



For Immediate Release: 08/09/01

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A 'TOUR' OF THE HANFORD SITE FROM THE COMFORT OF YOUR HOME

There's nothing quite like it anywhere else in the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) complex. Now, if a person wants to take a tour of the Hanford Site in southeastern Washington, all the individual needs is access to the Internet. The "tour bus" leaves on demand.

DOE and its Hanford Site contractors offer several tours of the site, the most popular of which is the Saturday Road Tour conducted by Fluor Hanford, Inc. Now, however, people can enjoy a virtual tour any day of the week and they can take the tour from wherever in the world they might be.

"The Hanford Tours Web Page is on-line at www.hanford.gov" said Guy Schein of the DOE-Richland Operations Office of Intergovernmental, Public and Institutional Affairs. "Just select the 'bus' icon and you're on your way."

The virtual tour is designed for individuals who don't have time to personally explore the vast expanses of the 1518-square kilometer (586 square mile) site. The tour has more than an hour of material including 23 different "stops" with 19 of the stops having at least one video. The stops are in the same sequence that they would be seen on a Hanford Site road tour.

Each stop along the virtual tour offers current information on Hanford cleanup progress, Hanford history, and short video clips of significant locations. The tour includes areas of interest such as the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, the old Hanford and White Bluffs townsites, 100 Area reactor sites, the 200 East and West Areas, and the Volpentest HAMMER Training and Education Center.

RL 01-070

Historical Note: The U.S. Department of Energy's Richland Operations Office manages the Hanford Site in southeastern Washington State. Hanford was established during World War II as part of the top secret Manhattan Project to produce plutonium for nuclear weapons. Weapons material production was halted in the late 1980s. The Hanford Site is now engaged in the world's largest cleanup effort to deal with the legacy of radioactive and hazardous wastes that resulted from the plutonium production era. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Washington State Department of Ecology regulate Hanford's cleanup program under a long-term compliance contract called the Tri-Party Agreement. This agreement sets the framework and timelines on the cleanup work so that Hanford meets environmental standards. Hanford cleanup is focused on three outcomes: restoring the Columbia River Corridor for other uses, transitioning the Central Plateau to long term waste treatment and storage, and preparing for the future.

[\[Hanford Home Page\]](#) [\[Press Index\]](#)

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