U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY | Richland Operations Office

DOE News Release
Media Contacts:
Cameron Hardy, DOE
509-376-5365, Cameron.Hardy@rl.doe.gov
Mark McKenna, Washington Closure
(509) 372-9032, media@wch-rcc.com

For Immediate Release:
February 14, 2014

1,153-ton Waste Vault Removed from 300 Area

Vault held waste tanks with contamination from Hanford's former laboratory facilities

RICHLAND, WA – Today, the Department of Energy's (DOE's) Richland Operations Office announced the removal of a massive concrete vault that once held two 15,000-gallon stainless steel tanks used to collect highly contaminated waste from Hanford's 300 Area laboratories as part of the River Corridor Closure project.

"The removal of the vault is another big step in cleaning up Hanford's fuel fabrication and research and development facilities that supported the Cold War effort," said Mark French, DOE Federal Project Director for the River Corridor Closure Project.

The vault weighed 1,153 tons, or 2.3 million pounds, and is the second large lift completed in the 300 Area. The first lift was completed last month, when a 1,082-ton Plutonium Recycle Test Reactor was removed. The vault removal was completed by Washington Closure Hanford, the contractor for the River Corridor Closure project.

Used during the site's plutonium production days to retain highly contaminated liquid from various facilities within the 300 Area, the vault measured 40 feet long, 29 feet wide and 25 feet high. The 340 vault was secured and packaged on a high-payload-capable Goldhofer trailer for transport to the Environmental Restoration Disposal Facility, Hanford's onsite landfill for low-level mixed waste.

The River Corridor is a 220-square-mile section of land bordering the Columbia River and is DOE's largest environmental cleanup closure project. The 300 Area is located about a mile north of Richland and a quarter-mile from the Columbia River. It was home to Hanford's research, development and fuel fabrication activities for nearly 60 years.

For additional information on the Department of Energy's Office of Environmental Management and on the Hanford Site, visit www.em.doe.gov or www.hanford.gov.

**Photos of the 340 Vault can be viewed and downloaded at:
http://www.hanford.gov/c.cfm/photogallery/gal.cfm/A808774D-C4BB-4633-A462-6F5EB5899780/3#

B-roll video of the 340 vault being prepared for removal can be seen here:
http://youtu.be/UAlyExoxz8o

###