

THE HANFORD SITE

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Hanford Looks Back on Year of Historic Achievements

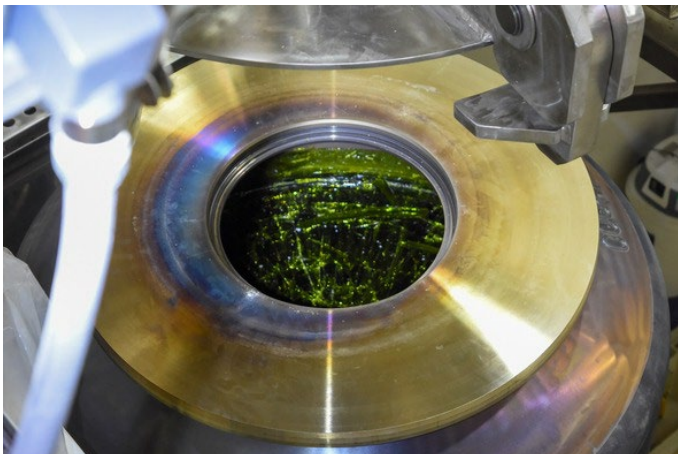
RICHLAND, Wash. – The Department of Energy (DOE) and its contractor partners made history and achieved several “firsts” while progressing the cleanup the Hanford Site in 2023, as reported in the DOE Office of Environmental Management’s [Year in Review](#) released today. See the Hanford Site section for local highlights.

Preparing for Next Phase in Tank Waste Treatment Era

The Hanford Site made history by pouring the first test glass from the first of two 300-ton melters at the Waste Treatment and Immobilization Plant (WTP), marking another important step in commissioning the plant as Hanford prepares to immobilize in glass millions of gallons of radioactive and chemical waste from large underground tanks for safe disposal.

“Our team delivered a tremendous year of historic achievements in 2023,” said Brian Vance, DOE manager of Hanford Site cleanup and operations. “Each of our contractor partners accomplished important cleanup objectives, many requiring years of dedicated effort. This was another year of ‘firsts’ in our mission to immobilize and dispose of waste from our large underground tanks.”

Those firsts include heating up the first large 300-ton melter in the plant that will immobilize millions of gallons of tank waste in glass. Another was filling the first stainless steel container with clean molten glass while commissioning the Waste Treatment and Immobilization Plant.



In a historic moment in the Hanford Site cleanup mission, workers filled the first stainless steel container with clean glass while commissioning a large 300-ton melter that will vitrify, or immobilize in glass, millions of gallons of radioactive and chemical waste from Hanford’s large underground tanks beginning in 2025.

Hanford also reached 800,000 gallons of tank waste treated to remove radioactive cesium and solids so it can be fed to the plant when immobilization in glass begins.

The site continued important progress by readying multiple facilities to work as one system under the Direct-Feed Low-Activity Waste Program to support 24/7 operations to treat tank waste beginning in 2025.

Another highlight was reaching a conceptual agreement with the state of Washington and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in Holistic Negotiations on revising plans for managing the tank waste that upholds the agencies' shared commitment to a safe, effective and achievable path forward.

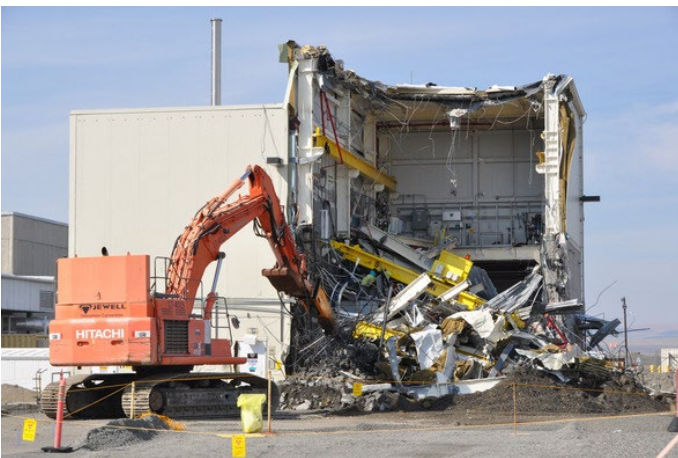


Workers move ion exchange columns filled with radioactive cesium and solids to a storage pad near a system that treats tank waste to prepare it to be fed to the nearby Waste Treatment and Immobilization Plant.

Protecting the Environment, Prioritizing Risk Reduction, Safety and Security

“Our team also continued to deliver taxpayer value by progressing projects that reduce risks to our workforce, our community, and the environment of the Pacific Northwest,” said Vance.

Hanford demolished a nuclear facility used to transfer radioactive sludge out of a basin in the K West Reactor and into safer storage away from the nearby Columbia River. The site also sorted and moved radioactive debris in the 1.2-million-gallon basin into underwater bins to prepare to drain the basin and fill it with grout so it can be removed.



Hanford demolished the facility used to transfer radioactive sludge out of a nuclear fuel basin in the K West Reactor and is preparing to drain and remove the basin itself.

More than two billion gallons of groundwater was treated at Hanford in 2023, bringing the total to more than 32 billion gallons treated since DOE began removing contamination from groundwater in the mid-1990s, and significantly shrinking areas of groundwater contamination to enhance protection of the Columbia River.

Ensuring Future Success

The One Hanford team of DOE and its contractors also remains focused on rightsizing and modernizing the site's infrastructure to ensure Hanford's electrical distribution system, information technology systems, water and sewer systems, and roads continue to support safe and cost-efficient cleanup progress.

Outlook on the Future of Cleanup

"We are poised for another exciting year of 'firsts' in 2024, and I'm grateful for the opportunity to work with such a talented team of professionals and for the broad support we receive from beyond the borders of our immense site on a mission of national prominence," said Vance.

Click [here](#) to watch a video on the EM Year in Review or read the full review.

For more information on the Hanford Site, go to www.hanford.gov.

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The Department of Energy (DOE) is engaged in one of the great public works of this century at the Hanford Site near Richland, Washington. Responsible for the federal government's cleanup of the legacy of more than 40 years of producing plutonium through the 1980s, DOE is transforming the site back into a 24/7 operations mode to treat tank waste from the production era. The DOE Office of River Protection (ORP) is responsible for the safe and efficient retrieval, treatment and disposal of the 56 million gallons of chemical and radioactive waste stored in Hanford's 177 underground tanks. The mission includes building and commissioning the world's largest radioactive waste treatment plant, which will immobilize the legacy tank waste through vitrification. The DOE Richland Operations Office is responsible for all remaining Hanford cleanup and is currently focused on stabilizing and demolishing former plutonium production structures, excavating and disposing of contaminated soil and waste, treating contaminated groundwater, and configuring Hanford Site infrastructure for the future, with an emphasis on supporting the tank waste mission. Hanford Site work is conducted by a federal and contractor workforce of approximately 10,000 personnel. Visit www.hanford.gov for more information about the Hanford Site.



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