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DOE

EXPLOSIVES BRING DOWN AGING HANFORD STRUCTURES

Hanford's skyline will change dramatically on Sunday, July 21 when two 175-foot-tall water towers are felled by explosives as part of the U.S. Department of Energy's continuing cleanup of this former defense production facility.

The water towers stored emergency cooling water for Hanford's C-Reactor from 1952 until it ceased operation in 1969. C-Reactor was one of nine nuclear reactors at Hanford that produced plutonium for the nation's defense program from World War II through the end of the Cold War.

The towers are a prominent feature of the Hanford skyline and are visible from Highway 24 near Vernita Bridge.

"Bringing down these aging structures makes the site safe while also reducing our surveillance and maintenance cost," said John D. Wagoner, Manager of DOE's Richland Operations Office. "It represents real cleanup progress as we follow the public's mandate to clean up sites along the Columbia River as quickly as possible."

"The clean-up of the `C' Reactor Site is a key Hanford demonstration project which will demostrate our ability to place the site in a safe interim storage status by the end of fiscal year 1997," Wagoner added. Hanford's 10-year Clean-up Plan calls for placing all of Hanford's reactor sites except `B' Reactor and `N' Reactor into a safe interin storage status by 2006.

Demolition of the towers is part of Hanford's Environmental Restoration project, which is managed for DOE by Bechtel Hanford, Inc. Bechtel's subcontractor for demolishing the towers and removing the debris is Phillip Environmental Services, and the explosives subcontractor is Engineered Demolition.

The demolition also illustrates how the Hanford cleanup is reducing costs and accelerating progress, according to Joe Nemec, President of Bechtel Hanford. "These towers weren't scheduled for demolition until next fiscal year. By reducing costs on other projects, we made funds available to do more work this year, including removal of these tanks," Nemec said.

Standing 175 feet tall, each tower contains more than 360 tons of steel and held 300,000 gallons of water. The tank atop each tower is 44-feet in diameter and 36-feet high, and is made of carbon steel plates about one-third of an inch thick. Each tank has six legs that are 40-inches in diameter, and the riser pipe that supplied water to the tank is 60-inches in diameter. The tanks will not contain water at the time of the blast.

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