month ago, DOE was confident that the leaked waste was being contained by the outer shell.

On June 20 it began to suspect that the outer shell also might be leaking based on results of routine testing related to the tank's leak detection pit.

Oversight of Hanford sees shift

19 JUL 13

White House makes nomination for position of undersecretary for management and performance

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

A Department of Energy reorganization will move oversight of the Hanford nuclear reservation under the newly created position of undersecretary for management and performance.

The White House announced Thursday afternoon that Beth Robinson, chief financial officer at NASA since 2009, will be the nominee for the job.

Robinson previously served as the assistant director for budget at the Office of Management and Budget and deputy director of the Congressional Budget Office.



Robinson

She is educated as a scientist, with a bachelor's degree in physics from Reed College in Portland and a doctorate in geophysics from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute.

She also has congressional experience, including as principal minority staff member for the House Committee on Science from 1995-98 and earlier as a staff member for the House Committee on Science, Space and Technology and project director for the Office of Technology Assessment.

RICHLAND

Area 300 has new electrical boss

City taking over Hanford's power service is 'really good from the economic development aspect,' director says

SARA SCHILLING

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The city of Richland is taking over electrical service in Hanford's 300 Area — a process that should be complete by the end of the year.

It won't cost existing city customers any extra money, said Bob Hammond, director of Richland Energy Services, the city's power utility.

And, "it's really good from the economic development aspect because we're all trying to figure out how to leverage everything we have for eco-

nomics diversification — the day when we don't have \$2 billion or around that coming in every year for Hanford site cleanup," Hammond said.

He also noted that having city electrical services in the area will make land there more easily redeveloped.

Many 300 Area buildings are being torn down as part of site cleanup.

But four used by Pacific Northwest National Laboratory will stay for at least another 13 years, and after 2015 the lab will be the primary 300 Area tenant, according to information provided by PNNL.

The transfer is expected to save PNNL and taxpayers \$5 million to \$10 million over the next 10 to 15 years, the information said. The lab now pays about \$1.2 million a year for electrical services and related infrastructure provided by Department of Energy contractors, the information said.

The savings is a primary factor in the transfer, said Greg Koller, PNNL spokesman. He also noted that "it also allows Richland to be the single provider of all electrical services to PNNL," which is more efficient. The city already handles electrical services for PNNL's main campus.

Mission Support Alliance, Hanford's support services contractor, also will continue using some

Area 300 buildings.

The transfer has been discussed for about two years. The lab is footing the bill — of just less than \$3 million — for costs associated with the transfer, namely extending infrastructure such as cables, conduits, vaults and power poles.

Richland Mayor John Fox said he sees it as a positive move for the city in more ways than one, including that "it's not going to affect our present ratepayers — either residential or industrial — but it will strengthen the backbone overall of the electric utility."

► *Sara Schilling: 582-1529; sschilling@tricityherald.com; Twitter: @saraTCHerald*

HANFORD 300 AREA

30 JUL 13

DOE, board differ on groundwater plan

Meeting today in Richland for discussion, to hear comment

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The Hanford Advisory Board is concerned that more research should be done before a cleanup plan for uranium-contaminated groundwater becomes final.

A meeting is scheduled tonight in Richland by the Department of Energy and its regulators to discuss and hear comments

on the proposed plan for the 300 Area, which is just north of Richland.

Much of the plan follows usual Hanford procedures for digging up contaminated soil and waste sites, treating the waste as needed and then disposing of much of it in a central Hanford landfill for low-level radioactive waste.

However, choosing a final plan for groundwater near the Columbia River that is contaminated with uranium above drinking water standards over about 125 acres may be more controversial.

The 300 Area was used for fabricating

IF YOU GO

- **What:** Public meeting on Hanford 300 Area proposed cleanup plan
- **When:** Open house at 5:30 p.m. today, followed by meeting from 6:30 to 8:30
- **Where:** Richland Public Library, 955 Northgate Drive, Richland

uranium into fuel pieces for the Hanford reactors that produced plutonium for the nation's nuclear weapons program. It also

See **GROUNDWATER** | Page A2

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

MID-COLUMBIA

Thursday, July 18, 2013

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

HANFORD

Union talks continue after failed vote

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Hanford union workers overwhelmingly rejected the offers of five Hanford contractors proposing a collective bargaining agreement to the Hanford Atomic Metal Trades Council.

Voting ended at 8 p.m. Tuesday, with votes counted later that night.

The vote was: CH2M Hill Plateau Remediation workers,

408-2; Washington River Protection Solutions, 474-3; Mission Support Alliance, 452-2; Washington Closure Hanford, 263-17, and Advanced Technologies and Laboratories, 25-0.

“(Workers) will not accept substandard wages, benefits and working conditions from the contractors or DOE,” said Dave Molnaa, HAMTC president. HAMTC is an umbrella organization, for 15 of the

unions performing work at the Department of Energy’s Hanford nuclear reservation.

Negotiations will resume July 30.

Negotiations between HAMTC and DOE contractors began 18 months ago and grew increasingly contentious last winter. But recently, the two sides agreed to a memorandum of understanding.

As part of the conditions under the memorandum,

HAMTC agreed to put contractor proposals to a worker vote and to remain neutral on the offers made. That included not publicly discussing details of the offers before workers had voted. The offers proposed have been largely the same for most of the contractors, with Washington Closure the exception.

Molnaa said before the vote that the results would make clear how workers stood on

offers.

Many of the offers workers considered Tuesday included no pay increase for 2012 and increases of 1.5 percent to 2 percent for each of the next three years, Molnaa said after the vote. Previous negotiations resulted in a collective bargaining agreement through spring 2012.

Also, under many of the

See **UNION** | Page B2

MID-COLUMBIA

SECTION C | tricityherald.com | Saturday, June 29, 2013

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

Tamosaitis in court after earning no bonus

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The attorney for former Hanford manager Walter Tamosaitis who raised concerns about the safety of the vitrification plant brought his case back to court Friday after Tamosaitis' employer failed to give him a bonus.

In January 2012 a lawsuit brought by Tamosaitis against Bechtel National was dismissed by former Judge Craig Matheson of Benton County Superior Court, in part because Tamosaitis did not show that he had suffered financial harm, according to

Tamosaitis' attorney, Jack Sheridan.

Judge Sal Mendoza Jr. declined to reopen the case Friday, but the hearing will allow the evidence to be brought up on appeal, satisfying Sheridan's goal.

Tamosaitis sued Bechtel National claiming the company wrongly interfered in his employment with Bechtel subcontractor URS. URS has claimed in court documents that it



Tamosaitis

removed Tamosaitis on Bechtel's orders.

Tamosaitis claims he was removed in summer 2010 from the \$12.2 billion vitrification plant project at Hanford for raising questions about the future safe operation of the plant when it begins treating radioactive waste for disposal in 2019.

Bechtel and URS deny that he was removed for raising safety concerns and said he was removed after sending an inappropriate email.

Work on key parts of the plant have since been stopped until technical issues that could affect the safe operation

of the plant have been resolved.

Tamosaitis has continued to work for URS, but initially was assigned to a basement office shared with a copy machine and given little meaningful work, according to court documents.

Bechtel pointed out after the hearing that a federal judge last year said Tamosaitis was given opportunities to change offices and to accept work that would require him to relocate, but he declined.

Tamosaitis continued to be paid and initially was given annual bonuses. However, in 2012 he did not receive a bonus

with other employees in March, Sheridan said. When he asked about it he was told it was a mistake and he was awarded a bonus, Sheridan said.

Sheridan argued in court that was a legal maneuver to make sure that Tamosaitis did not suffer financial harm in the one-year window after Matheson dismissed the case.

This spring, after the one-year period had passed, Tamosaitis did not receive a bonus, which likely would have been for upwards of \$40,000, Sheridan said.

A URS official said that Tamosaitis did not receive the

bonus because he is considered "overhead," rather than being assigned to a billable project, Sheridan said.

However, if Tamosaitis had not been wrongly removed from the vitrification plant project, his career would not have been destroyed, he would have been assigned to a project and he would have been given a bonus, Sheridan argued.

To introduce the evidence into the Benton County Superior Court more than a year after it was dismissed, Sheridan needed to show that extraordinary circumstances

EPA says nuclear reservation used areas without required permits

2 JUL 18

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The Department of Energy has agreed to pay a \$136,000 fine to settle Environmental Protection Agency allegations that it has violated legal requirements for storing radioactive and hazardous chemical waste at Hanford.

It has operated waste storage areas without a required permit, stopped using other areas for storage without closing them or requesting an extension and has not properly treated some waste, according to EPA.

DOE has argued that it long has followed requirements in the Dangerous Waste Permit issued by the state of Washington and the Tri-Party Agreement to store waste.

Hundreds of inspections during almost two decades have not raised issues with methods now being criticized, it said.

However, the EPA National Enforcement Investigations Center conducted an inspection in March 2011 and questioned whether several waste storage units were covered by permits.

"When handling mixed (nuclear and hazardous) waste, there's no such thing as being too careful," Ed Kowalski, director of EPA's Office of Compliance and Enforcement in Seattle, said in a statement. "Strict compliance with all dangerous waste requirements is the only acceptable path here."

DOE had permits to store waste in units within T Plant, some double-lined trenches and the Central Waste Complex. But it also was storing waste in places in those facilities that the permits did not cover, according to the investigation.

Most of the waste is material that has been set aside or temporarily buried and then retrieved to eventually be disposed of at the nation's repository for transuranic waste, the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant, in New Mexico. At Hanford, transuranic waste typically is waste contaminated with plutonium.

The waste also includes suspected transuranic

HANFORD NEWS ONLINE

Find related stories at www.hanfordnews.com

DOE to mark Hanford waste disposal milestone

The Department of Energy on Tuesday will mark 15 million tons of waste disposed of at Hanford's Environmental Restoration Disposal Facility.

The 70-foot-deep, lined landfill at the center of Hanford began operating in 1996. It accepts waste from across Hanford, including contami-

nated soil, debris dug up from waste sites that do not meet current environmental standards and rubble from buildings that are torn down.

The landfill's liner system collects and removes any water from precipitation or dust control to prevent contaminants from being carried into the soil beneath the landfill and toward groundwater.

Baby eagles^{3 JUL 13} hatch in nest at Hanford

Officials say birds
may be first born
on site since WWII

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Two bald eagles have hatched in a nest on the Hanford nuclear reservation, for possibly the first time in more than 50 years.

Hanford officials are not aware of bald eagles producing eggs on the site since it was established during World War II, according to Department of Energy spokesman Cameron Salony. It's the first known bald eagle nesting attempt at Hanford in three years.

The young birds are estimated to be about 10 weeks old and already stand about 31 inches tall.

In February, Mission Support Alliance officials surveyed for bald eagles on the site and spotted 13 adults and

three juveniles. Bald eagles are considered juveniles until they are about five years old, when their mottled brown-and-white plumage turns to dark brown and they develop the distinctive white head and tail of an adult.

The 13 adults spotted in February included the breeding pair that produced the two chicks.

Pictures taken by Mission Support Alliance employees show them in a nest built of sticks high in a group of trees.

Although DOE is not disclosing the location to protect the birds, bald eagles typically nest near water, such as the Columbia River, where there is a supply of fish. They also may eat waterfowl, small mammals and carrion, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Hanford officials put up signs to restrict worker access in a buffer zone around the nest until the

See **EAGLES** | Page A2

HANFORD

Study looks at waste options

DOE looks at disposal
of defense waste, used
nuclear fuel together

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The Department of Energy will finish a study this fall on whether Hanford and other high-level radioactive defense wastes should be disposed of with used nuclear fuel from commercial plants, said Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz.

He discussed the study in response to questioning from Sen. Maria Cantwell, D-Wash., at a hearing of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee on Tuesday.

Bipartisan Senate legislation has been introduced to implement the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future, which was formed after the Obama administration moved to end work on the Yucca Mountain, Nev., nuclear repository.

The proposed legislation would allow the construction and operation of a facility for defense waste if Moniz determines that separating the two types of waste is best.

Technically, Hanford and commercial waste could be stored together, Moniz said at the hearing. However, there could be advantages to not combining the two types of waste, he said.

Hanford waste includes high-level radioactive waste stored in underground tanks until it can be glassified at the vitrification plant. It also includes fuel irradiated for weapons plutonium production but not processed to remove plutonium after the Cold War ended.

Cantwell is concerned that Hanford and other defense waste not be treated as "an afterthought" as plans are made for disposal of commercial used fuel.

"We need this to be a central part of the discussion, and so that's what I would be looking for in legislation," she said.

Hanford continues to make progress, she said. But a plan is needed so that waste that's retrieved from aging underground tanks, some of which are leaking, has a destination once it is treated for disposal. The plan should be updated every five years, she said.

"It's unacceptable to our state and my constituents to think that Hanford is just going to end up being that repository for that vast amount of high-level defense waste," she said.

A disposal site for high-level radioactive defense waste "is

MID-COLUMBIA

Thursday, Aug. 1, 2013

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

HANFORD

State looks at safety of short shipments

Inspection report part of 'an ongoing enforcement process' by government

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The state of Washington is taking a close look at how the Department of Energy transports waste from the Hanford nuclear reservation to a nearby treatment plant, a recent inspection report indicates.

The inspection report was obtained

by Hanford Challenge, and DOE and the Washington State Department of Ecology declined to discuss the report during what the state called "an ongoing enforcement process."

The inspection report indicated that more information was being gathered.

The document, which was signed by two state employees July 8 and 11, focused on whether the public and environment are being adequately protected as waste is shipped from central Hanford to Perma-Fix Northwest, which is just off the Hanford nuclear reservation, for treatment.

About 12 miles of the route are on

roads open to the public, according to the report.

DOE has been shipping waste, typically containers of debris with radioactive and hazardous chemical contamination, by what it calls a rolling road closure starting at the Wye Barricade, where public access onto Hanford is barred.

The shipments travel Route 4 South and then turn onto Battelle Boulevard in north Richland, according to the state report.

Pilot cars travel in front and back of the waste shipment truck. But the public has unrestricted access to two lanes

in the opposite direction of Route 4 South, according to the report. In addition, crossroads are not controlled, according to the report.

Between 2009 and 2012, about 2.2 million pounds of hazardous waste was transported from Hanford to Perma-Fix, according to the report.

The inspection also questioned whether appropriate shipping packages were used after looking at shipments made on March 22 and 23.

The state calculated radioactivity of the drums and determined they needed

6 AUG 13

Work delayed to empty tank

Failed pump sidelines
robotic arm retrieving
radioactive waste!

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

A failed pump has once again stopped work with Hanford's new Mobile Arm Retrieval System to retrieve waste from an underground tank of radioactive waste, ending hopes that it would be emptied this year.

The Department of Energy is required to empty that tank and six others before October 2014 to meet a court-enforced consent decree. DOE already notified the state of Washington that it may not be able to

empty two of the seven tanks on time.

However, the latest setback on emptying Tank C-107 with the Mobile Arm Retrieval System, or MARS, may not mean that now three of the seven tanks are at risk of not being emptied by the consent decree deadline.

DOE and Washington River Protection Solutions have developed a plan to reschedule work to get as many of the tanks emptied as they can before October 2014.

Two of the seven tanks could be emptied to regulatory standards before October 2013, according to information provided by DOE to the Washington State Department of

BRIEFS

Hanford vit plant hiring construction workers

The Hanford vitrification plant is hiring construction workers as a second shift is added at its Low Activity Waste Facility.

About 50 building trades workers have been hired and will start work Monday, according to Bechtel National. More hiring is expected. Most of the jobs are for electricians and pipefitters, but some other construction workers also are needed.

The basic structure of the building has been completed, and enough work is ready to be done to bring in more workers, according to Bechtel. Construction on the building, one of the four large buildings on the vit plant campus, is about 60 percent complete.

The plant's schedule is being revised, but the Low Activity Waste Facility is expected to be finished in the next couple of years. The plant legally is required to start treating radioactive waste for disposal in 2019.

New defendants added in case alleging work was unfairly awarded

13 AUG 13

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The U.S. Department of Justice plans to join a federal lawsuit against Washington Closure Hanford and two subcontractors that alleges unfair practices in the award of Hanford subcontracts.

The lawsuit was filed by Savage Logistics of Richland and its owner, Salina Savage, in 2010, after the company failed to win a bid.

Savage named Washington Closure and Federal Engineers and Constructors of Richland as defendants. The Department of Justice is adding new defendants Sage Tec and Sage Tec's owner, Laura Shikashio.

The department will have 120 days from Aug. 8 to file a legal complaint against the defendants detailing specific allegations, which may not include all of Savage's allegations.

Savage alleged that Federal Engineers and Constructors, or FE&C, conspired with Washington Closure to rig bids and misrepresent the size and independence of subcontractors bidding on Washington Closure work.

That would allow FE&C to continue performing work and getting paid, while Washington Closure could satisfy Department of Energy requirements to subcontract work to small and disadvantaged companies.

FE&C co-owner Dick French described Savage's lawsuit as "frivolous" in 2011.

FE&C has not reviewed the most recent complaint and does not know what allegations Justice plans to pursue, but believes that Savage's allegations are without merit, said FE&C attorney Jessica Blankenship.

"We will continue to vigorously defend the company against her accusations, as we have been doing for the past two years," she said.

The Department of Justice has not indicated which subcontract awarded to Sage Tec is of

See **LAWSUIT** | Page A2

HANFORD

Sentence 'fairly merciful' for gifting crime

Community service, fines, probation in the near future for convicted felon

GEOFF FOLSOM

HERALD STAFF WRITER

YAKIMA — In private business, it was OK if Shane Fast wanted to treat customers with tickets to sporting events and other gifts. But he found out it was a whole different ballgame when dealing with the federal government.

Fast, the owner of the now-defunct Fast Pipe and Supply in Pasco, was sentenced Thursday to three years probation and no prison time for giving out \$40,000 in gifts to purchasers at the Hanford nuclear reservation.

He also must pay a \$1,000 fine and \$100 penalty assessment and serve 100 hours of community service with a not-for-profit agency.

Federal Judge Lonny R. Suko called the sentence "fairly merciful." Fast could have served up to 10 years in federal prison. The Department of Justice asked for a sentence on the low end

of the range.

His attorney, Sam Swanberg of Kennewick, said Fast, 53, was unaware of the differences in gifts to private and government customers. When dealing with the government, gifts larger than \$25 are forbidden.

"If this was a private business, this would have all passed muster," Swanberg told the Herald after the hearing. "This is the same as an orthodontist sending a catered lunch to the dentist who sent referrals to him."

Fast pleaded guilty March 14 to one felony count. He admitted to giving gifts

intended to influence buyers to do business with him between November 2005 and October 2008.

During that time, the 14 purchasers for former contractor Fluor Hanford who federal attorneys believe accepted gifts ordered \$3.9 million in goods from Fast Pipe, according to court documents. The Department of Energy then reimbursed Fluor Hanford for items bought for use at Hanford.

On Thursday, Assistant U.S. Attorney Matt Duggan, addressing the court on

See **CRIME** | Page C2

HANFORD TANK FARMS

Emergency stops work

Possible leak detected; may be from equipment used to transfer waste from C tanks

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Work has stopped to empty radioactive waste from old tanks at the Hanford

nuclear reservation after an emergency Wednesday night.

An unusual radiation reading at 9:35 p.m. indicated radioactive waste had leaked, possibly from a transfer system being used to empty high level radioactive and hazardous chemical waste from Tank C-101. However, no waste was visible on the ground, indicating the leak may be small.

Four workers immediately stopped using the retrieval system and evacuated the C Tank Farm, an area with 16 under-

ground tanks. No contamination was found on the workers, but they were sent to Kadlec Regional Medical Center in Richland as a precaution.

Others in central Hanford and near the K Reactors along the Columbia River were ordered to take cover and access to Hanford was restricted.

The Department of Energy issued an "alert," the lowest level emergency DOE

See **EMERGENCY** | Page A2

9 AUG 13

Senator sees pre-1943 sites

White Bluffs school,
Bruggemann ranch
stops on Murray tour

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Hanford High School may be nothing more than a gray concrete ruin standing among the sage on the Hanford nuclear reservation.

But an air of grandeur remains about the two-story building, graced with tall, multi-paned windows and a front porch where students would gather for an annual photo.

It's an indication of how important the school was to the community, Colleen French of the Department of Energy told Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., on Thursday.

Murray visited some of the few buildings that still stand from the days before the 586-square-mile nuclear reservation was created to produce plutonium for the nation's nuclear weapons program.

She saw the high school, the White Bluffs bank and the Bruggemann warehouse, all of which could be included in a Manhattan Project National Historical Park.

B Reactor, which Murray also toured, is planned as the Hanford jewel of the proposed park.

But supporters also want to tell the story of the people forced to abandon their homes and businesses to allow the secret nuclear complex to be built along the Columbia River during World War II.

A national park would

See **SENATOR** | Page A2

Congress needs vit plant plan soon

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., is pushing for the Department of Energy to release a plan soon for the Hanford tank farms and vitrification plant to treat the tank waste, she said Thursday.

She spoke with new Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz on Tuesday, two days before touring Hanford historic sites and holding a brief press conference at Hanford's B Reactor.

"I was very clear to him that we could not wait any longer for a comprehensive plan," she said.

Critical budget decisions will be made this fall on Hanford spending and she'll need to know details of DOE's plan by then, she said.

See **VIT PLANT** | Page A2

MID-COLUMBIA

Saturday, Aug. 17, 2013

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

HANFORD

DOE to assess toxic waste shipping

State ecology department raised safety concerns in ongoing inspection in July

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The Department of Energy plans an assessment of shipments of radioactive waste within short distances of the Hanford nuclear reservation after safety concerns were raised.

The Washington State Department

of Ecology raised some initial issues in a report on an ongoing inspection in July obtained by Hanford Challenge. However, the Department of Ecology does not have regulatory authority over waste shipments and only can consider issues, not require changes. It has not issued a final inspection report.

"I'm pretty confident we are doing shipping safely," said Matt McCormick, manager of the Department of Energy Hanford Richland Operations Office. The assessment is being done "in the spirit of continuous improvement" and to make sure the shipments comply

with all regulations, he said.

The Department of Energy follows U.S. Department of Transportation regulations for Hanford waste shipments that are sent long distances, such as to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant nuclear repository in New Mexico.

Those shipments rely on the waste containers to prevent the spread of radioactive contamination and protect the public in case of an accident. Shipments generally do not have escort cars and travel at normal highway speed.

But the Department of Energy also

can choose to make shipments by a method called "out of commerce" that relies on road closures regulated by federal, state and local governments and DOE standards for safe containment of the waste and the prevention of collisions.

The assessment planned by DOE will focus on those shipments.

It's the method picked for shipments of waste to Perma-Fix Northwest, which is just off the nuclear reservation. Waste such as debris with

22 AUG 13

Work continues on tank retrieval arm

Tank farm crews installed a mast for the Mobile Arm Retrieval System Vacuum inside tank C-105 at Hanford this week, the Department of Energy's Office of River Protection announced on its Facebook page.

The single-shell underground radioactive waste tank is the first to be cleaned using the vacuum version of the MARS technology. Officials said it uses as little liquid as possible during retrieval.

Tank C-105 is not on the list of 68 tanks suspected to have leaked. However, because of contaminated soil around the

tank, Washington River Protection Solutions is taking a conservative approach and limiting the liquid used in waste removal.

DOE notified the state in June that tank C-105 was one of two tanks in the C Tank Farm that may not be emptied in time for a September 2014 consent decree deadline that requires all 16 tanks in the group to be emptied.

The World War II-era tanks contain radioactive sludge left from past production of plutonium.

Former DOE manager to discuss Hanford issues

A former Department of Energy Hanford manager will

discuss Hanford issues and their significance at a meeting of the Columbia Basin Badger Club.

Mike Lawrence, manager of the DOE Hanford Richland Operations Office from 1984 to 1990, will speak at the meeting at 11:30 a.m. Friday at the Pasco Red Lion, 2525 N. 20th Ave. Register at cbbc.club.express.com. Cost is \$22.

Lawrence will discuss Hanford's leaking tanks, hydrogen gas issues, delays in building the vitrification plant and the absence of a national deep geological waste repository and potential solutions to those problems.

- Herald staff

Bust of 'man who built Hanford' dedication planned at Richland library

SARA SCHILLING

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Col. Franklin T. Matthias, known as the man who built Hanford, will be honored Saturday during a ceremony in the city he helped shape.

A bronze bust of the late Army Corps of Engineers officer recently was installed at the Richland Public Library. The dedication starts at 11 a.m.

It's a long overdue public recognition for the man who managed the largest construction project of World War II, said Karen Miles of Richland.

She spearheaded the commemoration project.

"Richland is a very unique city. We have a history, and we should remember and honor our history," she said.

Matthias died in 1993. But his son, Michael, and several other relatives are scheduled to attend Saturday's ceremony.

Gary Petersen, vice president of Hanford projects for the Tri-City Development Council, will be the master of ceremonies, and U.S. Rep. Doc Hastings, Army Corps of Engineers Lt. Col. Andrew Kelly and Richland Mayor John Fox are among those scheduled to participate.

See **MATTHIAS** | Page B2

Matthias honored with bust

200 people attended dedication ceremony at Richland library

TY BEAVER

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Richland's streets are named for prominent figures from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The city's Leslie Groves Park is named for the U.S. Army general who oversaw the entirety of the Manhattan Project, the original mission of the Hanford site.

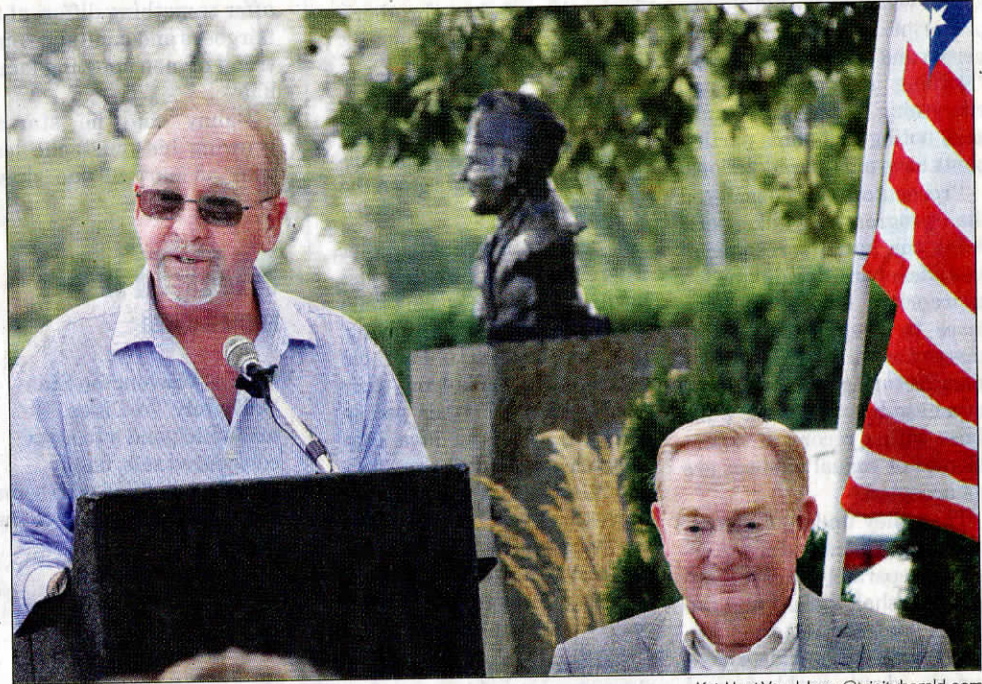
And now the man who directed Hanford's construction and built the city that housed its workers then and now has recognition that was a long time coming.

About 200 people crowded in front of the Richland Public Library on Saturday to dedicate a bust of Col. Franklin T. Matthias, who died in 1993. Community, military and government leaders hailed the achievement of such a vast project and how it still fuels the region's economy.

Matthias' son, Michael Matthias, said his father's work here in the 1940s, was of an unprecedented scale, but his father had no doubt it could be done.

"He had a complete disregard for the word 'impossible,'" Michael Matthias said.

Richland resident Karen Miles spearheaded the project to honor Col. Matthias. The bust, designed by



Kai-Huei Yau | kyau@tricityherald.com

Michael Matthias speaks alongside Gary Petersen on Saturday during a dedication ceremony for a statue of his father, Col. Franklin T. Matthias, at the Richland Public Library. Nearly 200 attended the event to honor Col. Matthias, known as the man who built Hanford. Petersen is the vice president of Hanford projects for the Tri-City Development Council. [See a photo gallery at tricityherald.com.](#)

“
He had a complete
disregard for the word
'impossible.'

Michael Matthias,
Col. Franklin T. Matthias' son

”
Michael Salazar and cast by Ron Gerton, was installed earlier this week in a landscape designed by Tim Montgomery and lighted by Roger Gibson.

Officials detailed Col. Matthias' connections to the community. Lt. Col. Andrew Kelly, Walla Walla district commander for the Army Corps of Engineers, discussed the colonel's discovery of the Hanford area and how he expounded upon the quality of gravel deposited there in a formal report.

Several talked about the immensity of the project Franklin Matthias was given as commander of construction for the Hanford Engineers Works and city of Richland.

His workers built nuclear

reactors and related facilities but also hundreds of miles of highways and railroads, numerous homes, grocery stores and anything else needed.

"These were the days of slide rules and hand-crafted blueprints," said Gary Petersen, vice president of the Tri-City Development Council.

Richland Mayor John Fox said Franklin Matthias' work here is an ongoing legacy, putting the Tri-Cities on the path to future growth, creating the need for institutions

HANFORD C TANK FARM

Emergency may briefly stop work

Radiation readings, wipedowns, air samples were part of hazard checks

ANNETTE CARY
HERALD STAFF WRITER

Work could resume to empty radioactive waste from Hanford Tank C-101 in as little as a couple of weeks,

said Kevin Smith, Department of Energy manager of the Hanford Office of River Protection, on Friday.

Wednesday night, an emergency was declared when workers discovered indications that equipment being used to empty waste from the tank was leaking radioactive waste.

Workers went back Friday into the C Tank Farm, an area with Tank C-101 and 15 other single-shell tanks, to take another radiation reading at a sluicer

shield box where the suspected leak was detected.

The radiation reading was slightly lower than a reading taken during an entry into the tank farm Thursday, but still above expected levels.

Workers also wiped areas nearby to check for contamination, but found nothing unexpected, said John Britton, spokesman for contractor Washington River Protection Solutions.

Air samples picked up no chemical

vapors from the mix of radioactive and hazardous chemical waste held in Hanford tanks, he said.

As a result, the barricade around the C Tank Farm was moved to a fenced-in area within the farm where workers routinely are required to wear protective clothing to enter. That allowed access to the control room trailer being used for Tank C-

BRIEFS

Hanford contractor gets safety, outreach awards

Advanced Technologies and Laboratories International at Hanford has been awarded the Department of Energy's Star of Excellence Award for safety.

The award was presented to ATL at the 29th annual Voluntary Protection Programs Participants Association conference in Nashville, Tenn., this week. In conjunction with other DOE prime contractors at Hanford, ATL also received the 2013 Outreach Award.

This is the second time ATL has received the Star of Excellence award since it became a Hanford prime contractor in 2005. The Star of Excellence was awarded to ATL based on employees' commitment to the principles of the Voluntary Protection Program, performance in meeting established safety and health goals, conducting outreach to others and achieving an injury and illness rate significantly below the average of similar businesses.

The Outreach Award is presented to "Voluntary Protection Program ambassadors," in recognition of outreach activity and results and for encouragement of others.

HANFORD BETA READING

30 Aug 17

No source found for radiation alert

Work on emptying
tanks at C Tank Farm
on hold since incident

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Hanford workers have been unable to find the source of an unusual radiation reading that caused an emergency alert to be declared last week at the nuclear reservation.

"We're not ready to close the book on this. We're still doing

HANFORD NEWS ONLINE

Find related stories at
www.hanfordnews.com.

work," said John Britton, spokesman for contractor Washington River Protection Solutions.

The night of Aug. 21 a higher-than-expected beta radiation reading was detected at a sluicer shield box, causing workers to suspect a leak. Work was under way with the sluicing system to empty

See **ALERT** | Page A2

31 AUG 13

Hanford B reactor marks milestone

Activities planned to celebrate 70 years of nuclear community

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Seventy years ago Oct. 5, ground was broken on the nation's first production-scale nuclear reactor, Hanford's B Reactor, as the United States raced to produce an atomic bomb during World War II.

The movement of that earth along the Columbia River would lead to a world where the allies were victorious in the war, where the threat of nuclear warfare looms over nations, and where radioactive isotopes are used for the diagnosis and treatment of disease.

The Tri-Cities will mark that historic date with a month of activities in October organized by the Hanford History Partnership, a community collaboration led by Washington State University Tri-Cities.

Tours, including a look inside T Plant, and lectures have been organized by the partnership to help the community observe its heritage and a Cold War-themed party has been planned by the Hanford Reach Interpretive Center as a fundraiser for the center.

Any proceeds after expenses from the other activities will be used to continue the Hanford History Partnership's work.

Since its organization earlier this year, the Hanford

HANFORD

T Plant open to the public in October

'Queen Mary' was first chemical processing and separating plant of its kind

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The public can get a rare look inside Hanford's historic T Plant as Hanford-area communities commemorate the birth of the atomic age with Hanford 70th anniversary events in October.

Plans include a month of tours of B Reactor and T Plant and lectures by scholars and eyewitnesses to history.

TICKETS ON SALE

Go to www.ourhanfordhistory.org to order Plutonium Passport tickets.

Hanford 70th Plutonium Passport tickets, the first available to the events, are on sale on the Internet at a link at the top of www.ourhanfordhistory.org. The passports, which cost \$70, will cover bus transportation to tour B Reactor and T Plant.

B Reactor is well known in the Tri-Cities as the world's first full-scale nuclear reactor, producing plutonium for the world's first manmade nuclear explosion, the Trinity Test in the New

Mexico desert, and the bomb dropped on Nagasaki, Japan, helping end World War II.

But less well known is B Reactor's sister facility, T Plant.

The plant, nicknamed the Queen Mary for its massive length, was the first chemical processing and separations plant of its kind in the world. It was used to chemically separate plutonium from irradiated fuel rods, allowing it to be used in the nation's weapons program during WWII.

"It's time we tell the story of T Plant's role in history," said Colleen French, the



A historic preservation team toured Hanford's T Plant this spring. Public tours of the plant are planned in October to commemorate Hanford's 70th anniversary.

Herald file

See **T PLANT** | Page A2

HANFORD

Alert traced to old contamination

Probe of unusual radiation readings last month showed no evidence of new leaks

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Unusual radiation readings that caused an emergency to be declared last month at Hanford came from old

contamination, according to Hanford officials.

No evidence of a new leak from the system being used to retrieve waste from a Hanford tank or from the system's transfer hoses was found, Hanford workers were told Tuesday.

An investigation concluded that insulating blankets that had shielded radiation on an area about 4 square inches shifted, causing the elevated beta radiation readings during routine

monitoring, Kevin Smith, manager of the Department of Energy Hanford Office of River Protection, said in a message to employees Tuesday.

Washington River Protection Solutions, the DOE contractor for the tanks farms, has completed an assessment of the Tank C-101 sluicer, where the elevated reading was recorded and the surrounding area and found no additional contamination or exposure to the environment, according to

Smith. Employees of URS Corp. also helped with the investigation.

The contamination was on the concrete cover block near the base of the C-101 sluicer transfer hose cover assembly, according to a memo from Dave Olson, president of Washington River Protection Solutions.

The sluicer is part of the system being used to empty radioactive and hazardous chemical waste from the single-shell tank and transfer it to a

newer double-shell tank for storage until it can be treated for disposal. Underground tanks at Hanford hold 56 million gallons of waste left from the past production of plutonium for the nation's nuclear weapons program.

Because the abnormal reading could have been caused by a leak, workers at the C Tank Farm evacuated and workers in central Hanford

See **ALERT** | Page A2

Workers experienced no additional risk; load met requirements for disposal

SEP 13
ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

As many as 5,618 shipments of radioactive waste were made to the central Hanford landfill without the correct radioactive waste signs

required on shipping containers.

However, no additional risk to workers resulted and the waste met requirements for disposal at the Environmental Restoration Disposal Facility, according to Washington Closure Hanford.

The landfill waste containers used at Hanford, which typically hold 18 to 23 tons of waste, are routinely marked as carrying radioactive loads.

But the containers did not also have the required state Department of

Transportation magnetic placards indicating a load of radioactive "low specific activity."

The waste was collected at the 618-10 Burial Ground, which is about six miles north of Richland, and was transported on Route 4 South, which is open to the public, until it reached the secure area beyond the Wye Barricade.

Much of the waste was soil, including soil dug up to get to radioactive debris in trenches at the burial

ground, said Mill Lewis, waste services manager for Washington Closure. It also included some mixed-in debris.

Washington Closure discovered the mistake, which dated back to a single incorrect calculation in 2011, and reported it.

The calculation applied only to meeting Department of Transportation requirements, not the way the waste was loaded, and the waste was

See **WASTE** | Page B2

HANFORD

5 Sep 13

Joint trial likely in timecard fraud case

Judge hesitant, says dividing trial may create disadvantage for some

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Ten defendants accused of timecard fraud at Hanford likely will be tried together unless some make plea agreements.

Judge Edward Shea heard argu-

ments Wednesday for dividing the defendants into groups and holding three trials in federal court. He said he wanted to reread a past case before ruling, but was strongly inclined to hold a single trial for all defendants.

He is leery of dividing the trial for fear that it would create a disadvantage for some defendants, he said.

A trial date of March 10 has been set. A joint trial for all defendants

See **TIMECARD** | Page A2

HANFORD

8 SEP 13

Appeals court upholds union rulings

No evidence found
of discrimination
against ex-official

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The 9th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals has upheld 2009 federal court decisions that did not find evidence of discrimination or retaliation against a former Hanford

union official.

Stephanie Green, the former president of United Steelworkers Local 12-369, sued related labor organizations claiming that she was discriminated against because she is black or a woman or that she was retaliated against for her speech or actions.

She sued the local union, the international union, the Hanford Atomic Metal Trades Council — an

umbrella group for 15 Hanford unions — and the HAMTC president.

The district federal court dismissed some of Green's claims outright, and then ruled against other claims in November 2009 before the defense had presented its case in a nonjury trial.

The lower court found that actions against Green were not retaliatory or discriminatory, but were because of the competing

interests of rival factions within the local or the need to alleviate the tension created by disagreements within the local.

Legal claims filed by Green followed years of turmoil within the local that had HAMTC discussing whether to drop the local, appeals court Judge Wallace Tashima wrote in an opinion Friday.

See **UNION** | Page B2

BRIEFS

Hanford worker crashes vehicle; accused of DUI

A Hanford worker was arrested earlier this month on suspicion of driving while intoxicated after allegedly rolling a government pickup on the secure portion of the Hanford nuclear reservation.

The Benton County Sheriff's Office was called to the area of Route Four South and Route 11 at 11:35 a.m. Sept. 7, said Lt. Chuck Jones of the sheriff's office. The sheriff's office was told the Hanford Patrol and medics already were at the scene of a one-

vehicle crash, he said.

A sheriff's detective smelled alcohol and conducted a field sobriety test on the driver of the pickup, Mitchell Senter, 43, which Senter failed, Jones said. Senter also had a suspended driver's license and was required to have an ignition interlock to detect alcohol on any vehicle he drove, Jones said.

Senter refused a breathalyzer test, but blood was drawn and he was booked into the Benton County jail, Jones said. He no longer was listed as an inmate two days later.

Washington River Protec-

tion Solutions, the Department of Energy tank farm contractor at Hanford, said Senter was employed as a health physics technician from Oct. 5, 2009, until Tuesday. Washington River Protection Solutions and the Department of Energy declined to say more about the incident.

Crisis response unit closer to new home

The Benton-Franklin Crisis Response Unit is a step closer to moving into a new home in Kennewick, near other government and social services.

Benton County commis-

BRIEFS

7 SEP 13

Hanford workers resume emptying Tank C-101 of waste

Hanford workers resumed emptying Tank C-101 of radioactive and hazardous chemical waste Friday.

Next week pumping also should resume on the second tank where work has been under way at Hanford, Tank C-110. Work to pump waste from single-shell tanks into newer double-shell tanks stopped Aug. 21 when an emergency alert was declared.

Hanford officials feared that a gasket had failed in a system being used to retrieve waste from Tank C-101, allowing waste to leak. But the cause of an unusual radiation reading was discovered to be a small amount of previous contamination that inadvertently had become uncovered.

The Department of Energy faces a court-enforced consent decree to have seven more single-shell tanks emptied before October 2014.

DOE chided for missed budget details

6 SEP 13

Department has failed to provide timely information for two projects, board says

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The Hanford Advisory Board criticized the Department of Energy on Friday for failing to yet make public a detailed budget request for key projects in fiscal 2015, which begins in less than 13 months.

Hanford officials held an annual public meeting on the budget four months ago, but had no numbers to

discuss then for work in the tank farms or the vitrification plant.

That meeting already had been postponed because of issues including the late release of the Obama's proposed budget for fiscal 2014 and uncertainty in the 2013 fiscal budget, in part because of forced federal budget cuts called sequestration.

DOE has failed to provide sufficient and timely information for several years on the two projects, both the responsibility of the DOE Hanford Office of River Protection, the board said in a letter of advice to DOE.

The lack of information harms the board's and the public's ability to comment on the work that is planned and

the budget priorities, the letter said.

"Work does not happen without money, and the right work does not happen without details to discuss," said John Price, of the Washington State Department of Ecology, as the board discussed the issue.

DOE and its regulators — the Department of Ecology and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency — expect the board to provide advice on proposed budget priorities and the board takes that responsibility seriously, said board member Susan Leckband.

DOE Hanford officials have been unable to provide fiscal 2015 information on the vitrification plant because

they are waiting on Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz's plan to resolve technical issues and provide a path forward for work there, said Ben Harp, DOE manager of the vitrification plant start-up and commissioning integration.

In addition, numbers have been delayed because plans and a schedule for work at Hanford's Tank AY-102 are not clear. The double-shell tank is leaking waste from its inner shell and regulations require it to be emptied.

Hanford officials already have concerns about the budget for the tank farms for fiscal 2014, which starts

Waste likely not from tank, report says

Pit likely caught rain water that dripped through soil, Department of Energy says

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

It's highly likely that radioactive liquid collected by a system to detect leaks in a Hanford double-shell tank did not come from inside the tank, according to results of a recently completed investigation.

The finding eases concerns that Tank AY-102, Hanford's oldest double-shell tank, may be leaking radioactive waste into the soil beneath it.

A comprehensive study done for the Department of Energy by contractor Washington River Protection Solutions shows "with a high level of confidence" that contaminated liquid collected in a leak detection pit for Hanford's oldest double-shell tank did not come from within the tank, the investigation concluded.

Instead, the pit likely caught some rain water that dripped through the

soil, picking up contamination in the soil left during more than 40 years of operating Tank AY-102, and then infiltrated the leak detection pit, according to information in the report. The pit collects water between the bottom of the tank's outer shell and the underground concrete platform beneath the tank.

The inner shell of Hanford's Tank AY-102 slowly is leaking waste into the space between its inner and outer shells. But that waste was not believed to have reached the environment until contamination was found June 20 in

the leak contamination pit, raising concerns that the outer shell of the tank also was leaking.

In July, DOE said further tests then to determine if the outer shell was leaking had been inconclusive and had not shown that the contamination came from the tanks.

Although results of the completed investigation are encouraging, DOE will continue its look at the leak detection pit to validate the investigation's conclusion.

See **TANK** | Page C3

HAMTC, contractors reach tentative deal

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The Hanford Atomic Metal Trades Council is recommending that members approve the latest collective bargaining agreement proposal after 20 months of contract negotiations.

A ratification vote has been set for Oct. 9 at the Richland Labor Temple.

The Hanford Atomic Metal Trades Council, or HAMTC, negotiations committee believes it has done the “very best that we could do given the current state of affairs,” said President Dave Molnaa in a letter sent to members Tuesday.

HAMTC is an umbrella organization for 15 of the unions performing work at the Hanford nuclear reservation.

The proposal represents the best contract that will be offered, though it is not the “fair settlement” that had been sought, Molnaa said.

“There is simply nothing more that can be done to enforce our position other than the ultimate battle — to conduct a strike,” he said. “However, it is very likely that

such action would prove to be unsuccessful and would not change the current circumstances at all.”

In fact, a strike might lead to a deterioration of the offer, he said.

HAMTC workers overwhelmingly rejected the previous proposal in a vote July 16.

The council determined the primary reason for the failed ratification vote was changes to the pension program, said a memo sent by CH2M Hill Plateau Remediation Co. managers Tuesday. CH2M Hill led negotiations for Hanford environmental cleanup contractors.

The proposal voted on in July would have reduced pension payments to workers after retirement. Workers also were unhappy with proposed wages and benefits, the memo said.

The revised collective bargaining agreement proposal partially addresses those issues, according to the CH2M Hill memo.

The current proposal will increase wage rates 2 percent for each of the next three years. Full-time workers each would receive a one-time payment of \$1,000 if

the contract is ratified by Oct. 11.

Employees with at least 10 years of participation in the Hanford pension plan would see no change to their pension benefits. However, workers with fewer years in the program would have their benefits reduced. New hires would not be eligible for the pension program, but could participate in a 401(k) plan.

A Hanford-wide seniority program and separation pay would be maintained under the collective bargaining agreement proposal.

The proposed contract would be for three years with a possible two-year extension.

Chief stewards and business agents of individual unions can provide members with more details, according to Molnaa's letter.

An information meeting is scheduled for 5:30 p.m. Oct. 7 at the Richland Labor Temple. Meetings will be held at Hanford next week.

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

HANFORD

26 SEP 73

DOE report calls for phased vit plant start

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Starting treatment of some of Hanford's radioactive waste without sending it to the vitrification plant's Pre-treatment Facility could speed work while technical issues at the plant are being resolved, according to a long-awaited Department of Energy report released Tuesday.

The report is a framework, rather than a proposal, that will aid discussions as DOE works with the state of Washington to resolve concerns about Hanford waste treatment and put the treatment program on a sustainable path, said Energy Secretary

Ernest Moniz in a message to DOE staff.

Little information has been released about the \$12.2 billion vitrification plant over the last year as past Energy Secretary Steven Chu and then Moniz worked with teams of technical experts. They were assigned to identify and resolve technical issues that could affect the plant's safe and efficient operation, leading to some possible answers in the new report.

The framework "represents a prudent and reasonable approach to immobilize waste in a glass form as soon as practicable while working

BRIEFS

Washington Closure hits safety milestone

Washington Closure Hanford and its subcontractor employees have worked 2 million hours without a day of work lost to a workplace injury or illness.

It's the fourth time the milestone has been reached since Washington Closure was awarded the contract for environmental cleanup at Hanford along the Columbia River in 2005.

Washington Closure has finished about 90 percent of the work in its 10-year contract, which includes tearing down contaminated buildings and digging up waste sites and burial grounds.

Washington Closure also recently was recognized with the Legacy of Stars Award in DOE's Voluntary Protection Program for four consecutive years of Star of Excellence status in the safety program.

DOE extends CH2M Hill cleanup work contract

ANNETTE CARY
HERALD STAFF WRITER

The Department of Energy has extended CH2M Hill Plateau Remediation Co.'s contract for Hanford environmental cleanup work for five more years.

DOE notified CH2M Hill on Thursday of the contract extension, valued at about \$2.1 billion.

"DOE has determined that CH2M Hill remains the best value to the government," Hanford employees were told in a memo.

CH2M Hill was awarded a contract for central Hanford and groundwater cleanup in 2008 after a bidding process. The contract, initially valued at about \$4.5 billion total, included an initial five year period and an option for a second five years of work.

For the first five years, the contract value was increased to about \$3.6 billion because of \$1.3 billion in one-time funding from the American Recovery Act.

"DOE's decision to continue working with CHPRC is due to your work in meeting and exceeding our client's expectations in cleanup and safety," John Fulton, CH2M Hill president, said in a message to employees Thursday.

DOE announced in April 2012 that it planned to extend the contract for five years. Not only did CH2M Hill remain the best value on the basis of price and other factors, but extending the contract also would ensure continuity as major projects are finished over the next five years, Matt McCormick, manager of

the DOE Hanford Richland Operations Office, said then.

DOE considered CH2M Hill's performance in meeting cost and schedule goals, the quality of its work and its success in taking on additional work paid for with federal economic stimulus money, DOE said in 2012.

CH2M Hill and its main subcontractors had about 1,800 employees then, but that has dropped to 1,400 now.

CH2M Hill will continue work to prepare the Plutonium Finishing Plant for demolition. It will remove radioactive sludge from the K West Reactor Basin and move it to central Hanford, protecting the Columbia River.

It also will continue to operate plants that pump up contaminated groundwater, clean it and then return clean water to the ground. CH2M Hill treated a record amount of groundwater this year.

CH2M Hill also is responsible for operating waste treatment and storage facilities in central Hanford.

If money is available, CH2M Hill's work over the next five years also could include retrieving temporarily buried radioactive waste and shipping it to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant in New Mexico for disposal.

It also could add more methods for protecting the Columbia River from contaminants in the groundwater and could speed up the treatment or shipping of waste now at Hanford's Central Waste Complex.

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

“
DOE's decision to
continue working with
CHPRC is due to your
work in meeting and
exceeding our client's
expectations in
cleanup and safety.

John Fulton,
CH2M Hill president

”

HANFORD

3 SEP 13
Unknown

liquid
spills on
workers

HERALD STAFF

Six Hanford workers were taken to Kadlec Regional Medical Center in Richland on Wednesday morning as a precaution after an unknown liquid spilled on some of them.

Tests are being conducted to determine what was in the liquid, but it was not radioactive, said Rob Roxburgh, spokesman for Department of Energy contractor Washington River Protection Solutions.

Workers were at the 242-A Evaporator building dismantling piping that previously had been drained and taken out of service, Roxburgh said.

They were removing piping valves when some liquid spilled out, getting on the clothing or skin of some of the workers, he said.

A couple of the workers felt discomfort on their skin, and all the workers who had come in contact with the liquid or were nearby were taken to Kadlec about 10:30 a.m., Roxburgh said. They were released from the hospital by late afternoon, but still needed

See **LIQUID** | Page B2

BRIEFS

602713

Cold War Patriots plan compensation meetings

Cold War Patriots, a non-profit group, plans meetings to discuss benefits and compensation available to former and current Hanford and Pacific Northwest National Laboratory workers.

The Energy Employee Occupational Illness Program offers compensation of up to \$400,000 and coverage of medical expenses for workers harmed by exposure to radiation or toxic chemicals. Survivors are eligible for compensation in some cases.

The meetings will be at 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. Monday and Tuesday at the Red Lion, 802 George Washington Way, Richland.

Meetings also will be at noon and 6 p.m. Thursday at Oxford Suites, 1050 N. First St., Hermiston.

Cold War party kicks off Hanford anniversary

The Hanford Reach Interpretive Center's Cold War Party to kick off events marking the 70th anniversary of the Hanford nuclear reservation is 7 p.m. Friday at the Richland Public Library.

The event will highlight the role Hanford played in the Cold War. Community leaders will portray characters from '60s James Bond films.

A display of Bond cars, a martini bar and tasting, Bond-themed food stations, performances by musicians Bill, Cindy and Geoff McKay, a casino royale, Cold War art and a silent auction of Bond collectibles are planned.

Tickets are \$70 per person, \$125 per couple or \$30 for those with 70th Anniversary Plutonium Passports.

27 SEP 13

Inslee discusses tank waste

Governor says sending material to New Mexico fastest way to empty tanks

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The fastest way to get Hanford's radioactive waste out of possibly leaking or leak-prone underground tanks is

to send some of the waste to New Mexico, Gov. Jay Inslee said Thursday in the Tri-Cities.

As part of a full day, he met with the Herald editorial board and later Hanford Communities, an organization of local governments.

The state of Washington must "consistently be insistent" that the Department of Energy honor its commitments to clean up radioactive waste at Hanford and protect the

Columbia River, he said.

Sending some of the waste to a national repository in New Mexico, the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant, or WIPP, could be done more quickly than building new and sturdier tanks to hold waste, he said.

But the state also will demand a better response to leaking tanks, he said. Last winter he called for more storage tanks to be built after DOE discovered the first of its 28 double-shell tanks was

deteriorating. DOE is emptying waste in Hanford's 149 single-shell tanks into newer double-shell tanks until the waste can be treated for disposal. But the double-shell tanks are nearing capacity.

Even if tanks were not leaking, DOE still would need more tanks for the vitrification process, which also will add more waste storage capacity, he said.

See **WASTE** | Page C3

Tank farm contract extended 3 years

1. OCT 13

Washington River Protection Solutions won job in 2008

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The contract to manage and operate Hanford's tank farms was extended for three years by the Department of Energy on Monday, the last day of fiscal 2013.

Washington River Protection Solutions will continue work to empty leak-prone single-shell tanks holding radioactive waste for the next three fiscal years. The contract extension is valued at about \$1.7 billion.

Washington River Protection Solutions won the tank farms contract in 2008 in a competitive bidding process. It included an initial five-year period that ended Monday and then options for extensions of three years through fiscal 2016 and then two years through fiscal 2018.

The contract extension awarded Monday recognizes Washington River Protection Solutions' strong performance and commitment to safety, said Stacy Charboneau, deputy manager of the DOE Hanford Office of River Pro-

tection, in a memo to employees. Earlier this year, the contractor reached an unprecedented milestone of 7 million hours worked without an employee losing a day of work because of a workplace injury, she said.

Among other highlights of the first five years was emptying waste from three of Hanford's 149 single-shell tanks in a single year, 2012.

That was the only year in which Washington River Protection Solutions emptied a tank to regulatory standards, but it could finish emptying Tank C-110 this month. It would be the 11th tank emptied by Washington River

HANFORD NEWS ONLINE

Find related stories at www.hanfordnews.com

Protection Solutions and the previous tank farm contractor.

Washington River Protection Solutions also has finished retrieving the bulk of the sludge from five tanks, leaving only a hard layer at the bottom of each tank.

Radioactive and hazardous chemical waste left from the past production of plutonium for the nation's nuclear

See **CONTRACT** | Page B2

HANFORD

3 00T 12

Steam plant waits for startup, Bechtel says

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The steam plant at the Hanford vitrification plant will be ready to start up as soon as it's needed, said Bechtel National.

Completing construction on the steam plant met a court-enforced consent decree requirement, and the Department of Energy and the Washington State Department of Ecology have agreed that the requirement has been met.

The steam plant is one of about 20 buildings on the vitrification plant cam-

pus that will support the four main facilities at the plant that are central to turning radioactive and hazardous chemical waste into a stable glass form for disposal.

The 11,000-square-foot building contains six boilers that will supply high- and low-pressure steam to the plant, said Tony Veirup, Bechtel National area project manager for the plant's Analytical Laboratory and support buildings.

Steam with a pressure of 25 to 35 pounds per square inch will be used to heat the four main facilities at the plant — the Pretreatment, High Level Waste and Low Activity Waste Facilities and

the Analytical Laboratory.

Steam with a pressure of 135 pounds per square inch will be used to transfer liquids from one tank to another within the Pretreatment and High Level Waste Facilities. It also will be used to decontaminate the canisters of glassified high-level radioactive waste before they leave the plant.

The waste is left from the past production of plutonium for the nation's nuclear weapons program.

At full capacity, the steam plant will produce 207,000 pounds of steam per hour, enough to heat nine buildings the size of the Empire State Building,

according to Bechtel.

It's expected to be used first to supply heat for the Analytical Laboratory and Low Activity Waste Facility. The Department of Energy is required to begin treating waste in 2019, but may start treating low-activity waste before the entire plant is ready to operate.

The steam plant still needs to be prepared for operation, starting with bringing up the low- and medium-voltage power systems and then flushing the piping systems to make sure they are clean.

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

HANFORD REACH

Fall chinook may set record

RICH LANDERS

THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

The fall chinook that return to the free-flowing Hanford Reach of the Columbia River are renowned for including a few gargantuan survivors in the 50- to 60-pound range.

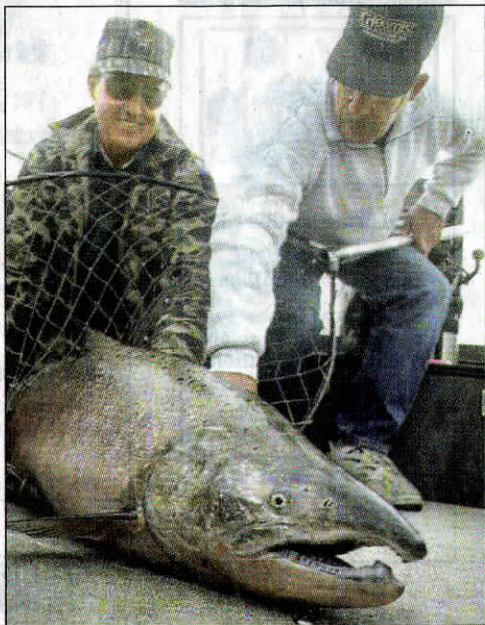
Some anglers said they're seeing fewer of the giant fish being caught in the Vernita area and they wonder if the trophies are being targeted by downstream commercial gillnet fisheries.

Ron Roler, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Columbia River policy coordinator, said it's largely a matter of percentages.

"In reality, yes, nets will be somewhat selective toward larger fish, but when the run is this big, that will make virtually no difference," he said, referring to the record 1.06 million fall chinook predicted to enter the Columbia River system this season.

"Look at commercial fishery openings and then look at Bonneville Dam counts. If there was a dip, it was imperceptible. They're catching a tiny fraction of what's going by."

The answer, he said, is in the age composition



Rich Landers | Spokesman-Review

This 50-pound fall chinook salmon was caught in September using a downrigger and plug-cut hering on the Hanford Reach of the Columbia River.

and proof of guardianship, if applicable. Spanish interpreters will be available.

Hanford State of Site meeting canceled

The Hanford State of the Site meeting Thursday in Kennewick has been canceled because of the federal government shutdown.

It is expected to be rescheduled. No decision has been made about other State of the Site meetings Oct. 15 in Seattle, Oct. 16 in Portland and Oct. 17 in Hood River, Ore.

The last State of the Site meetings were in spring 2011 and before that in 2008, but

the Hanford Advisory Board recommended a year ago that Hanford officials resume the meetings.

The meetings provide a platform for the Department of Energy, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Washington State Department of Ecology to discuss progress and challenges at the Hanford nuclear reservation.

They also allow members of the public — and often Hanford retirees, workers and their families — access to Hanford leaders to raise issues and ask questions.

- Herald staff

BRIEFS

Hanford board begins canceling events

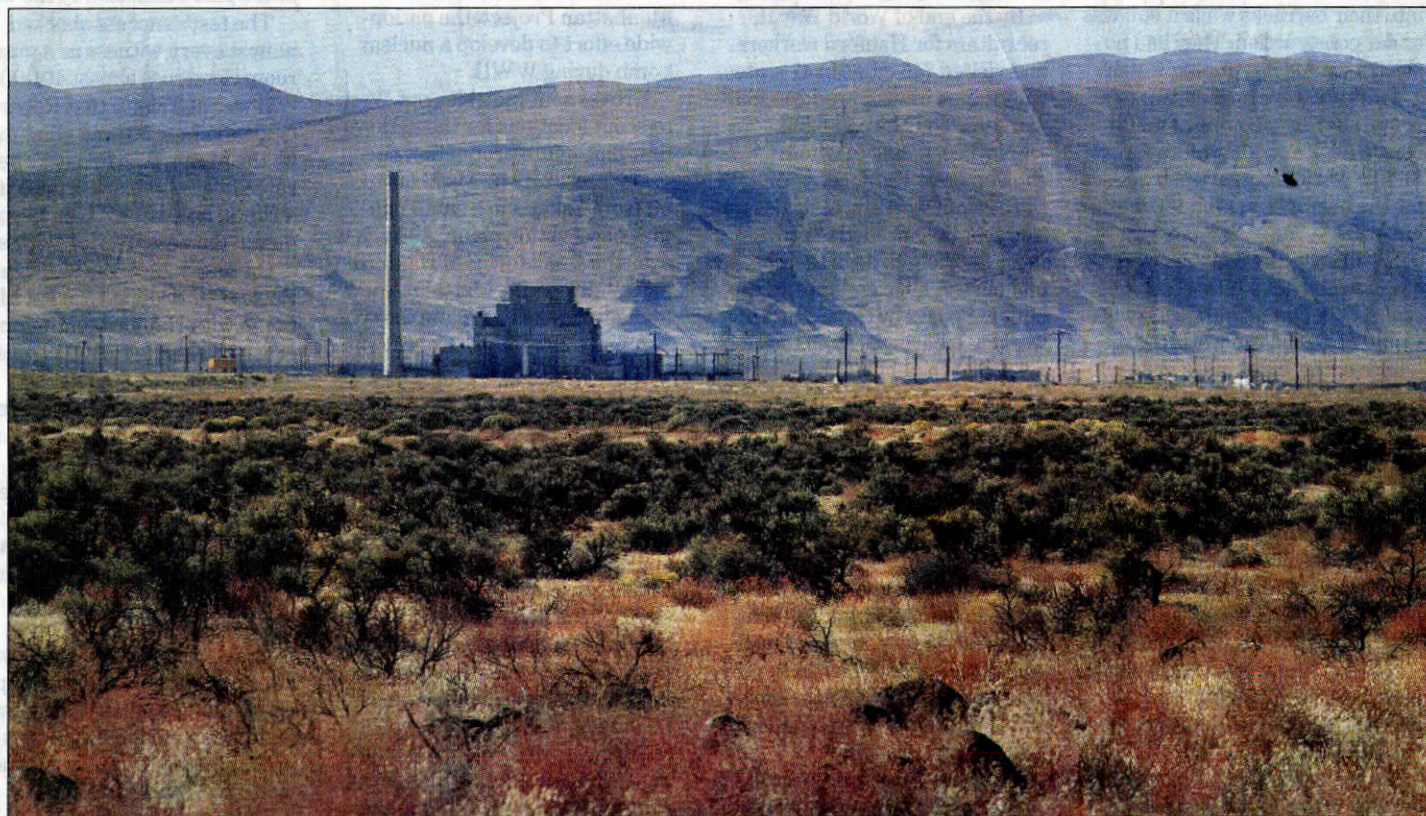
The Hanford Advisory Board has begun canceling events because of a lack of money after the federal government shutdown.

The board started a new fiscal year Tuesday and the first events were a series of committee meetings and conference calls, scheduled for next week, that have been canceled.

Board leadership is evaluating whether it can conduct conference calls, which typically involve paid staff, the week of Oct. 14.

“ I never had any reluctance nor any thought later that I didn't follow the right course. ”

Hanford: 70 years later



Paul T. Erickson | perickson@tricityherald.com

B Reactor, which produced plutonium for the atomic bomb during World War II, is in a remote section of Hanford near the Columbia River.

ANNETTE CARY AND CHRIS SIVULA

HERALD STAFF

Seventy years ago, the world's first full-scale nuclear reactor began to rise among the grass and sage of the desert near the Columbia River.

Lives across the world and for generations to come would be changed. The world would begin to live under the threat of nuclear warfare.

But the weapons-grade plutonium produced at Hanford also helped end a war in which 17 million people died in battle and another 18 million civilians were killed by bombs, plague and genocide.

Plutonium produced at B Reactor was used in the world's first nuclear explosion, a test in the New Mexico desert, and the bomb dropped on Nagasaki, Japan.

At the time construction started on Hanford's B Reactor, the United States had every reason to believe that Germany also was

Thousands came to remote desert site to work on mysterious project that would change the world

INSIDE

- ▶ Events planned to commemorate opening. | A4
- ▶ New and historical Hanford photos. | A4

ONLINE

- ▶ Photo galleries at www.tricityherald.com.

MONDAY IN THE HERALD

- ▶ Animals used to test effects of radiation.
- ▶ Early workers remember dust, security.

developing a nuclear weapon.

But at Hanford 70 years ago, most people had no idea what they were building, much less the lasting changes that would be created from the start of the Atomic Age.

All they knew was that their long hours of work in a remote and dust-blown area in Eastern Washington had been deemed essential for the frantic effort to win the war.

In 30 months, Hanford's construction forces would build 554 buildings, 386 miles of road, 158 miles of railroad, three massive chemical plants and the world's first three production-scale nuclear reactors, starting with B Reactor.

At the start of the year, about 6,700 people lived along the 30-mile stretch of the Columbia River between Hover and While Bluffs.

By the end of the year, the construction camp at Hanford was home to 51,000 people, the majority of them past draft age but still

MID-COLUMBIA

Monday, Oct. 7, 2013

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

70TH ANNIVERSARY

Hanford, farm advanced radiation research

First in Richland lecture series notes early concerns on radionuclides effects

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Little was known about the health effects of radionuclides when Hanford began to produce plutonium for the nation's nuclear weapons program in 1944.

But there were concerns early on, said Bill Bair, who gave the first lecture in the Hanford History Partnership's lecture series Sunday in Richland to observe the 70th anniversary of Hanford.

Bair earned the world's first doctorate in radiation biology and came to work at Hanford in 1954. He eventually would become manager of the Life Sciences Center at what is now Pacific Northwest National Laboratory.

Concerns ranged from whether plu-

tonium was putting the health of workers at risk to whether radioactive materials released from Hanford operations in its early production years had an effect on wildlife.

Radionuclides were detected in jackrabbits, ducks, geese and deer caught at Hanford, raising the question of whether contaminants were being carried off the nuclear reservation, Bair said.

"Well, yeah, they were," he said. Ducks and geese sampled in the Pot-holes Reservoir area were found to have radionuclides and some water fowl with radionuclides were discovered in California, he said.

But the final assessment then was that people would have had to have consumed a diet so high in contaminated species that it was not a serious health risk, he said.

Radionuclides were not detected in crops watered from the Columbia River, he said. But in 1946 cattle wandered onto a portion of the Hanford nuclear reservation, and after a day of volunteers trying to lasso enough to test, some evidence of radionuclides was found. That led to the clandestine

testing of cattle on nearby farms, Bair said.

Two security agents instructed a scientist with the Hanford program to pose as a U.S. Department of Agricultural official evaluating the health and vigor of animals as they took him around to farms.

As the Atomic Energy Commission looked for peaceful uses for the atom in the 1950s, one proposed plan was to use a series of nuclear explosions to dig the Panama Canal and there was consideration of testing the principle by using nuclear devices to dig a harbor on the Alaskan coast, he said.

Hanford researchers were sent to Alaska and assigned to collect data, including a baseline assessment of the radioactivity within the bodies of native people. They found that lichen had soaked up radioactive fallout and then was eaten by caribou. The caribou were part of the native diet, giving them about 2 percent to 4 percent of the amount of radioactive cesium set as the limit considered safe for nuclear workers, Bair said.

Early Hanford workers remember dust, security

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Ask early Hanford workers what they remember about the 1940s, and you're likely to hear a story about the wind and the dust it whipped up from a desert being scraped bare for new construction.

"There was a terminator wind, and there was probably 3 to 4 inches of sand blew into our front lawn," remembered Harold Copeland, who started working at Hanford in 1947 and lived in worker housing in the government town Richland. "The way they took care of it was the fire department came out with their tanker trucks and hoses and hosed it off our lawns."

Monte Stratton, who came to

See **SECURITY** | Page B2

Events planned throughout month

Events are planned each weekend this month to mark the 70th anniversary of the Manhattan Project and Hanford's role in the start of the atomic age.

Bus tours

Weekend tours will be offered through October of Hanford's T Plant, which rarely is open to the public, and B Reactor.

Lecture series

A lecture series will open today with "Fish, Pigs, Dogs and Plutonium - Hanford Biologists and the Atomic Bomb" by Bill Bair, former manager of the Life Sciences Center at Pacific Northwest National Laboratory.

Bair, a biological scientist who went to work at Hanford in 1954, was a leader in research programs that helped set standards for human protection from radiation.

A reception is planned at 3 p.m. and the lecture at 4 p.m. at Richland Public Library. Tickets cost \$10 at the door and are limited.

On Oct. 12 a science writer and a poet, both with Tri-City roots, will speak. Hill Williams, a retired

Seattle Times science reporter and author of *Made in Hanford - The Bomb that Changed the World*, will speak. Kathleen Fleniken provides a more emotional perspective of Hanford in her book of poetry *Plume*.

Bruce Hevly, University of Washington co-author of *Atomic Frontier Days*, speaks Oct. 19, and Richard Rhodes, author of *The Making of the Atomic Bomb*, the winner of a Pulitzer Prize for nonfiction, speaks Oct. 26.

The Oct. 12, 19 and 26 lectures will be at 7 p.m. at the Richland Players Theater, 608 The Parkway.

Tickets

Tickets for the lectures, other than today's talk, are expected to be available online starting this weekend and cost \$10 each.

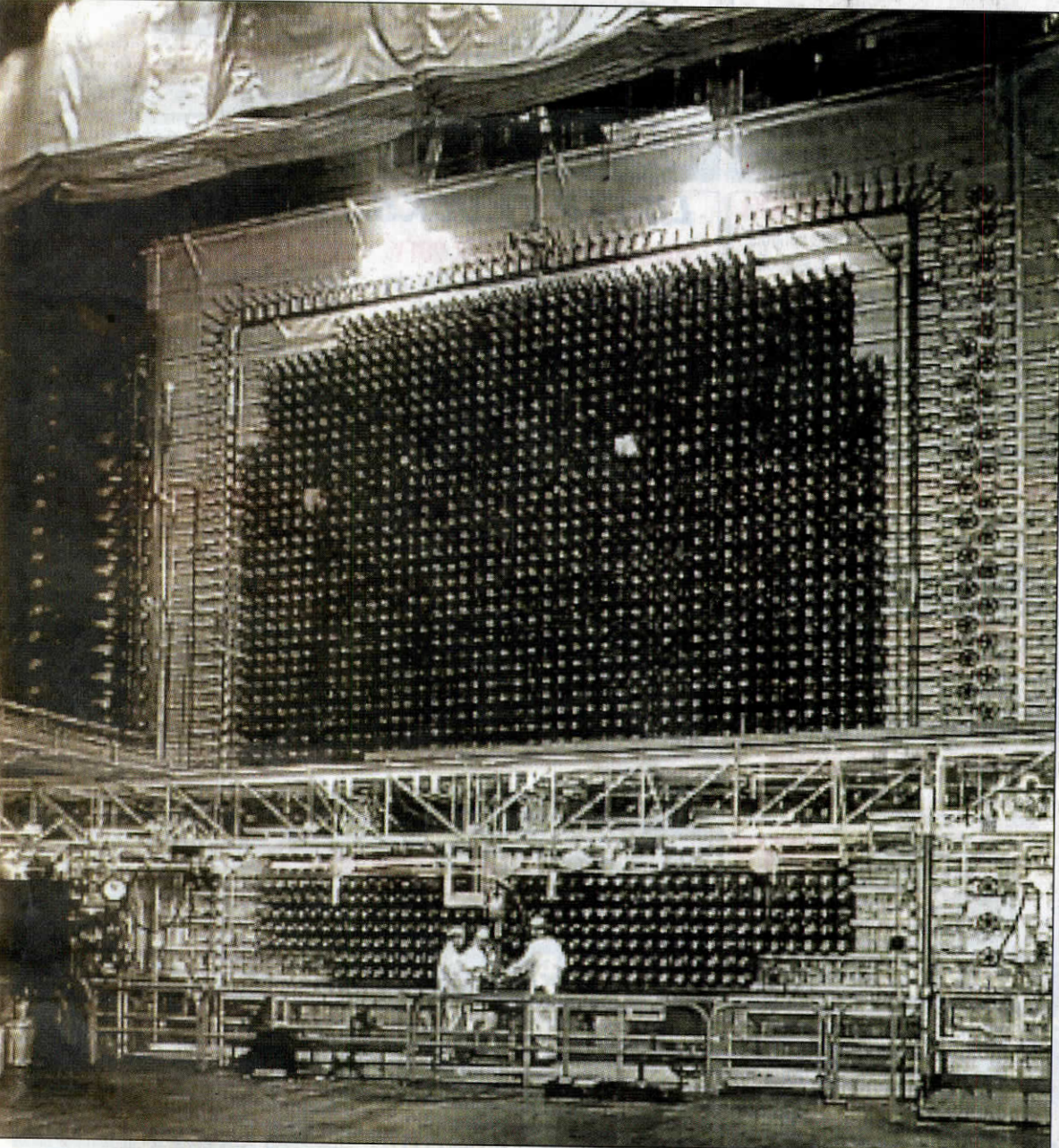
Tickets for the bus tours to B Reactor and T Plant are part of a \$70 Plutonium Pass ticket, which also includes one or more lectures and other benefits. Go to www.ourhanfordhistory.org and look for a link at the top of the page.

—Herald staff



Russ Fabre, B Reactor tour manager, stands next to a cluster of 29 vertical boron-infused safety rods hung above the reactor. In the event of a malfunction, the rods would be lowered into the core and shut down the reactor's chain reaction. See three galleries of contemporary and historical Hanford photos at www.tricityherald.com.

Paul T. Erickson | perickson@tricityherald.com



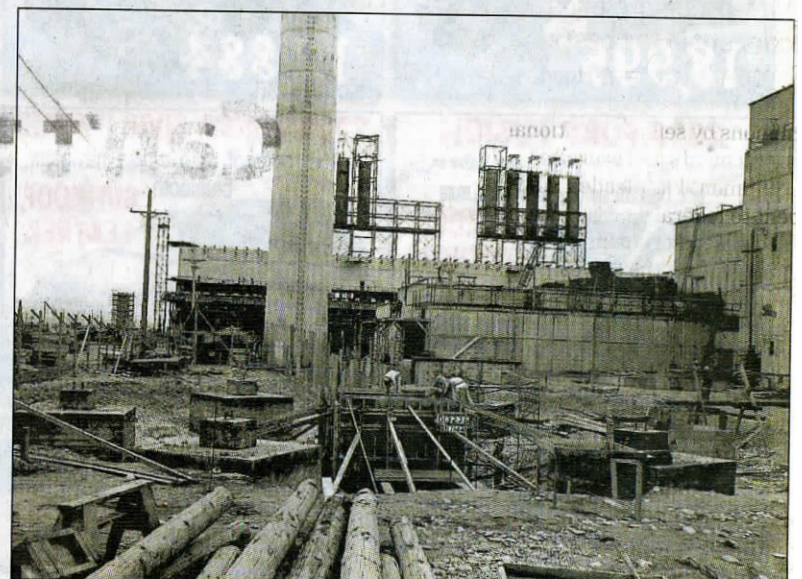
This historic photo shows the front face of Hanford's B Reactor core where uranium fuel was loaded into processing tubes. More than 2,000 holes bored through the core's graphite blocks held the fuel rods.

Courtesy Department of Energy



The Western Union office is packed on a 1944 payday with men waiting to send money home.

Courtesy Department of Energy



The B Reactor shown at Hanford during construction in the early 1940s.

Courtesy Department of Energy

Contracts approved with 4 of 5 contractors

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Hanford Atomic Metal Trades Council workers voted Wednesday to approve new contracts with four Hanford contractors, but turned down the offer by Washington River Protection Solutions, the Hanford tank farms contractor.

Contracts with CH2M Hill Plateau Remediation Co., Mission Support Alliance, Washington Closure Hanford and Advanced Technologies and Laboratories were approved.

HAMTC announced the outcome of the votes at about 9 p.m. Wednesday, but did not release vote totals.

"We respect what members had to say," said Dave Molnaa, HAMTC president. "We will do our jobs accordingly."

HAMTC is an umbrella organization for 15 of the unions performing work at the Department of Energy's Hanford nuclear reservation and has about 2,600 workers.

HAMTC's last collective bargaining agreement ended March 31, 2012, and then was extended three times, but contractors refused to extend it beyond February. At that point, negotiations had been under way for about a year.

"This successful vote was almost two years in the making, and I'd like to thank the people on both sides of the table who worked so hard to reach this agreement," said John Fulton, president of CH2M Hill, in a statement Wednesday night. Mission Support Alliance released a similar comment, but comments from other contractors were not immediately available.

The passage of the offers made by four Hanford contractors Wednesday followed a vote on a previous proposal July 16, with workers overwhelmingly rejecting offers by all five contractors then. HAMTC leaders

Washington Closure Hanford president to retire

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The president of Washington Closure Hanford told staff Tuesday that she plans to retire at the end of December.

Carol Johnson has served as president and project manager since July 2011 for the Department of Energy contractor in charge of environmental cleanup in the area along the Columbia River. A new president has not been named.

"Carol has done an incredible job over the past three years leading WCH's cleanup of Hanford's river corridor," said

Matt McCormick, manager of the DOE Hanford Richland Operations Office, in a memo to employees.

Johnson told employees she had been considering the decision for many months.

"After 33 years in the nuclear industry, I can look forward to the flexibility of spending more time with my husband, Mike, my family, and to pursue the long list of items on my bucket list," she said.

Her husband, Mike Johnson, retired as president of Washington River Protection Solutions, the Hanford tank farm contractor, in June.

URS Corp., the primary owner of Washington Closure, will begin work immediately to find a new president for the Hanford project, said David

Pethick, general manager of URS Global Management and Operations Services Group, in a message to employees.

"I anticipate the position being posted this week and the selection and approval process taking several weeks to complete," his message said.

Johnson will help the new president make a smooth transition, McCormick said.

He has called Washington Closure one of the best performers in DOE's nationwide environmental management complex based on schedule, cost and safety.

Under Johnson's leadership, Washington Closure has met all regulatory deadlines for environmental cleanup and saved taxpayers more than \$300 million in cleanup costs, according

to Pethick.

Environmental cleanup near Hanford's F Reactor has been completed, with the exception of ongoing work by another contractor to address contaminated groundwater. In addition, workers have nearly completed tearing down the last of the unneeded buildings at Hanford's 300 Area just north of Richland.

The Washington Closure contract is scheduled to end in fall 2015, when most of the environmental cleanup along the Columbia River is completed. However, DOE has indicated it expects to have Washington Closure continue to do some work to finish up some challenging projects.

Johnson and her team have positioned Washington Closure

well to complete cleanup of the area along the Columbia River, Pethick said. She has been committed to the welfare of employees losing their jobs as the contract begins to ramp down, and more than 80 percent have found new jobs, Pethick said.

She also has had an exemplary safety record, achieving consecutive Stars of Excellence in the DOE Voluntary Protection Program, he said.

Johnson came to Washington Closure in November 2010 as closure director and previously was infrastructure executive director at the URS-led Sellafield remediation project in the United Kingdom.

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



Johnson

HANFORD CLEANUP

Plans being developed

DOE working on how to keep reservation safe during shutdown

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Contingency plans are being developed at Hanford to keep the nuclear reservation

in a safe condition if the federal government shutdown continues.

How long work can continue as usual is uncertain. Since the start of the current fiscal year, Oct. 1, Hanford environmental cleanup has continued, at least in part, with carryover money from the previous fiscal year.

But the Department of

Energy has not said how much money is available. And questions remain about how much flexibility DOE will have to move money among projects to provide flexibility to allow cleanup work to continue.

DOE has produced a department-wide plan that addresses federal employees, but not contractor employees, the majority of the approxi-

mately 8,000 workers at Hanford.

The plan, which has not been implemented, as DOE continues to use money from prior years, calls for five federal employees to continue working at the DOE Hanford Richland Operations Office and two federal employees to

See **PLANS** | Page A2

11 OCT 13

Stamp club to mark Hanford anniversary

The Tri-Cities Stamp Club will mark the 70th anniversary of the Hanford nuclear

reservation at its stamp show Saturday and Sunday in Richland.

The annual commemorative envelope for the show will picture the remains of the Hanford school and White Bluffs bank and the postal cancellation will say "Gone But Not Forgotten" and have additional information.

The show is from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday at the Knights of Columbus Hall, 2500 Chester Road, Richland. Envelopes also will be available for \$2 by mailing Lawrence Clay at P.O. Box 6228, Kennewick, WA, 99336.

For more information email lclay3731@charter.net or call 735-3731.

BRIEFS

State official to discuss vit plant management

Project management of the Hanford vitrification plant construction will be discussed by Maia Bellon, director of the Washington State Department of Ecology, on Tuesday in Richland.



Bellon

She will be joined at the meeting of the Eastern Washington Section of the American Nuclear Society by Dan McDonald, the tank waste disposal project manager for the Department of Ecology.

Her talk will be at 7 p.m. at the Shilo Inn, Richland. There is no cost, but those who would like to attend the dinner meeting an hour earlier will be charged \$22 and should make reservations by calling 366-9632 by 4 p.m. today.

PNNL expected to furlough up to 35 workers

If government shutdown continues, more workers to be put on unpaid leave

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Pacific Northwest National Laboratory is expected to start some limited furloughs next week because of the federal government shutdown.

The Department of Energy national laboratory in Richland has been operating with limited money not spent in previous years after the federal gov-

ernment shutdown began Oct. 1, the first day of the new federal fiscal year with no money appropriated by Congress.

PNNL's goal is to keep the lab open as long as possible if the federal government shutdown continues.

However, it is placing up to 35 employees on furloughs, or unpaid leave, next week. If the federal government shutdown continues much longer, more employees are expected to be furloughed, but a shutdown of the entire lab could be delayed for a substantial amount of time.

Workers on furlough would be allowed to draw vacation pay, if they

have any vacation time to use.

Laboratory leaders are concerned about the cost of stopping scientific experiments and shutting down scientific equipment in a full closure of the lab.

But some other national labs are preparing to close this month until more money is appropriated.

Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico told employees in a memo Wednesday that the lab would close its doors Oct. 18 and employees not needed to ensure safety and security at the lab will be placed on unpaid furlough.

Sandia National Laboratory in New

Mexico also is preparing to shut down by Oct. 21, Weapons Complex Monitor reported.

PNNL has increased steps to save money over the past week, including telling employees to defer travel. Initially, employees had only been told to make sure the events they were traveling to were still being offered.

"This is a very complex situation, with no uniform answers," lab director Michael Kluse said in a message to employees Oct. 4. "We have a range of scenarios to manage, from staff that have funding for the current year to

“

This is a very complex situation, with no uniform answers. We have a range of scenarios to manage, from staff that have funding for the current year to those who won't have funding until the shutdown is resolved.

Michael Kluse, lab director

”

See **PNNL** | Page A2

15 OCT 17 Hanford workers could see furloughs

About 9,000 workers face temporary leave or layoffs

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Hanford workers could start receiving furlough notices Wednesday because of the federal government shutdown, according to the Tri-City Development Council.

Depending on how long the shutdown drags on, about 9,000 Hanford and Pacific Northwest National Laboratory workers could be put on temporary leave or laid off, TRIDEC estimates.

It sent a letter late last week to Rep. Doc Hastings R-Wash. with copies to

ers, outlining the pending cutbacks and then updated the numbers as it learned more Monday.

"I am asking personally, on behalf of TRIDEC and the Tri-Cities community, for our congressional offices to take the lead and find some kind of compromise to end this shutdown," said the letter signed by Carl Adrian, TRIDEC president, and Gary Petersen, TRIDEC vice president of federal programs.

The number of people who would be affected at Hanford and PNNL could be large, if Congress does not act quickly, Adrian said.

It would not be a permanent loss of jobs for the community, but would have a personal impact on the many workers who could be furloughed and

HANFORD NEWS ONLINE

Find related stories at www.hanfordnews.com

spending while those people are out of work, Adrian and Petersen said.

Furloughed workers may be able to claim vacation time, if they have any remaining after last year's forced federal budget cuts, called sequestration. It led to furloughs and requirements to use up extra vacation time, reducing the amount of vacation workers have now.

The Department of Energy has released no specific information about how the federal government shutdown will be handled at Hanford if it continues.

Lawmakers optimistic about shutdown deal

ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Racing the clock, the Senate's Democratic and Republican leaders closed in on a deal Monday night to avoid an economy-menacing Treasury default and end the two-week partial government shutdown.

"We've made tremendous progress," Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid declared after an

intense day of negotiations with Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell and other lawmakers. "Perhaps tomorrow will be a bright day," he said, suggesting an agreement could be announced soon after weeks of stubborn gridlock.

McConnell also voiced optimism — although not as much as Reid, D-Nev., had — and the details under

HANFORD

Senators blast whistleblower layoff

Democrat from Oregon says little has changed in safety culture at plant

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The layoff of Hanford whistleblower Walter Tamosaitis makes clear that little has changed in the safety culture at Hanford, said Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore.



Tamosaitis

Moniz to intervene.

Tamosaitis' layoff particularly was

Wyden, the chairman of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, sent a letter to Department of Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz on Wednesday outlining his concerns. Sen. Edward Markey, D-Mass., also sent a letter Wednesday urging

troubling because it came after Moniz and Deputy Secretary Daniel Poneman pledged in a Sept. 20 memo to "pursue a safety culture built on an environment of trust and mutual respect, worker engagement and open communication," Wyden said in the letter.

There was a chilled atmosphere at Hanford when Tamosaitis raised issues in 2010, Wyden said. But his layoff "within days of your pledge can only be seen as perpetuating a culture that would plunge DOE employees and con-

tractors who dare to raise safety issues into the deep freeze or worse."

Tamosaitis continued to be employed until last week with URS Corp. But three years ago, he was removed from his URS position as the research and technology manager for the Hanford vitrification plant being built to turn up to 56 million gallons of radioactive waste into a stable form for disposal.

See **LAYOFF** | Page B2

Corp. after 44 years. That was three years after he lost his position as research and technology manager for the \$12.2 billion Hanford vitrification plant, but continued to be employed at URS.

His treatment makes a mockery of the pledge that whistleblowers will receive a fair shake, said Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore.

"My job was to point out if there was a problem, to identify the problem and offer solutions to it," Tamosaitis said during the CBS interview. To watch, go to cbsn.ws/1auW7VX.

Tamosaitis said he believes he was removed from the vit-

rification plant for raising safety concerns about whether waste would remain well mixed to prevent an explosion or uncontrolled nuclear reaction. Work on a key part of the plant has since been stopped to address technical issues that could affect the plant's safe and efficient operation.

Contractors said his removal from the vitrification plant project long had been planned because his work was finishing, and URS said it recently laid off several employees because of budget constraints.

10 OCT 13

Hanford whistleblower appears on news show

Hanford whistleblower Walter Tamosaitis told his story to a national audience Friday on *CBS This Morning*.

As the Herald reported early this month, he was laid off from his job with URS

EPA fines DOE \$115,000 for Hanford asbestos handling

Officials say contractors followed rules as they understood them at time

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The Department of Energy was fined \$115,000 by the Environmental Protection Agency on Monday for past asbestos management issues at the Hanford nuclear reservation.

Asbestos contamination was left in

the soil, creating new waste sites to be cleaned up, and waste containing asbestos from building demolition was not properly labeled when it was sent to the Environmental Restoration Disposal Facility in central Hanford, said Dennis Faulk, EPA's Hanford program manager.

In the instance linked to the largest portion of the penalty — \$85,000 — vehicles that unloaded waste at the huge, lined landfill were not properly marked to warn workers that the waste contained asbestos, according to EPA.

HANFORD NEWS ONLINE

Find related stories at www.hanfordnews.com

DOE and its contractors were following regulations as they understood them at the time, according to a DOE statement issued Monday.

EPA's concerns are related to buildings demolished in 2009 and 2010. In late 2011, the EPA inspector general issued an early-warning report saying that removal of asbestos in certain

See **ASBESTOS** | Page A2

900713

Later vit plant deadlines at risk

Work required to be
done by 2022 to have
plant in operation

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The Department of Energy is at serious risk of missing all of the remaining Hanford vitrification plant deadlines under a court-enforced consent decree, according to the state of Washington.

DOE notified Washington and Oregon on Tuesday that three more deadlines are at substantial risk, bringing the total plant deadlines DOE may not meet to 14. They cover all of the work required to be completed on dates from 2014

HANFORD NEWS ONLINE

Find related stories at
www.hanfordnews.com

to 2022 to build and operate the plant.

DOE has met the remaining five of the 19 consent decree deadlines on the \$12.2 billion plant or is in talks with the state over whether they have been met. All of those came due at the end of 2012 or earlier.

"The state of Washington was disappointed, but not surprised," said the Washington State Department of Ecology in a statement released late Tuesday. It was expecting Tuesday's announcement after receiving informal information.

See **DEADLINES** | Page A2

HANFORD AND THE SHUTDOWN

Furloughs, layoffs might start Monday

DOE, contractors saying little because of shutdown

ANNETTE CARY
HERALD STAFF WRITER

The Hanford Atomic Metal Trades Council expects its 2,300 Hanford workers to be off work starting Monday if the federal shutdown continues.

Many other Hanford workers also are expected to be off work on furloughs starting Monday.

The Department of Energy and its Hanford contractors have had little to say about plans for Hanford because of the federal government shutdown, largely on instructions from federal officials in Washington, D.C.

But after meeting with Hanford cleanup contractors Monday, HAMTC

President Dave Molnaa said those contractors are prepared to notify union and nonunion workers today if they are expected to be furloughed or released from work Oct. 21. Because of union collective bargaining agreements, union workers would be "released" or laid off, while nonunion workers could be furloughed or placed on temporary leave.

The Tri-City Development Council believes that about 80 percent of Hanford's 8,500 workers, the number with security badges, will be notified they are being furloughed or released from work. That would reduce staffing to the minimum DOE believes is required to temporarily maintain safe and secure conditions at the nuclear reservation.

Hanford also has an estimated 1,500 to 2,000 subcontractor workers with-

HANFORD NEWS ONLINE

Find related stories at www.hanfordnews.com

out security badges, including suppliers, most of whom will not be receiving any Hanford money, according to TRIDEC.

DOE has said only that if the government shutdown continues, it will need to take further action to shut down nonessential operations and furlough DOE and DOE contractor employees.

However, some Hanford managers have been telling their workers what to expect ahead of official notifications of furloughs planned if the government shutdown continues.

At Pacific Northwest National

See **FURLOUGH**s | Page A2

BRIEFS

Hanford commemoration features author lectures

The commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the Hanford nuclear reservation concludes this weekend with two lectures.

Kate Brown, author of *Plutopia*, will speak at 7 p.m. today in the East Auditorium of Washington State University Tri-Cities in Richland.

Her talk will be followed by a panel discussion of people who believe their health was damaged by past releases of radioactive material from Hanford.

Brown's book, which focuses on Hanford and a nuclear site in

Russia, questions whether medical studies are flawed given the personal stories of those who live downwind of Hanford.

Lectures cost \$10 and tickets can be purchased at www.ourhanfordhistory.org.

Author Richard Rhodes will speak Saturday. A lecture and reception will start at 7 p.m. at the Richland Players Theatre. Rhodes is the author and editor of 24 books, including *The Making of the Atomic Bomb*, the winner of a Pulitzer Prize for nonfiction and a National Book Award.

He also wrote *Dark Sun: The Making of the Hydrogen Bomb*, which was on the short list for a Pulitzer Prize in History.

HANFORD

11th tank emptied; first this year

ANNETTE CARY
HERALD STAFF WRITER

Hanford workers have emptied the nuclear reservation's 11th leak-prone underground tank of radioactive waste.

Tank C-110 is the first single-shell tank to be emptied this year, according to the Department of Energy. The work was done with a revamp of the Fold-track, a remote-controlled

device, that had failed in its single previous use in a Hanford tank.

The regulator on the project, the Washington State Department of Ecology, still must make its assessment and agree that only residual waste remains in the tank. Regulatory standards allow 360 cubic feet of waste to remain in the tank, about an inch if spread evenly over the bottom of the

530,000-gallon tank.

"We agree that much of the tank bottom is visible and that it is likely C-110 retrieval is complete," said Erika Holmes, a Department of Ecology spokeswoman, in a statement.

DOE is working to get all of the tanks in the grouping called the C Tank Farm emptied in just less than a year to meet a court-enforced consent decree. With completion of work in

Tank C-110, six more C Farm tanks must be emptied.

DOE already has notified the state that it may not meet the deadline for two of the tanks.

Hanford has 149 single-shell tanks holding waste from the past production of plutonium for the nation's nuclear weapons program. Waste from single-shell tanks — some of

See **TANK** | Page A2

BRIEFS

Hanford gets mention on USA Today 'fact' list

USA Today had some Halloween fun at the expense of Hanford this week when it listed "5 things you didn't know about candy corn."

"You either love (candy corn) or hate it. There's no middle ground on this important issue," wrote author Bill Mann.

To support his point he listed little-known "facts" about the orange-gold sugary treats.

No. 3 on the list: There are landfills devoted entirely to surplus candy corn.

"Candy corn is non-

biodegradable, and most waste-management companies won't touch the stuff. It must be carefully sorted and then trucked to a few special sites around the country in remote areas — e.g., the one at the federal nuclear storage site out in Hanford, WA. EPA officials there say they're as worried about candy-corn leakage into the aquifers as they are about nuclear-waste seepage."

For the full list, go to <http://usat.ly/1h6KkWC>.

7 NOV 13

DOE: Just 1 single-shell tank leaking



Hanford single-shell Tank T-111 is potentially leaking up to 300 gallons of radioactive waste per year.

State officials don't agree with all findings in reports

ANNETTE CARY
HERALD STAFF WRITER

Just one of six suspect tanks at Hanford is leaking radioactive waste into the ground, according to evaluations released Wednesday by the Department of Energy.

However, the Washington State Department of Ecology does not agree with all of the conclusions in the reports.

The good news is that both DOE and the state agree that four of the six tanks in question are not leaking, said Dieter Bohrmann, a spokesman for

HANFORD NEWS ONLINE

Find related stories at www.hanfordnews.com

the Department of Ecology.

In the past, 67 of 149 single-shell tanks at Hanford were suspected of leaking radioactive and hazardous chemical waste into the ground. But the underground tanks were believed to be stable after the last of the pumpable liquids was transferred to newer double-shell tanks by 2004, leaving mostly solids in the single-shell tanks.

An announcement by Gov. Jay Inslee on Feb. 15 changed that assumption. He said Tank T-111 was leaking up to 300 gallons a year of waste into the ground in central Han-

ford. The waste is left from the production of plutonium for the nation's nuclear weapons program.

The evaluation released Wednesday concluded that Tank T-111 is leaking. But DOE also said that the rate at which it is leaking appears to be decreasing.

A week after Inslee announced the tank was leaking, he announced that five more underground, single-shell tanks also appeared to be leaking based on information from DOE.

The new evaluation concluded that changes in the level of liquid in those five tanks could be attributed to evaporation. The rate of evaporation in those tanks exceeded the calculated

5 NOV 13
The Material Sciences Laboratory has recently been demolished to ground level, leaving Washington Closure Hanford buildings to tear down in the Hanford 300 Area. Courtesy Washington Closure Hanford

300 Area building comes down

2 major structures remain after contractor demolishes Material Sciences Laboratory

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Hanford's Material Sciences Laboratory has been demolished to ground level, leaving the landscape of the Hanford nuclear reservation's 300 Area just north of Richland looking much as it is expected to remain for at least a decade to come.

Demolition of the building, one of about 150 torn down by Washington Closure Hanford in the 300 Area, leaves the Department of Energy contractor with just two major buildings left to tear down there.

Rubble from the Material Sciences Laboratory, also called the 326 Building, is being hauled to the central Hanford landfill for low-level radioactive waste, and that work is expected to be completed by the end of the month. Washington Closure also is preparing to start below-grade work on the building, which should be completed by the end of the year, said Washington Closure spokesman Mark McKenna.

Still standing are several buildings that Pacific Northwest National Laboratory will continue to use, plus the 3790 Build-

ing and the 324 Building. Work is expected to begin in January to take down the 3790 Building, a large office building where badges were issued to Hanford visitors.

The 324 Building will be the last to be torn down by Washington Closure in the 300 Area after a spill of cesium and strontium was found beneath it. In 2010, Washington Closure discovered a crack in the sump at the bottom of one of the building's hot cells.

Washington Closure also has more below-ground structures to remove, including the Plutonium Recycle Test Reactor and the 340 Vault, each weighing an estimated 1,100 tons. They could be removed by the end of the year, weather permitting, said DOE spokesman Cameron Hardy.

DOE is required by the legally binding Tri-Party Agreement to have all excess 300 Area Buildings, except the 324 Building, removed by September 2015. Other work remaining includes digging up several miles of pipeline and multiple waste sites, Hardy said.

Preparations to demolish the 63,107-square-foot Material Sciences Laboratory started when workers moved out in 2011.

Among work done was characterization of 12 tritium storage tubes, each 12 feet long. Lead brick enclosures and a glovebox had to be stabilized and an irradiated fuel fragment removed from one of

the gloveboxes. A network of trenches was filled with grout, and a furnace booth contaminated with cadmium was prepared for demolition.

The building opened in 1953 to support reactor development and originally was called the Pile Technology Building. It was used to experiment with spacing of fuel tubes and moderators in reactor cores for improved safety and efficiency, and also to examine reactor components and fuel elements.

The L-shaped building had offices along the outside and laboratories along the inside on two floors above ground. The basement contained large laboratories, large reactor mock-ups and graphite piles.

Because underground utilities must continue to serve a nearby building being used by Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, the Material Sciences Laboratory's below grade structure is not being removed beyond the top three feet.

Instead, the basement will be cleaned out, including removing two concrete and lead-lined hot cells, each measuring 12-by-12-by-8 feet. Then the basement will be filled with dirt.

When buildings used by the national lab come down, the remainder of the Material Sciences Laboratory also could be excavated.

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

HANFORD REACH CENTER TO OPEN IN 2014



Bob Brawdy | bbrawdy@tricityherald.com

A cloud of dust fills the air Friday morning as Jarod Rowland, an employee of DGR Grant Construction in Richland, makes a cut along a concrete slab of the new Hanford Reach Interpretive Center building in the west end of Columbia Park. The first building on the campus – totaling 24,000 square feet, including a 10,000-square-foot basement – is scheduled to open June 2014.

17 NOV 13

Board urges caution in removing waste

It's unknown if pumping
material from tank
could increase corrosion

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The Department of Energy should proceed cautiously if it decides to empty liquid radioactive waste from the Hanford double-shell tank that has an interior leak, according to a letter from the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board.

It's not fully understood if removing some waste could increase corrosion within the tank, the board's staff said.

DOE's oldest of 28 double-shell

tanks, Tank AY-102, has sprung a leak in its inner shell. The waste is believed to be contained by the outer shell, but it is thinner than the inner layer and the tank no longer complies with regulations.

The state of Washington, which regulates Hanford underground tanks holding 56 million gallons of radioactive waste, wants waste removed from the tank.

DOE is prepared to begin pumping liquid waste from the tank, if warranted, said DOE spokeswoman Lori Gamache.

But as long as 151,000 gallons of radioactive sludge remain in that tank, some of the 680,000 gallons of liquid also will need to be left in the tank to help cool it. Another 22

HANFORD

Draft plan unveiled for recreational use

Environmental cleanup could make opportunities for hiking, biking, camping

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Officials unveiled a draft community "vision" Monday for recreational opportunities — hiking, biking and

camping just north of the Tri-Cities — that could be opened up by environmental cleanup at Hanford.

Imagine multiple points along the Columbia River where a boater could pull off at Hanford, someone could take a multi-day hike along the river or people would have limited access to the top of Rattlesnake Mountain, officials said.

"We're asking the community to envision a different future for Han-

ford," said Derrick Smith, senior vice president of MacKay Sposito, a Kennewick engineering consulting firm.

The Department of Energy plans to complete most Hanford cleanup in the 220 square miles along the Columbia River by the end of 2015. Most cleanup in the security zone around Hanford already is finished. That will leave the remaining environmental cleanup concentrated in 75 square miles at the center of the nuclear reservation.

DOE plans have called for some Hanford land to be used for industrial development, but most to be set aside for preservation and conservation of desert shrub steppe habitat.

"This is a great time to start a dialogue on what some controlled public access to portions of that land could look like over time," said Colleen French, DOE government programs manager.

The Tri-City Development Council

hired MacKay Sposito in January to develop a community proposal for using Hanford land for outdoor recreation, based in part on public meetings in 2010 to hear what Tri-City area residents wanted to see the land used for eventually. The work was paid for by TRIDEC, the Tri-Cities Visitor and Convention Bureau and URS Corp., which holds Hanford contracts.

See **PLAN** | Page A2

HANFORD

Cleanup effort called a dysfunctional mess

REBECCA LAFLURE

CENTER FOR PUBLIC INTEGRITY

The government's multibillion-dollar effort to clean up Hanford, the nation's largest former nuclear weapons site, has become its own dysfunctional mess, critics say.

For more than two decades, the government has planned and

gallons of nuclear and chemical waste in underground, leak-prone tanks at the Hanford nuclear reservation.

But progress has been slow, the budget is rising by billions of dollars, and a long-running technical dispute has sown ill will between some of the project's senior engineering staff, the Energy Department and its lead contractors on the vitrification

plant, where waste will be treated for disposal.

The waste is a legacy of the Cold War, when the site housed nuclear reactors churning out enough radioactive plutonium for thousands of atomic bombs. To clean up the mess, the Department of Energy started building the vitrification plant 12 years

See **HANFORD** | Page A2



Herald file

Construction has stopped on some key parts of the Hanford vitrification plant until technical issues have been resolved.

DOE looks at gas issue

Flammable gas could delay emptying tanks by decree deadline

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The Department of Energy could know this spring whether a potential flammable gas issue will delay emptying the last two tanks required to meet a court-enforced consent decree deadline.

DOE is required to have all 16 underground, single-shell tanks in the group called C Tank Farm emptied of radioactive waste before October 2014.

However, in June, DOE noti-

fied the state of Washington that emptying the final two of the 16 tanks by that deadline was at serious risk because of the potential flammable gas issue. Six of the tanks still hold some radioactive waste from the past production of weapons plutonium at Hanford.

The two tanks at issue have more waste to be removed than other remaining C Farm Tanks. Plans call for pumping it into two sturdier double-shell tanks where the waste will be stored until it can be treated for disposal.

Pumping to remove 316,000 gallons of waste from Tank C-102 had been expected to begin

HANFORD

Supplier sues over vit plant troubles

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Problems at the vitrification plant have added millions of dollars of uncompensated costs to a subcontractor on the project, the company says in a federal lawsuit.

American Crane and Equipment Corp. of Pennsylvania has sued Department of Energy contractor Bechtel National, saying that delays, technical questions and other issues at the plant

have added at least \$3.9 million to its costs.

"The costs that are the subject of this action did not arise in a vacuum," American Crane said in its lawsuit.

Issues that have increased the plant's construction and commissioning schedule by eight years and tripled its price also have influenced American Crane's costs, the lawsuit said.

American Crane agreed in 2003 to design and manufacture eight cranes

for \$13.2 million. The cranes are to be used in the plant's High Level Waste Facility, where they will be remotely operated as they perform work with radioactive waste in hot cells.

The plant is being built to turn radioactive waste left from the past production of weapons plutonium at Hanford into a stable glass form.

It's required by a court-enforced consent decree to be fully operating in 2022, but DOE has notified the state of Wash-

ington that it may miss that deadline.

The plant has been under intense scrutiny because of its immense cost — \$12.3 billion and rising — a risky plan to do construction as design work continued, first-of-a-kind technical challenges and the urgency of treating radioactive waste now held in leak-prone underground tanks, the lawsuit said.

DOE has had a "never-ending" increase in mandates that Bechtel

See **PLANT** | Page B2

15 NOV 13

Contractor awards \$1B in subcontracts

Money going to help with environmental cleanup at Hanford

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Washington Closure Hanford has awarded \$1 billion in subcontracts to small businesses to help with environmental cleanup of the Han-

ford nuclear reservation, said Tri-City business leaders, who thanked the company at a press conference Thursday.

More than half of the \$1 billion spent in the past eight years has been pumped into the local economy.

But the announcement came as Hanford subcontracting is changing because of several factors, including a tight budget and new small business and contracting policies.

Washington Closure's subcontracting policy has been a success since it was awarded a contract by the Department of Energy in 2005 to clean up Hanford along the Columbia River, business leaders said. The contract is valued at \$2.4 billion.

"This is about preserving the environment and sustaining the economy," said Keith Klein, executive director for the Tri-Cities Local Business

Association. Most of the money, \$783 million, has gone to businesses in Washington and \$580 million of that has been spent in Benton and Franklin counties, including home-grown companies, according to Washington Closure. Among the local companies that have won subcontracts are Federal Engineers and

DOE contractor goes 1,000 days without injury

Employees at Advanced Technologies and Laboratories International have worked 1,000 days without a work-related injury that caused work days to be missed.

The Department of Energy contractor provides analytical services at Hanford's 222-S Analytical Laboratory, where highly radioactive samples are analyzed in hot cells.

"This milestone demonstrates ATL employees are mindful of their workplace hazards and are conscientious when applying the controls intended to keep them from injury," Joe Sondag, the DOE representative to the 222-S Laboratory, said in a statement.

ATL was named one of the 15 safest companies in the nation by EHS Today magazine.

Bechtel design manager to speak about vit plant

Ward Sproat, Bechtel National's manager of design, operations and integration at the Hanford vitrification plant, will discuss the project Tuesday in Richland.

He will speak at a meeting of the Eastern Washington Section of the American Nuclear Society.

Sproat's talk will be at 7 p.m. at the Shilo Inn, Richland. There is no cost, but those who would like to attend the dinner meeting an hour earlier will be charged \$22 and should make reservations by calling 366-9632 by 4 p.m. today.

BRIEFS

Bechtel project director to discuss Hanford plant

The new Bechtel National project director for the Hanford vitrification plant will discuss the plant at the Nov. 19 meeting of the Eastern Washington Section of the American Nuclear Society.

Peggy McCullough came to Hanford this summer to take over contractor leadership of the plant being built to treat up to 56 million gallons of radioactive waste.

Her talk will be at 7 p.m. at the Shilo Inn, Richland. There is no cost, but those who would like to attend the dinner meeting an hour earlier will be charged \$22 and should make reservations by calling 366-9632 by 4 p.m. Friday.

Don't love Hanford land to death, many say

Draft plan opens more area for recreational use

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

A draft community plan to open more of Hanford to recreational use got a generally warm reception at a community meeting Tuesday afternoon in Kennewick.

But many participants were clear that plans need to proceed carefully to make sure that the shrub steppe land,

some of it largely untouched for 70 years, is protected from human abuse.

"I love the idea of access," said Scott Woodward, a member of the Tapteal Greenway group and the Ridges to Rivers Open Space Network, and one of about 35 people attending the afternoon session. "But we have got to make people stay on the trails. It is an incredible resource, and it is up to us to protect it."

The Department of Energy expects much of the environmental cleanup to be completed on the majority of Hanford nuclear reservation land in two

HANFORD NEWS ONLINE

Find related stories at www.hanfordnews.com

years, leaving a heavily contaminated central portion that is designated for industrial use. Most of the 586 square miles of Hanford are set aside for conservation and preservation under current land use plans.

Hanford produced weapons plutonium for more than 40 years and about \$2 billion is spent each year to clean up environmental contamination left behind by that work. But

between facilities that dot the production portion of the nuclear reservation and in its wide security perimeter are shrub steppe land, much of it never touched by nuclear production.

Two community agencies — the Tri-City Development Council and the Tri-Cities Visitor and Convention Bureau — have commissioned a conceptual draft plan for how land set aside for conservation and preservation might be used for recreation.

Among plans are hiking and biking trails for about 80 miles along the Columbia River, nonmotorized boat

ramps on the south side of the Columbia River, campgrounds and trails along the base and to the top of Rattlesnake Mountain.

Areas should be gradually opened to the public for recreational use to make sure adequate funding is available to protect plants and animals, said Dick Watts of West Richland. Animals there have been largely protected from humans for decades and some people will take advantage of that, he said.

See **LAND** | Page A2

30 NOV 13

BRIEFS

Hanford retirees group plans luncheon Dec. 12

The Hanford Retirees Association plans its annual Christmas luncheon at 11:30 a.m. Dec. 12 at the Shilo Inn in Richland.

Current and retired Hanford contractor and Department of Energy employees are invited. College students who have received scholarships from the association will speak. For reservations, call 946-7738 by Dec. 10. Cost is \$15.

Whistleblower says retaliation continues

Official files second complaint, claiming she no longer is considered senior manager

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

A key official at the Hanford vitrification plant has filed a second legal complaint, saying she continues to suffer retaliation and harassment since filing a whistleblower complaint two years ago.

Donna Busche, the manager of environmental and nuclear safety at the vitrification plant, filed the new complaint with the Department of Labor, naming URS Energy and Construction and Bechtel National as respondents.

Bechtel and URS strongly denied Busche's accusations Monday.

Busche is employed by URS,

the primary subcontractor of Bechtel, which holds the Department of Energy contract to build and commission the vitrification plant. "Busche's job is to raise technical and safety issues," including issues that could lead to an unplanned nuclear reaction, according to the second complaint.

She filed her first complaint with the Department of Labor in 2010 and that claim has moved to federal court.

The additional complaint lists 32 examples of alleged harassment and retaliation, including that Bechtel tried to have Busche removed as "key

War argument used in timecard case

Department of Justice gets OK to continue prosecution of alleged fraud at Hanford

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Because the nation is at war, the Department of Justice is allowed to continue prosecution of alleged timecard fraud that is more than five years old at the time an indictment was filed in federal court against 10 CH2M Hill

Hanford Group upper managers and supervisors.

Two of the defendants had asked that four of 34 counts related to alleged timecard fraud be dismissed because they were based on invoices from CH2M Hill to the Department of Energy in January and February 2008 and corporate bonuses paid in January 2008. U.S. Judge Ed Shea heard arguments on that and other motions Monday and Tuesday in Richland.

The indictment was filed March 20, 2013, five years and one to two months later, which normally would have

exceeded the five-year statute of limitations.

But Tyler Tornabene, the lead attorney for the prosecution, argued that the Wartime Suspension of Limitations Act suspends the statute of limitations during wartime in cases accusing monetary fraud against the United States. During times of war, the government loses resources, such as law enforcement officers who may be serving in the National Guard, Tornabene said. The war in Afghanistan continues.

The World War II-era law was sel-

dom used in the last decade until it was invoked by the Department of Justice 12 times between 2008 and 2012, as many times as in the previous 47 years, according to the Wall Street Journal.

Shea ruled that the law applies and prosecution of two counts of submission of false claims related to the contractor invoices and two counts of violation of anti-kickback acts related to the bonuses will proceed.

Defendants are accused of enabling timecard fraud as employees of

Up to 450 Hanford jobs to be cut

Most layoffs planned next month, through Jan. 30 next year

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Three Hanford contractors told employees Thursday that they plan to lay off up to 450 workers, with most of the layoffs planned in December and January.

Union and nonunion workers are expected to lose their jobs.

The contractors are reacting to an uncertain Hanford

budget for the fiscal year that started Oct. 1. With no federal budget passed by Congress for the year, the Department of Energy is operating under a continuing resolution that keeps funding at fiscal 2013 levels — which included sequestration, or a mandatory federal budget reduction.

To deal with sequestration in the fiscal year that ended Sept. 30, contractors used some budgeted money saved from previous years, but that money has been spent. Some also cut costs by furloughing workers, or requiring them to take leave, to meet their reduced budgets.

HANFORD NEWS ONLINE

Find related stories at www.hanfordnews.com.

Hardest-hit this year is Washington River Protection Solutions, the Hanford tank farm contractor managing 56 million gallons of radioactive waste held in underground tanks.

The waste is left from the past production of plutonium for the nation's nuclear weapons program.

Last year, \$48 million was shifted from the Hanford vitrification plant project to the

tank farms, but a similar shift of money is not expected this year.

That drops its budget to \$409 million under the consent decree. The Obama administration had proposed a budget of \$520 million for the tank farms this fiscal year.

Because of the lower budget, Washington River Protection Solutions plans to reduce its work force of about 1,600 employees by up to 250 employees by Jan. 30.

The DOE contractor will ask for volunteers for layoffs, with



Herald file

Three Hanford nuclear reservation contractors plan to lay off 450 employees between now and next fall

HANFORD TANK FARM

Workers might strike

HAMTC employees
plan to vote Dec. 13

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Hanford Atomic Metal Trades Council (HAMTC) workers at the nuclear reservation's tank farms will be asked Dec. 13 to either approve a proposed collective bargaining agreement or give their authorization to

proceed to a possible strike.

The workers have turned down two earlier proposals by Washington River Protection Solutions, most recently Oct. 9. That agreement was approved by HAMTC workers at four other Hanford contractors.

The agreement on the table now is the same, but minus a one-time payment of \$1,000 per worker offered by Hanford contractors for ratification of an agreement by Oct. 11.

The 650 HAMTC workers at the tank farms were sent a letter this week from HAMTC President Dave Molnaa, saying that after "considerable and painful deliberations," the negotiations committee recommends members approve the proposed agreement.

Getting that agreement back took considerable persuasion, Molnaa said.

HAMTC negotiators, after talking to members, had proposed

that the offer voted down Oct. 9 be amended to eliminate mandatory overtime, continue current overtime and premium pay policies, include a \$2,500 signing bonus and change the start time of the hot-weather day shift from 4 a.m. to 5 a.m.

Workers wanted a larger signing bonus because no wage increase was offered for 2012, Molnaa said. The last collective bargaining

Decision awaits on B Reactor's future

Senate considering fate of national park bill

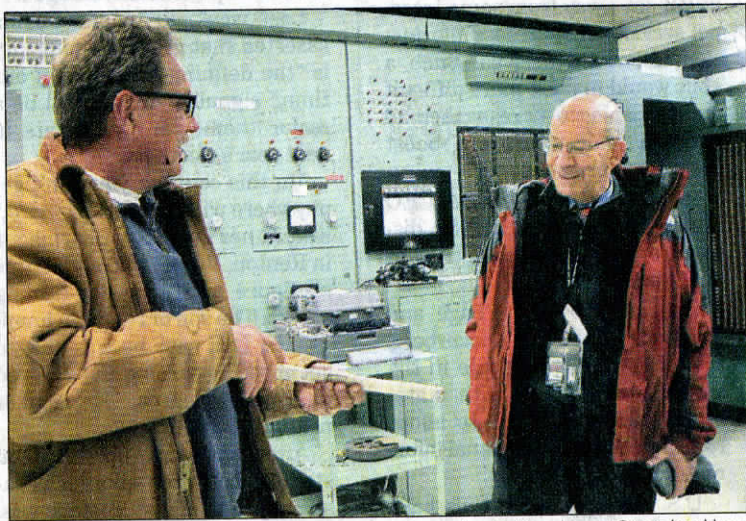
ANNETTE CARY
HERALD STAFF WRITER

Rep. Peter DeFazio, D-Ore., took a moment to sit at the controls of Hanford's historic B Reactor Monday as discussions continued on the other side of the nation on a bill that could set the reactor's future.

The U.S. House of Representatives has given its approval to create a Manhattan Project National Historical Park that would include B Reactor. It approved the 2014 National Defense Authorization Act with an amendment creating the new national park in June.

Sen. Maria Cantwell, D-Wash., has proposed a similar amendment to the Senate bill with the support of Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., Sen. Tom Udall, D-N.M., and Sen. Martin Heinrich, D-N.M.

But as work was under way Mon-



Annette Cary | acary@tricityherald.com

Kirk Christensen of Mission Support Alliance, left, shows Rep. Peter DeFazio, D-Ore., the "computer" – a slide rule – used by engineers to design Hanford's B Reactor.

day to rewrite the bill, it was uncertain whether the Senate would agree to include provisions for the new national park bill. The bill could be considered by the Senate in

December, or delayed until January, giving advocates of the new park more time to persuade the Senate to approve it.

"I'm always cautiously opti-

mistic," said Rep. Doc Hastings, R-Wash., who brought DeFazio for his first look at B Reactor Monday. "Sometimes the process slows down. We have to keep working on it."

Creating the park does have broad bipartisan and bicameral support, he said. But getting a bill passed remains a work in progress.

Hastings is the chairman of the House Natural Resources Committee, which has purview over national parks, and DeFazio is the ranking member of the committee.

"It definitely merits preservation and being available to the public," DeFazio said after touring the reactor. "It's a phenomenal part of history."

The House Natural Resources Committee also has passed a separate bill focused solely on creating a new national park. A similar bill has passed the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. But

MID-COLUMBIA

Sunday, Dec. 8, 2013

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

CH2M HILL

Paralegal: Documents withheld in fraud case

Former employee says she was fired after accusing company in timecard issue

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

A former CH2M Hill paralegal says she was fired after she accused the company of purposely withholding documents from prosecutors investigating timecard fraud at Hanford.

Grace Randazzo filed a lawsuit last week against CH2M Hill and her former supervisor in federal court in Colorado.

CH2M Hill, in a statement, said the lawsuit is without merit, incoherent and lacks facts to support any of its claims.

The company agreed in March 2013 to pay \$18.5 million to settle civil and criminal allegations of defrauding taxpayers through widespread timecard fraud at the Hanford nuclear reservation. Allegations concerned its per-

formance as the Department of Energy's tank farm contractor until 2008.

In addition, 10 managers and supervisors who worked for CH2M Hill at the Hanford tank farms are heading to trial. Nine hourly workers have made plea deals but have not been sentenced.

Randazzo, who worked at a corporate office in Colorado, was assigned to prepare responses to government requests to produce documents for threatened or pending legal investiga-

tions, according to her lawsuit.

She was assigned to search and locate documents for the Department of Justice in an earlier case, a 2010 investigation of fraud linked to CH2M Hill purchasers at the Hanford tank farms. She had concerns then that CH2M Hill was withholding information about hundreds, if not thousands, of stored boxes of Hanford records and Hanford databases and that Hanford staff were hiding or destroying potentially damaging records,

HANFORD

12 - 12 - 13

Hastings questions land transfer policies

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Recent policy changes to transfer surplus Department of Energy land could create more cost and risks for local communities like the Tri-Cities, said Rep. Doc Hastings, R-Wash, in a letter sent Wednesday to Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz.

The letter was written before Hastings received additional bad news about efforts to transfer 1,641 acres of surplus Hanford land to allow industrial development and help replace jobs lost as Hanford environmental

cleanup progresses.

Hastings had included an amendment requiring that DOE move ahead with the transfer of land in the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal 2014, which was passed by the House. Congressional approval is not needed for a land transfer, but the amendment was intended to speed up DOE action on land no longer needed for defense activities.

However, the Senate failed to pass a companion defense authorization bill.

Instead, a new bill was

See **HASTINGS** | Page B2

26 Nov 73
Some companies picked for Hanford mentor-protege programs, given subcontracts without having to bid

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Small businesses picked for Department of Energy mentor-protege programs are too often not the ones that need the extra help, accord-

ing to an audit report by the DOE Office of Inspector General.

The audit looked at mentor-protege programs at Hanford and two other DOE sites in Tennessee and South Carolina.

Small businesses picked by DOE or

its contractors in the program often are given subcontracts outright without having to bid for the work in competition with other small businesses, according to the audit report. Many contractors guaranteed the companies they pick as protege are given subcontracts ranging from \$100,000 to \$4 million.

The mentors benefit by counting the awards toward their small-busi-

ness subcontracting requirements.

The mentor-protege program is intended to grow small businesses by helping them develop business and technical capabilities to make them better able to perform work for DOE and other federal agencies. The goals of the program are laudable and have been recognized as valuable by the small business community, the audit report said.

But the audit found that several small business picked for the extra help had already received significant federal awards before becoming a protege. In other cases, they were allowed to continue as protege for too long or graduated from the program at one DOE site and then became a protege, with similar development

See **BUSINESSES** | Page B2

HANFORD

1 D F C 13

Judge orders 3 timecard fraud trials

Case spanned almost 10 years, it's not as simple as claiming unworked time, official says

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

A federal judge has reversed his decision to hold a single trial for 10 defendants accused of

timecard fraud at Hanford after learning more about the complexity of the case.

The case is not as simple as claiming unworked time on a timecard, said Judge Edward Shea in a new ruling made in response to a hearing last month.

"To the contrary, this case involves a pattern or practice of behavior that spanned nearly a decade, raising the complex issue of who had knowledge of, or aided and abetted, the alleged ongoing illegal activity," he said in

a court order.

He heard from attorneys that there is little or no proof that some defendants had knowledge of timecard fraud. All 10 defendants were managers or had supervisory duties for former Hanford contractor CH2M Hill Hanford Group.

Hourly workers are accused of refusing to work overtime unless it was offered in eight-hour blocks. When overtime assignments

See **TIMECARD** | Page A2

HANFORD LAND TRANSFERS

TRIDEC has concerns about rules

4 DEC 13
Organization worried new DOE regulations will affect its request

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The Department of Energy is throwing up roadblocks to the efficient transfer of excess land at Hanford and other nuclear weapons sites with new regulations, according to the Energy Communities Alliance and the Tri-City Development Council.

"DOE is releasing regulations that negatively impact communities," said the Energy Communities Alliance in a letter this week to Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz. The alliance includes the Hanford Communities, a coalition of Hanford-area local governments.

DOE disagrees, saying the changes are meant to clarify existing regulations.

TRIDEC is concerned because it is waiting for a decision on a request for about 1,600 acres of Hanford land, most of it proposed for green manufacturing or energy production just north of Richland. The land, like much of the 586-square-mile nuclear reservation, was not used directly for Hanford's mission of weapons plutonium production.

As portions of environmental cleanup at Hanford are finished and the work force reduced, the industrial use of the land could create a couple of thousand jobs, preferably high-tech jobs, to help replace those lost at Hanford.

TRIDEC, designated by the federal government as a community reuse organization for Hanford, made the request in cooperation with local governments two and a half years ago and anticipates a final decision could take another year, said Gary Petersen, TRIDEC vice president of Hanford programs.

The new regulations, issued as a final rule to modify and replace an interim rule from 2000, take effect Dec. 13.

The changes were limited to revisions to clarify regulations, and DOE and the Office of Management and Budget believe that no additional public notice or opportunity for public comment was required, said Steven Thai, a DOE spokesman in Washington, D.C. Public comment was accepted after the interim rule was proposed 13 years ago.

The changes will apply only to proposals for land transfers made after the final rule takes effect later this month, he said.

However, TRIDEC is skeptical. It's not clear that earlier proposals would be grandfathered in under the interim rule requirements, Petersen said, and TRIDEC also has concerns about how the changes would affect possible additional requests for land in future years.

The Hanford Comprehensive Land Use Plan proposes saving about 90 percent of Hanford land for conservation and preservation as environmental cleanup is completed. That leaves tens of thousands of acres designated for industrial development, some of

HANFORD

Justice Department sues contractor, subcontractor

Washington Closure
accused of falsely claiming
credit for contract awards

ANNETTE CARY
HERALD STAFF WRITER

The federal government filed a civil lawsuit Friday against Washington Closure Hanford, accusing it of falsely claiming credit for awarding small-business subcontracts worth millions of dollars.

The Hanford nuclear reservation

contractor is required by the Department of Energy to award subcontracts to small businesses, including women-owned small businesses. But in three subcontracts that Washington Closure used to meet those requirements, the businesses did not qualify, federal prosecutors said.

Instead, the businesses that were awarded the work passed it through to another subcontractor, Federal Engineers and Constructors (FE&C), according to the legal complaint. FE&C, Sage Tec and Sage Tec's owner also were named in the lawsuit.

The claims of improper subcon-

tracting were originally made by Savage Logistics of Richland and its owner, Salina Savage, in 2010 after the company failed to win a bid.

The U.S. Department of Justice indicated in August that it would intervene in part of that lawsuit, which it did Friday.

It also added allegations that Washington Closure breached its contract with DOE by making allegedly false statements about its small business subcontracting.

Friday was a day off for Washington Closure and officials were not immediately available to comment. Laura

Shikashio, the owner of Sage Tec, could not be reached.

Dick French, an owner of FE&C, has previously called Savage's allegations without merit.

"Teaming arrangements are common and are encouraged on many projects at Hanford," French said in court documents filed earlier.

No company has been asked to serve as a "front company" for FE&C and all the companies it has teamed with have done an appropriate share of the work, he said.

In the first subcontract at issue, Washington Closure awarded a \$4.8

million "truck and pup" subcontract to Phoenix Enterprises Northwest four months after it was formed as a small, woman-owned business. The work required hauling contaminated material to a central Hanford landfill.

But the Small Business Administration later determined that Phoenix was affiliated with FE&C, which was ineligible for the bid as advertised. Issues included that its owner was a full-time employee of FE&C, Phoenix used FE&C's state contractor registration and insurance policy, and

See **JUSTICE** | Page C3

11 DEC 2013

Final plan for cleanup announced

Uranium groundwater plume to be addressed

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The Department of Energy and its regulators have issued a decision adopting a final cleanup plan for the Hanford 300 Area just north of Richland, the first of six final plans that will cover 220 square miles along the Columbia River.

Much of the plan follows usual Hanford nuclear reservation procedures for digging up contaminated soil and waste sites, treating the waste as needed and then disposing of most of it in a cen-

tral Hanford landfill for low-level radioactive waste.

But it also addresses the uranium groundwater plume beneath the 300 Area, which allows contaminated water to seep into the Columbia River.

The Hanford Advisory Board had asked that a pilot project be conducted to address the uranium-contaminated groundwater before a final plan was adopted. But DOE and the Environmental Protection Agency said the cleanup plan adopted in the final decision appears to be the best way to address contamination.

The Comprehensive Environmental Response,

See **CLEANUP** | Page A2

HANFORD TANK FARM

14 Dec 13

Workers OK labor contract

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Hanford Atomic Metal Trades Council workers at the Hanford tank farms approved a new collective bargaining agreement Friday by a vote of 290 to 239.

The 650 workers for contractor Washington River Protection Solutions had been given a choice of approving the proposed collective bargaining agreement or giving their authorization to proceed to a possible strike.

It was the third proposal considered by workers. Most recently, on Oct. 9, workers turned down the same proposal, but with a \$1,000 one-time payment as an incentive to ratify the agreement by Oct. 11. Workers at four other Hanford contractors voted to approve the agreement Oct. 9.

"It's a bittersweet victory," said Dave Molnaa, HAMTC president, Friday night. "We would have preferred a better contract. But we've got a

See **CONTRACT** | Page A2

Board displeased with secret plans

Hanford vit plant issues require open, transparent process, members say

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The Department of Energy's framework report for resolving technical issues at the Hanford vitrification plant, made public in late September, is a disappointment, members of the Hanford Advisory Board say.

The advisory board met for two days last week. All members agreed that DOE has been too secretive about problems and any proposed solutions.

They sent DOE a formal letter of advice asking for an open and transparent process to resolve issues and held a roundtable discussion to hear members' thoughts on the report's content.

Rep. Doc Hastings, R-Wash., also

weighed in on the issue last week, saying a continued lack of details about the draft framework may be harming efforts to reach agreement on the future of Hanford tank waste cleanup.

Without a final plan for the plant, money from Congress could be jeopardized, Hastings said.

Construction has stopped on the plant's Pretreatment Facility, which is planned to separate radioactive waste into "low-activity" and "high-level" waste streams for separate treatment, until technical issues are resolved. Issues include the possibility of an unplanned nuclear reaction or a buildup of flammable gases.

Little information had been released about the \$12.3 billion plant for more than a year as former Energy Secretary Steven Chu and his successor, Ernest Moniz, worked with teams of technical experts to identify and resolve technical issues that could affect the plant's safe and efficient operation. The plant is

supposed to transform up to 56 million gallons of radioactive waste into a stable glass form for disposal.

The report discussed the possibility of pretreating some of the waste before it is sent to the vitrification plant, allowing it to bypass the plant's Pretreatment Facility. It also discussed sending some of the waste to a national repository in New Mexico for transuranic waste — typically waste contaminated with plutonium — without glassifying it at the vitrification plant.

'A case has not been built'

Some of the details missing from the report include the size and functionality of additional facilities that would need to be built, costs of possible solutions and how much longer changes would take to implement, said several advisory board members.

DOE already has said the plant is at risk of not meeting deadlines in a court-enforced consent decree. It is supposed

to begin operating in 2019 and be fully operating in 2022.

"A case has not been built for Congress that really compels them to adequately fund any or all of the phased steps," said Shelley Cimon, who represents the public at large on the board.

The state of Oregon, in a letter to DOE, said the yearlong wait for the document and the "best of class input" the energy secretary had sought raised high expectations.

"We are surprised at the paucity of details it contains, and the near complete absence of solutions suggested for the major technical issues," the letter said.

Important concepts were outlined, but with not enough information to judge the merits of the proposals or what hurdles might need to be surmounted to make them workable, the letter said. No indication was given of

Vit plant donates toys, \$34,000 to Toys for Tots

HERALD STAFF

Santa Claus picked up thousands of toys and almost \$34,000 in donations Thursday at the Hanford vitrification plant, thanks to donations made by employees to the Marine Corps Reserve's Toys for Tots campaign at the construction site.

"This year, the vit plant is providing nearly a quarter of the toys that will be provided to area families," said Glen Carter, Toys for Tots coordinator. "The vit plant employees consistently provide tremendous

support for our local Toys for Tots campaign, and their generosity ensures that we are able to meet our growing community needs every year."

Vit plant employees designated \$15,000 of the total donation to the Local 598 pipefitters' annual Bikes for Tikes campaign. Each year, the pipefitters purchase and assemble more than 1,000 bicycles for Toys for Tots.

Griggs/Ace Hardware is ensuring the bikes are ready for Christmas delivery, and Vintners Logistics is delivering the toys and bikes.

WASHINGTON RIVER PROTECTION SOLUTIONS

Contractor approves 82 voluntary layoffs

HERALD STAFF

Washington River Protection Solutions has approved 82 voluntary layoffs, it told employees Monday.

The Hanford tank farm contractor has

17 DEC 13

been approved by the Department of Energy to lay off up to 250 workers in the fiscal year.

The voluntary layoffs at Washington River Protection solutions include 44 nonunion employees and 38 union workers.

It's one of three Department of Energy Hanford contractors that announced Nov. 21 that they planned layoffs because of the uncertain Hanford budget for the fiscal year that started Oct. 1.

See **LAYOFFS** | Page B2

**At the
close**

DOW
16,179.08



+11.11

NASDAQ
4,058.14

C12 | tricityherald.com | Friday, Dec. 20, 2013

BRIEFS

DOE senior executives given promotions

Jim Owendoff has been promoted to acting principal deputy assistant secretary for the Department of Energy's Office of Environmental Management.

Owendoff, a senior policy adviser for environmental management, will replace Tracy Mustin, who is retiring, and will oversee Hanford and other DOE environmental management sites.

Jack Craig has been named associate principal deputy assistant secretary, replacing Alice Williams, who is retiring. Craig is the director of the Office of Environmental Management's Consolidated Business Center.

Both are proven DOE senior executives with the technical and management acumen needed to help lead DOE's environmental management program, said Dave Huizenga, Office of Environmental Management senior adviser, in a memo to DOE staff.

HANFORD

31 Dec 13

Study to look at modular reactor

TRIDEC taking bids
to examine issue; state
would fund proposal

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFFWRITER

The Tri-City Development Council is seeking bids to study the possible benefits of building a small modular nuclear reactor system at the Hanford nuclear reservation.

Sen. Sharon Brown, R-Kennewick, made a successful budget request during the past state legislative session for \$500,000 to study the manufacturing and advancement of small modular reactors in the Tri-Cities.

That money, which comes from state capital budget funds for economic development and job creation, will be used to pay for the TRIDEC study and then a proposal to the Department of Energy, if the study results confirm advantages of building at Hanford.

"This is an opportunity I do not want to see pass us by," Brown said on Monday.

The Department of Energy already has announced \$452 million in matching funds for two proposals to design and license modular nuclear reactors. They are being developed by Babcock & Wilcox in cooperation with the Tennessee Valley Authority and by NuScale Power in Oregon with tentative plans for an Idaho plant that would be operated by Energy Northwest of Richland.

WASHINGTON

12 JAN 14

Hanford time-card fraud adds to feds' 2013 haul

ASSOCIATED PRESS

SEATTLE — Proceeds from the Barefoot Bandit's movie deal, investigation of a Hanford Nuclear Reservation contractor's time-card practices and a strip club sale helped federal prosecutors in Washington collect more than \$25 million last year.

The U.S. attorney's office in Seattle said it hauled in \$22 million in criminal and civil actions, and the office in Spokane said it brought in \$3.5 million more. They also worked on cases with other Department of Justice offices, which nationally collected about \$8.1 billion.

Seattle U.S. Attorney Jenny Durkan said her office collected

six-figure totals in a conspiracy to steal 31 old-growth cedar trees from Olympic National Forest and in the case of airplane thief Colton Harris-Moore, the "Barefoot Bandit."

The sale of a strip club in Shoreline that had been seized during the racketeering investigation of the late adult-entertainment boss Frank Colacurcio brought in \$1.2 million.

Spokane U.S. Attorney Michael Ormsby said his office worked with DOJ's civil fraud unit to collect \$18.5 million from CH2M Hill after an investigation of time-card practices.

The money collected helps compensate crime victims and supports law enforcement and federal agencies.

HANFORD TANKS

Sampling deadline missed by 8 months

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

A paperwork mistake caused a deadline to check some Hanford waste tanks for the buildup of flammable gas to be missed for more than eight months.

Regulations require that the underground radioactive waste tanks in groups called the A, BY and C Tank Farms be sampled every 365 days for flammable gases, said John Britton, spokesman for Washington River

Protection Solutions.

The Department of Energy contractor realized Dec. 21 that sampling had been missed in late March for the C Farm tanks, in early May for the A Farm tanks and in mid July for the BY Farm tanks.

Sampling was done the next day with no serious problem discovered.

DOE takes any violation seriously, it said in a statement. It is reviewing the quality of its contractor's data management

BRIEFS

Hanford Challenge plans information session

Hanford Challenge plans an information session on compensation and medical benefits for Hanford-related illnesses 1:30 to 4 p.m. Friday at the Richland Public Library Gallery.

Speakers will provide tips on applying for compensation and potential future compensation and medical benefits for families of Hanford workers. Hanford Challenge is gathering information about health issues of those families.

The library is at 955 Northgate Drive.

HANFORD

15 JAN 14

URS

promotes workers

HERALD STAFF

James Taylor has been named general manager of URS Corp.'s Global Management and Operations Services Business Group, which manages the company's Hanford work.



Taylor

That includes Washington River Protection Solutions' tank farm work, Washington Closure Hanford's work to clean up Hanford along the Columbia River and URS's work as the primary subcontractor at the Hanford vitrification plant.



Wright

Taylor replaces David Pethick, who retired last month.



Hayfield

Taylor previously was senior vice president of business development for the URS group. He has broad experience in domestic and international business development, process engineering, project management in nuclear operations, facility decontamination and decommissioning, environmental remediation and waste management, accord to URS.

Todd Wright, who has worked at the Hanford vitrification plant, has been named to a newly created position as executive vice president of operations for the URS group. He most recently was board chairman for Sellafield Ltd. in the United Kingdom.

HANFORD SPILL ENGINEERING

Areva wins \$19M contract

Company to build 'hot cell' mockup at Richland campus to demonstrate cleanup system

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Areva Federal Services has been awarded a subcontract worth almost \$19 million to design and test a system to clean up one of Hanford's worst radiologi-

cal spills.

Washington Closure Hanford awarded the subcontract for the engineering of a system to dig up soil contaminated by concentrated cesium and strontium beneath the 324 Building in the Hanford 300 Area just north of Richland.

The structure will be left standing above the spill to protect workers from contamination as it comes out of the ground within the building.

The 324 Building, built in the mid-1960s and operated until 1996, housed shielded

rooms called "hot cells," where workers used remotely operated equipment to perform work with highly radioactive materials.

Areva plans to build a mockup of a 30-foot-high hot cell at its Richland campus on Horn Rapids Road to demonstrate the equipment it designs and prove that it works, said Don McBride, Washington Closure manager for the project.

Its team includes four Hanford-area

HANFORD

Budget could increase

Federal spending bill proposes \$2.2B for nuclear reservation; could give relief from layoffs

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The Hanford nuclear reservation could have \$186 million more to spend than last fiscal year under an annual spending bill worked out by leaders of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees late Monday.

The bill proposes a budget of \$2.2 bil-

lion, which could give some relief from layoffs under consideration at Hanford.

The bill is expected to be voted on by the full House and Senate this week, with the House vote possibly coming as soon as today. It then would need the president's signature.

The Department of Energy had approved proposals by Hanford contractors to lay off up to 450 workers this fiscal year, including 350 because of budget uncertainty.

Hanford officials typically do not comment on annual budget numbers proposed by Congress until a budget is final. However, if the spending bill is approved,

fewer Hanford layoffs are expected.

The contractors already have granted requests for 161 voluntary layoffs in December and more workers than usual took retirement in November.

Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., a senior member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, worked with colleagues to ensure Washington priorities, including Hanford, were included in the proposed spending package.

"(I) am pleased that this bill will roll back many of the devastating cuts from sequestration," Murray said in a

23 JAN 14

Most layoffs canceled

Only 12 dismissed after Congress OKs budget that increased spending

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Hanford contractors laid off just 12 workers this week, far fewer than the 289 they were authorized to let go.

The Department of Energy had approved three Hanford contractors to lay off up to 450 workers in the fiscal year that began Oct. 1 and some workers who volunteered for layoffs had already been released.

Up to 450 layoffs were being considered when it looked as though Hanford cleanup might be hampered by another congressional continuing resolution with flat funding for Hanford because of no federal fiscal 2014 budget.

There also was the possibility of another forced federal budget cut, called a sequester.

Instead, Congress approved a fiscal 2014 budget last week that increased spending at Hanford to about \$2.2 billion, or \$186 million more than was available in fiscal 2013.

18 JAN 2014

Attorney gives \$100,000 for Reach exhibit

Allen Brecke's father 'Les' worked on secret operation in 1940s

SARA SCHILLING
HERALD STAFF WRITER

Leslie I. "Les" Brecke was recruited in the 1940s to work on a secret operation that would shape the Tri-Cities and change the world: the Manhattan Project.

"He was in graduate school at the University of Michigan in the department of physics. He was approached by DuPont, 'How would you like



A. Brecke

to join a new and exotic field of science?" his son, Allen Brecke, told the Herald.

Les Brecke was 22 at the time. The young scientist's work took him from Chicago to Tennessee to New Mexico and finally to Hanford, where he stayed for decades before retiring in the early 1980s. He died in 2007.

INSIDE
Concept for exhibit unveiled. | **C1**

See **EXHIBIT** | Page A2

18 JAN 2014

Group looks into family illnesses

Organization wants to study whether workers' relatives exposed to contamination

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Hanford Challenge is exploring whether family members of Hanford workers may have been made ill by

exposure to contamination from the nuclear reservation.

It is conducting a community health assessment, asking for input from families of workers or those who live in homes that were previously occupied by Hanford workers.

If enough of a pattern is evident, the watchdog group may be able to interest a university in conducting a formal study, said Tom Carpenter, executive director of Hanford Challenge.

Depending on the findings, there could be a need for programs for those harmed or at risk, he said.

A national program, the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program, has paid more than \$1 billion in compensation and medical claims either to Hanford and Pacific Northwest National Laboratory employees who became ill because of workplace exposures or to their survivors.

The group is not making any claims about harm to nonworkers, but is interested in looking for possible trends for further study, Carpenter said.

As Hanford Challenge employees started seeing Hanford workers who were sick, they sometimes would see that family members also were ill, Carpenter said.

In addition, the group has sampled the dust in some Richland homes in

areas where it is likely to build up long term, such as under refrigerators, and found "fairly elevated" levels of radioactive contamination in some instances, he said.

Workers may have tracked contamination into their homes. Or contamination might have been spread in the air, he said. Hanford released radioactive material from its stacks from World

1,082-ton test reactor lifted from ground

One of most complicated cleanups from structure used for 1960s research

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

A massive test reactor just north of Richland has been lifted out of the ground in one the most hazardous and

complex cleanup projects along the Columbia River at Hanford, according to the contractor doing the work.

The reactor is the largest and last of the six test reactors once used for research at the Hanford 300 Area.

Getting the reactor out took three years of work and planning, including one major setback.

But sometime this weekend, Route 4 South from north of Richland to the Wye Barricade is expected to be closed

to traffic as the reactor is hauled on a trailer with 384 wheels to distribute the weight of the 1,538 tons it will be carrying. (The reactor alone is 1,082 tons.)

"We're going to scream out of here at 1 mile per hour," said Gary Snow, director of decontamination and demolition for Department of Energy contractor Washington Closure Hanford.

The reactor was used in the 1960s to test fuel containing recycled plutonium for possible use in commercial

nuclear power reactors.

The reactor and its shielding will be disposed of at the Environmental Restoration Disposal Facility, a lined landfill for low-level radioactive waste in central Hanford.

The 309 Reactor, also called the Plutonium Recycle Test Reactor, was housed below ground under the 80-foot-tall gray dome near Richland.

See **REACTOR** | Page A2

HANFORD

25 JAN 14

DOE fined after waste incidents

Settlement for toxic leaks
found to be in violation of
dangerous waste regulations

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

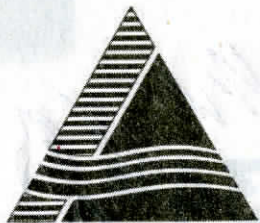
The state Department of Ecology is fining the federal Department of Energy \$261,000, but will forgive all but \$15,000 if improvements in waste management are made on schedule.

The settlement agreement between the two agencies was announced Friday by the state, which accused DOE of violating state dangerous waste regulations in central Hanford.

**HANFORD
NEWS ONLINE**

Find related
stories at
[www.hanford
news.com](http://www.hanfordnews.com)

Public Comment on Proposed Cleanup of Hanford Groundwater



Tri-Party Agreement

U.S. Department of Energy
Washington State Department of Ecology
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology) invite you to provide input on an engineering evaluation/cost analysis (EE/CA) to evaluate approaches for the extraction and treatment of perched water located under the central part of the Hanford Site, about 20 miles north of Richland.

DOE, with concurrence from EPA and Ecology, has issued an EE/CA that evaluates the proposed cleanup options and identifies a preferred cleanup alternative. The EE/CA is being issued for a 30-day public comment period from **February 3 through March 3, 2014.**

Please send your comments to Kim Ballinger, U.S. Department of Energy, Richland Operations Office, at the following address:

Kim Ballinger
Department of Energy
P.O. Box 550, A7-75
Richland, WA 99352
(509) 376-3361
Kimberly.ballinger@rl.gov

After the public comment period, a written response to significant comments will be provided in the Administrative Record for Hanford. The EE/CA is titled Engineering Evaluation/Cost Analysis for Perched Water Pumping/Pore Water Extraction and is available at: <http://pdw.hanford.gov/arpir/>.

HANFORD

10 FEB 14

Vit plant cost rising

New review shows increase is not from parts of facility where work has been stopped

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The cost of the Hanford vitrification plant has increased \$430 million from close to \$12.3 billion to almost \$12.7 billion, according to a new review.

That cost increase is for the parts of

the plant where construction is progressing — the Analytical Laboratory, the Low Activity Waste Facility and about 20 smaller support facilities. It does not take into account two key facilities where technical issues must be addressed.

Construction has been stopped at the Pretreatment Facility and a portion of the High Level Waste Facility because of issues that could effect the future safe and efficient operation of the plant.

The projected price increase also does not account for work that could be required if the Department of Energy

decides to feed low-activity waste directly to the vitrification plant before the plant is ready to accept high-level radioactive waste.

The new estimate was included in a recent Construction Project Review that focused on parts of the plant where construction has not been halted. The review was done by a team of industry, academic and DOE officials who assess progress and potential problems on the project periodically to advise DOE.

300 Area to be discussed at Feb. 20 meeting

12 FEB 14

The final record of decision for Hanford's 300 Area and proposed changes to the Washington State Dangerous Waste Regulations will be discussed at a Richland meeting Feb. 20.

The program replaces one announced earlier on future use and planning for Hanford.

Now, Harold Tilden of Pacific Northwest National Laboratory will talk at the meeting of the Eastern Washington Chapter of the Academy of Certified Hazardous Material Managers. The record of decision changes strategy for groundwater remediation, adds new administrative controls and continues contamination removal.

The meeting, which is open to the public, is at 6 p.m. in Conference Room B of the Richland Library.

HANFORD

Judge postpones whistleblower case

Worker filed lawsuit against URS, Bechtel a year ago

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

A Hanford whistleblower case was put on hold until May during a hearing Monday in federal court in Richland.

Bechtel National, which is building the Hanford vitrification plant, and its primary subcontractor, URS Energy and Construction, have asked that part of Donna Busche's case against them be dismissed. Her attorney has asked that the

case be halted until this fall.

Busche filed a lawsuit a year ago, saying she feared URS and Bechtel were working to fire her in retaliation for raising safety issues concerning the operation of the \$12.3 billion plant. A URS employee, she is the manager of environmental and nuclear safety for the project.

Before filing the lawsuit, she filed a whistleblower complaint with the Department of Labor. With no decision from the agency after a year, the federal Energy Reorganization Act allowed her to file the case in federal court.

Retaliation continued while the case was being considered by the Department

of Labor, she said in court documents. Bechtel reorganized and reduced her authority, URS no longer considered her a senior manager, she was excluded from meetings and the two companies countermanded the technical decisions she had been hired to make, among other allegations.

But URS and Bechtel said if she wanted to bring new claims, she must first take them to the Department of Labor. They also assert that she took too long to bring the claims, waiting more than 180 days.

Her attorney, Jack Sheridan, counted that the retaliation was continuous,

See **POSTPONES** | Page B2

BRIEFS

Meeting tonight on waste permit changes

A meeting on changes to the state dangerous waste permit covering Hanford nuclear reservation groundwater is planned from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. today.

The changes will cover groundwater monitoring, well monitoring and a wastewater storage and treatment system in central Hanford.

The meeting will be in the Gallery Room of the Richland Public Library, 955 Northgate Drive, Richland.

Hanford hiring for 200 vit plant jobs

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The Hanford vitrification plant is looking for at least 200 new employees now that federal funding for the nuclear reservation is more stable.

A career fair is planned from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Feb. 21 at the Courtyard by Marriott in Richland to fill positions in Richland and in Reston, Va.

Bechtel National plans to hire about 150 workers for jobs in engineering, con-

struction, project controls, procurement and other support positions. About half of the positions would be in Richland and the other half would be in Reston, where Bechtel has an office that does engineering work for the Hanford plant under construction.

URS Corp., Bechtel's primary subcontractor, is hiring about 50 workers for commissioning, operations and plant engineering. They would be based in Richland.

Candidates should bring electronic

and hard copy resumes to the career fair and be prepared to talk with managers. Job descriptions are posted at www.vitplantjobs.com.

Bechtel and URS expect a good turnout of well-qualified candidates, said Bechtel spokeswoman Suzanne Heaston.

Federal funding for the project is stable after Congress passed a budget last month for the remainder of fiscal 2014, which ends Sept. 30. It included \$690 million for the vitrification plant,

formally called the Waste Treatment Plant.

But last year the project was in flux.

Congress failed to pass a budget for Hanford for fiscal 2013, and instead rolled over the previous year's spending plan under a continuing resolution. It placed restrictions on how money could be spent, locking in funding for vitrification plant facilities where it was not needed for more than half the year.

12 FEB 14

BRIEFS

Deadline for DOE plan to empty tank extended

The Washington State Department of Ecology has extended the deadline for the Department of Energy to provide a plan to empty Hanford Tank AY-102.

The nuclear reservation's oldest double-shell tank is leaking radioactive waste between its shells.

The state demanded in January that DOE produce a plan by Feb. 15 to pump waste from the tank. But at a request from DOE, the state has extended the due date to March 7.

Tank AY-102 was discovered to have an interior leak

more than a year ago and DOE's delay in taking action has been "unacceptable," according to the state.

State regulations require DOE to inspect the tank to determine the cause of the leak, including removing as much of the waste as necessary to allow for the inspection, within 24 hours or as early as possible.

BRIEFS

Hanford Tri-Party agency asks for public input

The Hanford Tri-Party Agreement agencies are asking for public input on improving public involvement.

The Department of Energy, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Washington State Department of Ecology have posted a survey at svy.mk/1el8nzz.

DOE, PNNL isotope work to be discussed Tuesday

The Department of Energy's isotope program and Pacific Northwest National Laboratory's work on isotopes will be discussed Tuesday in Richland.

Brian Rapko of PNNL will speak at a meeting of the Eastern Washington Section of the American Nuclear Society at the Shilo Inn.

There is no charge to attend the presentation at 7 p.m., but those who attend a dinner meeting an hour earlier will be charged \$22 and must RSVP by 4 p.m. today at ans-ews.org or by calling 521-6499.

Huge Hanford vault to be lifted

Weather permitting,
1,100-ton piece to be
driven to landfill

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

A Hanford vault weighing about 1,100 tons is expected to be rolled out of the ground just north of Richland Friday, weather permitting.

The 340 Vault is one of just two complex radioactive facilities that still need to be demolished or removed at the Hanford 300 Area by Department of Energy contractor Washington Closure Hanford.

The list of complex facilities there dropped from three to two in January when the massive Plutonium Recycle Test Reactor, weighing 1,082 tons with its shielding, was lifted out of the ground.



Courtesy Washington Closure Hanford

A special lift system is being used to raise the underground 1,100-ton 340 Vault at Hanford.

Like the test reactor, the 340 Vault will be loaded onto a heavy-haul trailer with hundreds of wheels to distribute its weight, then slowly driven to a lined landfill for low-level radioactive waste in central Hanford.

Route 4 South from just

north of Richland to the Hanford Wye Barricade is expected to be closed during the transport, likely sometime this weekend when traffic near Hanford is light.

The work had been planned for last weekend, but postponed because of the snow.

"This will be another big piece of work accomplished on the river corridor and it has been done successfully so far," said Larry Gadbois, an Environmental Protection Agency scientist.

The removal of the test reactor and the 340 Vault will clear the way to advance work on other contaminated infrastructure below ground, including a piping system that is expected to have some high radioactivity, Gadbois said.

The underground vault, just north of Richland, was once used to hold two 15,000-gallon stainless steel tanks that collected highly radioactive liquids through a system of underground piping from laboratories, fuel fabrication facilities and test reactors in the 300 Area. The tanks have been filled with grout.

The 340 Building, also

See **VAULT** | Page A2

HANFORD

Governor wants answers from DOE

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The state expects answers by the end of the month after being kept in the dark about federal plans to clean up Hanford radioactive waste held in underground tanks, said Washington Gov. Jay Inslee.

"There is a growing level of frustration on the lack of information coming from the Department of Energy," Jaime Smith, spokeswoman for Inslee, said late last week.

Despite "concerted efforts," the state has failed to get details from the federal government about possible solutions outlined in a document the Department of Energy called a "framework" that was released in September, said a letter signed by the governor.

The letter, which also was signed by state Attorney General Bob Ferguson, was sent to Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz and U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder.

Federal officials told state representatives that DOE and the Justice

Department would provide the state with a proposal by the end of this month to amend a court-enforced consent decree setting deadlines for tank waste cleanup, the letter said.

However, the federal government has notified the state that it may not be able to meet most remaining deadlines in the consent decree signed in 2010 to settle a lawsuit brought by the state of Washington and joined by the state of Oregon. The consent decree set new deadlines to replace some of those in the legally binding Tri-Party Agreement that DOE

already had missed or had no hope of meeting despite repeated extensions.

All remaining consent decree deadlines for the \$12.2 billion vitrification plant under construction at Hanford are at serious risk of being missed, DOE has told the state. The plant is intended to treat much of the 56 million gallons of waste held in underground tanks from the past production of weapons plutonium. The plant is required to begin operating in 2019 and be at full

HANFORD

2014 spending plan revealed

DOE discussed budget this week for first time since Congress reached deal

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

Work to prepare for cleaning up one of Hanford's most notorious burial grounds, 618-10, will be accelerated with money in the fiscal 2014 Hanford budget.

Other plans call for speeding up work to remove some radioactively contaminated soil just north of Richland and continuing the momentum to complete demolition of the Plutonium Finishing Plant by a legal dead-

line of fall 2016, according to Matt McCormick, manager of the Department of Energy Richland Operations Office.

DOE discussed the fiscal 2014 budget for the first time this week since Congress worked out a budget deal Jan. 13 and the president signed it four days later. The fiscal year began Oct. 1.

The administration's budget request, which was released in April, proposed a budget that about matched the budget for fiscal 2012 before mandatory budget cuts, or sequestration, reduced spending at Hanford in fiscal 2013.

The budget finally approved by Congress for fiscal 2014 included \$200 million more than the adminis-

tration's request for DOE's nationwide environmental cleanup program.

"The overall support, particularly the \$200 million in environmental management, is a testament to the commitment and confidence Congress has in DOE's environmental management program, which includes Hanford," McCormick said.

About \$20 million of the \$200 million will go to Hanford to bring the budget for the DOE Hanford Richland Operations Office to \$1.13 billion, thanks to efforts of Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash. That's in addition to restoring about \$79 million for that office lost in fiscal 2013 to sequestration.

The Richland Operations Office is

responsible for all Hanford work except the management and treatment of 56 million gallons of radioactive waste held in underground tanks in central Hanford.

The additional \$20 million includes \$15 million that will be added primarily to the budget for cleanup along the Columbia River at Hanford.

The Richland Operations Office is focused on its "2015 Vision," which calls for the demolition of the Plutonium Finishing Plant, continuing efforts to clean up contaminated groundwater and completion of most environmental cleanup on Hanford land along the Columbia River.

The additional money will allow DOE to build a full-scale mockup of a

HANFORD

New plant possible

DOE considering building underground facility for interim pretreatment

ANNETTE CARY
HERALD STAFF WRITER

The Department of Energy is considering building an underground plant that would use the same technologies as the troubled Pretreatment Facility at Hanford's vitrifica-

tion plant, but on a smaller scale. The possible interim pretreatment system is one of the solutions discussed in what DOE called a "framework" document, released in September after a year of study of the plant's technical issues. It outlined for discussion a possible phased startup of the \$12.3 billion vitrification plant to allow some waste to be treated for disposal while technical issues still are being addressed. A presentation at a Hanford Advi-

sory Board committee meeting Thursday was the first time DOE has discussed in detail how the framework proposes to bypass the Pretreatment Facility, where construction has stopped while technical issues are resolved. However, it's too early to know what an interim pretreatment system outside the plant might cost or how long it would take to build and begin operating.

See **PLANT** | Page A2

DUELING LEAF BLOWERS IN KENNEWICK



Paul T. Erickson | perickson@tricityherald.com

Alberto Mendoza, left, and Juan Mendoza of River Lawn Maintenance clear leaves Monday from Iglesia church in Kennewick. Rain is likely during the day today, with highs in the mid-50s and winds gusting as high as 32 mph, according to the National Weather Service.

New Hanford cleanup price tag: \$113.6B

Report is requirement of Tri-Party Agreement

ANNETTE CARY

HERALD STAFF WRITER

An estimated \$113.6 billion is the new price tag for completing the remaining Hanford nuclear reservation environmental cleanup, plus some post-cleanup oversight.

If the cost were spread evenly among everyone living in the United States today, each person would have to come up with \$359.

The new estimate of cleanup costs was included in the 2014 Hanford Lifecycle Scope, Schedule and Cost

Report released this week. It's the fourth such report released since they became an annual requirement added to the legally binding Tri-Party Agreement in 2010.

The estimate is based on completing most cleanup work in 2060, and then some continuing oversight and monitoring until 2090. That oversight, called long-term stewardship, is listed at costing \$5.4 billion.

The total estimated cleanup cost has gone down from last year's estimate of \$114.8 billion after a year of cleanup work under a budget of about \$2 billion and some adjustment of estimates.

However, the report is required to be based on completing work to meet

HANFORD NEWS ONLINE

Find related stories at www.hanfordnews.com

all of its regulatory and cleanup obligations and that results in some unrealistic annual budget projections.

In recent years, the Hanford budget has been a little more than \$2 billion and large increases seem unlikely given the federal budget climate.

But the lifecycle cost report projects budgets of more than \$3 billion each of the next six years, including a budget of \$4 billion in 2019.

Projections show spending needs to remain above \$2 billion — and most years above \$2.5 billion — until 2046 to meet cleanup goals. Spending then

would drop quickly to below \$1 billion in 2049.

Many decisions on how to clean up Hanford remain to be made. For those projects, the report is required to make a plausible, upper-range estimate.

Some estimates are based on projected costs that are expected to change. For instance, DOE has said that the costs for the \$12.3 billion vitrification plant are likely to increase as technical issues are worked through, but a definite number has not been calculated to include in the latest lifecycle report.

In the past, the lifecycle reports have taken an in-depth look at a single project, but this year DOE and its

regulators decided not to do that after considering the effort required to conduct those analyses and the benefits and insights gained from them.

A link to the new lifecycle cost report is at www.hanford.gov on the rotating banner.

Comments will be accepted until April 18. Email them to LCSSC@rl.gov or mailed to Stephen Korenkiewicz, Lifecycle Report Project Manager, DOE Richland Operations Office, P.O. Box 550, MSIN: A5-16, Richland, WA 99352.

► *Annette Cary: 582-1533; acary@tricityherald.com; Twitter: @Hanford News*