



Recovery Act funding accelerates cleanup of Idaho Site, Creates jobs in community

IDAHO FALLS – American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding has accelerated a project to ship decades-old remote-handled transuranic waste out of Idaho. The project is one of several ARRA-funded projects at the U.S. Department of Energy’s Idaho Site that has contributed to the creation of 652 additional jobs.

“Recovery Act funding allowed us to accelerate the disposal of this waste by more than three years,” said Julie Conner, federal project director for the Materials and Fuels Complex Remote-Handled Waste Retrieval Project with DOE’s Idaho Operations Office.

The Idaho Settlement Agreement, signed in 1995 between Idaho and DOE, requires that the waste be removed from the state by the end of 2018. Recovery Act funding will allow earlier removal, with shipments starting this year instead of 2013 as previously planned.

The project involves retrieving waste from storage at the Materials and Fuels Complex, repackaging it at the Idaho Nuclear Technology and Engineering Center, and shipping it for safe and final disposal at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) in New Mexico. Already, 104 canisters containing remote-handled transuranic waste have been retrieved.

In addition to creating jobs and increasing the pace at which DOE moves waste out of Idaho, the accelerated pace of the project helps maximize use of waste disposal space available in WIPP by enabling steady deliveries of remote-handled transuranic waste to the repository.

The waste originated primarily from work performed at the Idaho National Laboratory-operated Materials and Fuels Complex (formerly Argonne National Laboratory-West). It was generated as early as 1975.

Editorial Date March 25, 2010
By Tim Jackson