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## Hanford Waste Treatment Plant piping protection system put into service

**Contact: Suzanne Heaston, Bechtel National, Inc., Waste Treatment Plant Communications  
(509) 371-2329, [smheasto@bechtel.com](mailto:smheasto@bechtel.com)  
(509) 539-7765 cell**

**Richland, Wash.** -- The Hanford Waste Treatment Plant (WTP), also known as the vit plant, reached a major milestone when most of its cathodic protection system was placed into service last month. The cathodic protection system, which protects miles of underground piping from corrosion, is the last of three such WTP systems selected for early turnover from construction to operations.

A variety of methods are used to prevent corrosion, depending on the composition of the piping, the soil surrounding it and the material that will flow through it. Cathodic protection uses a small electric current to neutralize corrosion properties of the soil.

The fire service water supply system and a permanent crane in the Low-Activity Waste (LAW) Vitrification Facility were placed into service in 2008. The cathodic protection and fire service water systems were selected for early turnover because they protect WTP facilities and commodities, and the crane is used regularly for construction installation activities in the LAW Facility.

“Early turnovers allow us to refine our processes and implement lessons learned now, which will optimize the larger vit plant turnovers in the future,” Ken Wells, WTP Commissioning & Training manager, said. WTP will be fully operational in 2019. The Department of Energy (DOE), together with primary contractor Bechtel National, Inc., is continuing to consider additional systems for early turnovers in 2009 and 2010.

“Placing support systems into operations as they are completed help demonstrate that the plant will work as designed, procured and constructed,” Wells said.

*Bechtel National, Inc. is designing and building the world’s largest radioactive waste treatment plant for the U.S. Department of Energy at the Hanford Site in southeastern Washington state. The \$12.2 billion Waste Treatment and Immobilization Plant (WTP), also known as the vit plant, will immobilize the radioactive liquid waste currently stored in 177 underground tanks.*

*The WTP will cover 65 acres with four nuclear facilities -- Pretreatment, Low-Activity Waste Vitrification, High-Level Waste Vitrification and Analytical Laboratory-- as well as operations and maintenance buildings, utilities and office space.*

*Construction of the WTP began in 2002. The plant will be operational in 2019.*



Photo caption: A view of the cathodic protection system, last April, before it was backfilled.