



# EM UPDATE

Office of Environmental Management



safety ❖ performance ❖ cleanup ❖ closure

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## EM Scorecard

### A Milestone for WIPP\*



TRU Shipments  
Received  
**8,000**  
(as of November 4, 2009)

Completed  
Emplacements  
of TRU Waste  
(in cubic meters)  
**63,928**

... since opening in March 1999

\* Waste Isolation Pilot Plant, Carlsbad, N.M.

## Catching Up on Portsmouth's Accelerated Cleanup Effort

EM Assistant Secretary Inés Triay joined Senator Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio) last week at the Department of Energy's Portsmouth Site in Piketon, Ohio to see the impact federal stimulus funds are having on cleanup projects there.

During the visit, Triay and Brown met with workers and were briefed on how funds provided by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) are being used to speed the cleanup of portions of Portsmouth's gaseous diffusion plant where production of enriched uranium ended in 2001.



Senator Brown, left, tries on the autographed hard hat he received from EM Assistant Secretary Inés Triay, right, during their tour of DOE's Portsmouth Site last week. It was signed by many of the 180 workers hired this year to work on cleanup projects funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

Brown led a bipartisan group of eight senators who pushed to include \$6 billion in funding for the accelerated cleanup of former nuclear weapons complex sites as part of the \$787 billion stimulus bill that Congress passed and President Obama signed into law earlier this year.

Brown had high praise for the cleanup program that is bringing more than \$118 million in additional funding to a region currently experiencing an unemployment rate

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## — IN BRIEF —

### ■ Marking a Milestone at Hanford

More than 1,500 workers at the Hanford Site's Waste Treatment Immobilization Plant (WTP) construction site took time out on November 10 to celebrate reaching the 50 percent complete mark last month in building the \$12.2 billion complex.

When operational in 2019, the complex will vitrify a large portion of Hanford's liquid radioactive waste that is currently stored in aging underground tanks. The waste was generated by years of producing plutonium for use in the nation's nuclear weapons.

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## All-Hands Meeting Set on EM Reorganization

Assistant Secretary Triay will conduct an "all hands" meeting for all EM employees on Tuesday, December 1, to introduce the members of her new leadership team, share her vision of EM's "Journey to Excellence" and outline the next steps for implementing EM's reorganization and its new business model.

The two-hour session will also include remarks from Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Dae Chung and Merle Sykes and Frank Marcinowski, the acting Chief Business and Technical Officers for EM. Barry Clark and Carolyn Haylock, the presidents of National Treasury Employees Union Chapters 213 and 228, respectively, will also speak.

The meeting will take place via a video conference linking headquarters to 21 EM field offices. An audio hookup will also be available for those offices without video capability.

The first hour of the session will consist of remarks from Triay and other speakers. The second hour will be devoted to answering questions from EM employees.

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## Portsmouth's Cleanup

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of more than 15 percent. And he said he looked forward to seeing more funds flow to the area over the next few years for the planned decontamination and decommissioning (D&D) of the gaseous diffusion plant. That project, he said, will create 1,000 additional jobs and accelerate the cleanup of the plant by more than 20 years

“These funds represent a new federal commitment to partnering with southern Ohio to promote long-term economic growth,” Brown told community officials, union leaders, workers, and members of the media during a briefing that followed the November 9 site tour. “The Piketon community was overlooked by previous administrations in Washington,” Brown said, adding that accelerated cleanup will ensure it “has the right infrastructure to promote long-term economic development.”

Triay said she “was very impressed with the ongoing work activities and the ‘can do’ attitude by everyone to work safely.”

ARRA funds have made it possible for LATA/Parallax, DOE’s environmental cleanup contractor at the site, to hire more than 180 workers this year for five different cleanup projects at the southern Ohio plant.

During the visit, Secretary Triay, Portsmouth/Paducah Project Office Manager Bill Murphie, and Portsmouth Site Lead Joel Bradburne showed Brown those projects. They visited the X-760 Chemical Engineering Building, the X-533 Electrical Switchyard and the X-633 Cooling Tower.

The group stopped and talked with workers at the X-701B groundwater plume area project where excavation is being done to prepare for using a chemical oxidant to treat trichloroethylene (TCE) that has contaminated the groundwater at a depth of 30 feet.

While there, they were briefed on a project to repackage approximately 1,200 metric tons of surplus uranium materials stored at the Uranium Management Center and ship them to the Nevada Test Site for disposition. And they saw the X-746 Shipping & Receiving Building site where the building structure was taken down in late September and final debris removal operations were underway.

In her remarks at the briefing, Triay pointed to the \$303 million in EM base program funds dedicated to cleanup work at Portsmouth in Fiscal Year 2010 as evidence of DOE’s strong commitment to the site. She also noted DOE’s

plan to raise \$150–\$200 million over each of the next four years through planned sales of surplus uranium to help fund the D&D work on the gaseous diffusion plant. That project, which is slated to be awarded to a contractor next year, is projected to cost between \$250 million and \$325 million a year.

During the visit, Triay presented Brown with a hard hat inscribed with the signatures of newly-hired workers at the Site and Brown presented union leaders with the Senate resolution designating October 30 as a National Day of Remembrance for the nation’s nuclear weapons program workers. ■



DOE and contractor workers pose with Senator Brown and EM Assistant Secretary Triay at the X-701B groundwater remediation project site at the Portsmouth Gaseous Diffusion Plant. Portsmouth/Paducah Project Office Manager William Murphie is at left in dark jacket and Portsmouth Site Lead Joel Bradburne is at right in gray jacket.



Secretary Triay (center) speaks to workers at the X-701B groundwater plume remediation project site, one of five accelerated cleanup projects at the Portsmouth Site being funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.





## EM Reorganization

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EM's reorganization and new business model have been in development since last summer. The headquarters portion of the reorganization took effect last month after it had obtained all needed reviews and approvals. Its key features include a major shift in relationships between the field and headquarters provides more operating authority to managers in the field, revamped roles and responsibilities for EM's Deputy Assistant Secretaries and the creation of the Chief Business and Technical Officer positions.

Full implementation of the reorganization and the new business model will require setting the criteria EM must meet to become a high-performing organization, completing site and headquarters self-assessments and, ultimately, establishing a new organization-wide baseline for measuring EM's future performance in areas such as project, contract and financial management, health and safety and quality assurance. ■



**A Closer Look:** Deputy Secretary Daniel Poneman, left, visited the Savannah River National Laboratory's shield cell area during his November 4 tour of the Savannah River Site (SRS) and was briefed on highly radioactive research done there to support the radioactive liquid waste disposition missions at both SRS and the Hanford Site by Jeff Griffin of SRNL, right. NNSA (National Nuclear Security Administration) Administrator Tom D'Agostino and Assistant Secretary Triay accompanied Poneman on the tour.

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1000 Independence Avenue, SW  
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**Contributors:** Angeline French, Jim Giusti, Carrie Meyer, Danielle Miller, Letitia O'Connor, and Doug Tonkay

**Web site:** [www.em.doe.gov](http://www.em.doe.gov)

**Email:** [EMUpdateNewsletter@hq.doe.gov](mailto:EMUpdateNewsletter@hq.doe.gov)



### – PEOPLE –

**John Howard** has been named Executive Assistant for the Office of the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary (EM-2).

John comes to EM from the Committee on Appropriations, U.S. House of Representatives, where he was the Administrative Aide to Chairman David Obey (D-Wis.).

He previously served nine years in the U.S. Navy where his duties included assignments to senior support positions at the Department of Defense.

He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Industrial Technology (Industrial Design) from Humboldt State University in California.



## – IN BRIEF: NEWS FROM AROUND THE COMPLEX –



Workers gathered in front of the Pretreatment Facility that is part of the Waste Treatment and Immobilization Plant at the Hanford Site to celebrate reaching the 50 percent complete mark on the overall project.

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During the celebration, Shirley Olinger, manager of DOE's Office of River Protection, commended the workers on their accomplishment and noted the complexity of the job and the dedication of the staff. "You are here every day, giving your best on one of the largest and most complex construction projects in the country—and the most complex job in EM," she said. "The WTP is the cornerstone of the tank waste mission—it is the critical component to completing [the] Hanford cleanup—[by] treating and disposing of the 53 million gallons of radioactive waste stored in the 177 underground tanks across Hanford. That waste contains some of the most hazardous materials known."

The complex includes a pretreatment facility, two vitrification facilities, an analytical laboratory and over 20 support facilities.

### ■ The IWTU Is Buttoned Up for Winter

The team building the \$570 million Integrated Waste Treatment Unit (IWTU) at DOE's Idaho Site successfully sealed, or "dried-in," the building against the elements on November 10, clearing the way for construction to continue as planned through the winter months when temperatures can plunge as low as minus 40 degrees Fahrenheit.

For the past two winters, work on the facility was carried out under a large, heated tent that covered the site. The tent was removed in April and work to complete the building's structure and install key pieces of processing equipment moved

quickly. The team building the facility is aiming to have it ready to begin operations in August 2011 so it can begin treating tank waste at the site and meet DOE's commitment to the state of Idaho to have the treatment work finished by the end of 2012.

"Bill Lloyd [project director] and his team have reached an amazing milestone," said Tom Dieter, senior vice president for CH2M-WG Idaho (CWI), the contractor managing the Idaho Cleanup Project for DOE. "This was an outstanding example of teamwork between DOE, CWI, URS, Premier Technology, and our union workforce. They deserve our congratulations."

"This was a battle well fought, and won," said Rick Provencher, DOE-Idaho's deputy manager for Environmental Management. "Reaching this important milestone will help us

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With the walls and roof now in place, construction on the Integrated Waste Treatment Unit at the Idaho Site can continue through the winter months.



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protect the Snake River Plain Aquifer and keep our commitments to the state of Idaho for closing the Tank Farm.”

■ **Disposal of Fernald Silo Waste is Complete**

Disposal of all 3,776 canisters of waste generated at DOE’s former nuclear weapons materials plant in Fernald, Ohio, was completed by Waste Control Specialists (WCS) on November 10.

Burial of the canisters at the WCS facility in western Texas began on October 7 and was originally expected to take two to three months to complete but the actual work moved faster than anticipated.

The disposal of the canisters is the final step in EM’s management of the Fernald Project. Major cleanup of the 1,050-acre site was completed in 2006 and EM then transferred it to DOE’s Office of Legacy Management.

The material in the canisters had previously been stored in Silos 1 and 2 at Fernald.

■ **Mercury Guidance Issued**

DOE’s guidance for the handling of mercury under the Mercury Export Ban Act of 2008 was published in the Federal Register on November 16.

The guidance was developed by EM’s Office of Environmental Compliance in consultation with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and state agencies. It is intended to be used as a reference by individuals, industries and regulatory organizations that are involved in the packaging, transportation, receipt, management and long-term storage of elemental mercury.



*The last of the Fernald waste canisters being placed at the Waste Control Specialists facility in western Texas.*

The Act also requires DOE to develop a capability for the safe and secure long-term management of elemental mercury. EM is currently preparing an Environmental Impact Statement that will evaluate alternatives for having that capability available by January 1, 2013, the deadline set by the Act.

■ **Cold War Patriots Honored at Hanford**

Shirley Olinger, manager of DOE’s Office of River Protection at the Hanford Site, presented commemorative Cold War Patriot pins last week to 30 workers whose service at Hanford dates back to its defense mission days [see photo below]. The

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*Olinger (middle) with employees Washington River Protection Solutions Wayne Brule, Miki Mensinger, Tom Miller and Ernie Hamm, who were honored with commemorative pins for being Cold War Veterans and Cold War Patriots.*

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honorees currently work for either Washington River Protection Solutions supporting tank farm work or Bechtel National, supporting efforts on the Waste Treatment Plant.

### ■ National Academies Committee Visits Savannah River Site

A committee of experts assembled by the National Academies visited the Savannah River Site (SRS) and Savannah River National Laboratory (SRNL) this week as part of a study that EM has requested of methods of processing and disposing of radioactive waste.

The twelve member committee includes experts in chemical and process engineering, materials sciences, waste form performance and radiochemistry. It is chaired by Milton Levenson, a chemical engineer with broad experience in nuclear energy and related fields.

As part of its visit to SRS, the committee toured the Saltstone Facility, Defense Waste Processing Facility, and SRNL's waste treatment research and development labs at the Aiken County Technology Laboratory. The session at SRS was the committee's second site visit. It has already had an information gathering visit to the Idaho National Laboratory.

The committee is studying waste form technology and performance. DOE is facing important policy decisions over the next few years on how to process and dispose of high-level radioactive waste. It hopes the committee's findings and recommendations will give it information and insight that it can use in evaluating those decisions, including cost and schedule implications.

### ■ Savannah River Remediation Awards \$15,000 to Area Schools

Savannah River Remediation (SRR), the liquid waste contractor at the Savannah River Site, has awarded \$15,000 in Student, Teachers Achieving Results (STAR) grants to 15 area elementary schools in South Carolina and Georgia.

The grants go directly to schools to recognize and support excellence in teaching and provide funding for innovative approaches to teaching science and mathematics.

"We have schools doing outstanding and exciting things in their classrooms, but many times they are limited in their ability to reach students by a lack of materials and supplies. These grants help teachers provide creative and innovative experiences for their students," said Jim French, SRR President and Project Manager.

"As a technology-based company, SRR has a history of supporting education. For the past couple of decades,

fewer students have been pursuing math- and science-related careers. If we are to remain competitive, both as a company and a country, we must reverse that trend. Helping teachers excite students about math and science is one way of doing that."

One of the winning proposals was a project to combine classroom work with experiential exercises in using simple robot programming software. Another would teach first grade students the use of mathematical concepts such as money, time, and measurement, and their use in everyday life. A third would enhance the learning of gifted third, fourth and fifth graders by using geometric and algebraic equations in real-life situations.

The winning teachers and schools were honored at an October 29 reception in Aiken, S.C.

SRR is a team of companies led by URS Corp. that includes partners Bechtel National, CH2M Hill and Babcock & Wilcox.



The teachers who submitted the winning proposals for Savannah River Remediations Students, Teachers Achieving Results grants were honored at an October 29 reception in Aiken, South Carolina.

