



National Nuclear Security Administration

NEWS

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Pantex Plant Achieves Key Safety Milestone Ahead of Schedule

Washington, D.C. – The nuclear weapons dismantlement process at the Pantex Plant in Amarillo, Texas, has achieved a major safety accomplishment, the U.S. Department of Energy’s National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) announced today.

NNSA administrator John Gordon said the Pantex Plant has achieved and sustained a plutonium pit-repackaging rate of 200 pits per month since April, four months ahead of the schedule established by NNSA. Based on the plant’s performance to date, NNSA expects Pantex to repackage over 1750 pits this year, nearly twice as many as last year.

Plutonium pits are nuclear components that are removed from weapons and stored at the plant. The repackaging operation inserts plutonium pits into sealed containers more suitable for safe, long-term storage.

“Safely increasing the repackaging rate was a critical issue facing us. The BWXT Pantex team tackled it quickly and effectively,” Gordon continued. “I am also encouraged by operational improvements in the plant’s pit repackaging program to further reduce personnel radiation exposure levels.” BWXT manages and operates the Pantex Plant for NNSA.

Last year, the plant repackaged 917 pits. The NNSA, under General Gordon’s leadership, changed contractors at the end of last year and chose BWXT to assume management of the Pantex Plant.

-NNSA-

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