



The U.S. Department of Energy and contractor Central Plateau Cleanup Company are preparing the last of Hanford's nine former reactors to be "cocooned" or placed in interim safe storage.

Background

Hanford's "sister reactors," K East and K West, were built side-by-side in the early 1950s. The two reactors went operational within four months of each other as K West went into service in January of 1955 and K East started operations in April of that same year. K West was the seventh reactor built at Hanford; K East was the eighth. The two reactors ran for more than 15 years before being shut down in 1970 and 1971.

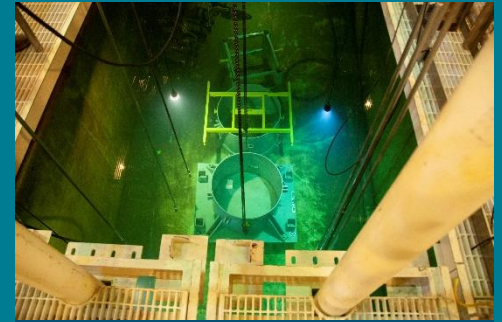
Mission

Today at K East, work is well underway to construct a "cocoon" or enclosure around the former reactor building. Workers also continue to make progress on demolition of support buildings and remediation of dozens of nearby waste sites, including size-reducing and removing old pipelines that supported the reactor during operations.

At K West, workers are isolating and removing the remaining debris from the basin. Following debris removal, the basin will be drained and grouted to allow for safe demolition. Demolition of support buildings and remediation of waste sites, similar to those at K East, will also be removed.

Future

K East and K West will be the last of Hanford's nine former reactors to be "cocooned" or placed in interim safe storage to allow the radioactivity in the reactor cores to decay over the next several decades, making it easier and safer to dismantle the reactors in the future. The support facilities and waste sites will be removed or remediated and the areas contoured to match the natural environment, including planting of native vegetation.



A mockup of the K West Basin prepares workers to safely isolate and remove radioactive debris.



Demolition activities near the K East Reactor continue to change the Hanford skyline.



Work is nearly complete on a 123-foot-tall steel structure at the K East Reactor building. The structure, or cocoon, is designed to protect the building while radioactivity in the deactivated reactor core decays over the next several decades.

