

Recovery Act Helps Clean Environment at DOE's Paducah Site

PADUCAH, Ky. – The environment at DOE's Paducah Site is becoming cleaner and safer thanks to \$80 million from the Recovery Act.

So far, about \$50 million in Recovery Act funds have been spent at Paducah. Aside from cleaning up the environment, the work expedites removal of old buildings with no reuse potential.

"That makes more land available for potential beneficial reuse," said Rob Seifert, DOE Recovery Act Project Manager at the Paducah Site.

A 200,000 square-foot complex known as the old Feed Plant operated from 1957 to 1977 to make uranium hexafluoride and fluorine. Recovery Act workers, who are cleaning up the contaminated complex to prepare it for demolition in late 2011 or early 2012, achieved their latest milestone January 7 after eight months of efforts.

Workers used heavy equipment to finish removing hundreds of feet of paper-insulated, lead-cased cable that supplied the Feed Plant with high-voltage electricity. The cable is the diameter of a fire hose and weighs nearly 15 pounds per foot.

Machines pulled the cable out of a large conduit that ran from man-holes through the building slab into the basement and up to electrical rooms. Wearing protective suits and respirators, workers cut the cable into shorter sections for waste storage. In all, they removed about 1,000 feet of cable, weighing nearly 15,000 pounds packaged.

Supervisor Bridgid Mills led a team of electricians, mechanics and operators with support from engineering, crane operators, and hoisting and rigging crews.

Recovery Act workers have nearly finished asbestos abatement in the Feed Plant, having previously removed the insulating material from about 41,000 feet of piping and 9,000 square feet of tanks and equipment. Workers also took out about 30,000 square feet of hazardous hydrogen fluoride, fluorine, and other contaminants in the eastern end of the complex, which would cover nearly half of a football field.

A 65,000 square-foot complex known as the Metals Plant is slated for demolition in summer 2011. Used from the early 1950s to the early 1970s to convert depleted uranium hexafluoride into uranium metal and uranium tetrafluoride, the Metals Plant had been one of the site's most contaminated structures.

In December 2010, Recovery Act personnel completed the removal of a magnesium fluoride system from the Metals Plant. Front Line Supervisor Chris Stewart's crew devised a way of placing the waste directly into proper shipping containers. That efficient process eliminated handling of the waste from one container to another and helped workers finish the job five months ahead of schedule. □



Recovery Act workers remove asbestos from the C-410 Feed Plant to prepare it for demolition in late 2011 or early 2012.