

Construction Test Damages Tank at Hanford Effluent Treatment Plant

Richland, Wash., March 31, 1995 -- A 100,000-gallon tank at an effluent treatment plant under construction at the Hanford Site was damaged during a test performed by the project contractor last week.

The tank was full of a non-hazardous test solution and there was no injury to workers, release of material to the environment, or leakage from the tank or chemical feed piping systems. However, the tank sustained significant damage.

The damage occurred when the construction contractor, ADTECHS, was performing acceptance testing on the surge tank. The surge tank will hold the feedstock for the facility. A vent valve was not open while the solution was being removed from the tank and the internal vacuum caused the top one-third of the tank to buckle inward about three feet.

The director of the Effluent Treatment Facility project for Westinghouse Hanford Company, George W. Jackson, says the estimate of damage and impact to the construction schedule are currently being assessed.

ADTECHS had been performing the final phases of testing before turning the facility over to Westinghouse Hanford Company, said Westinghouse construction project manager Jim Kelly. When the large stainless steel tank buckled, all testing stopped, and the contractor called in tanker trucks to pump solution out of the tank below the damaged area.

Acceptance testing in other areas of the Effluent Treatment Facility are continuing while ADTECHS assesses damage and prepares a repair plan for the tank, Kelly said.

The 200 Area Effluent Treatment Facility is being constructed to treat the condensate from Hanford's 242-A Evaporator. The evaporator is used to reduce the volume of liquid in the double-shell underground storage tanks in order to make room for waste transferred to them from the aging single-shell tanks and other wastes generated by environmental cleanup. Evaporator condensate is presently being held in basins near the treatment facility until it goes on line later this year. It is not known whether the damage to the surge tank will affect the current startup timetable for the facility, which is a Tri-Party Agreement milestone.

Westinghouse Hanford Company is the management and operations contractor for the U.S. Department of Energy at the Hanford Site in southeastern Washington.

###

For more information contact:

Craig Kuhlman (509) 376-6826 or Judy Graybeal (509) 376-2472

Westinghouse Hanford Company Communications Department

WHC-9503-030.ETF