NEWS
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Construction progresses on Hanford Waste Treatment Plant Pretreatment Facility

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Richland, Wash. -- The third elevation of concrete walls was recently completed on the Pretreatment (PT) Facility at the Hanford Waste Treatment and Immobilization Plant (WTP), demonstrating the continued progress on the WTP since full construction resumed in 2007. Construction was curtailed on the PT Facility and the High-Level Waste Facility in 2005 to address and finalize seismic design criteria.

Reaching 56 feet at the top, the third elevation is one of six elevated sections of concrete that will eventually compose the PT Facility. Each elevated section, often referred to as a "lift," is approximately 20 feet high. When complete, the PT Facility's concrete walls will reach a total 109 feet; steel columns and roof trusses will extend beyond the walls to an overall height of 120 feet.

The last wall section that was completed at the third elevation is located on the east side of the PT Facility and provides a gateway to a crane maintenance area. To move the crane in and out of the maintenance area, a 51-foot wide opening had to be included in the wall. Leaving an opening in an elevated concrete wall is no easy task.

To construct the wall, construction crews used shoring, that is, temporary supports that allow wall construction to continue above and around the opening. The supports will remain in place until the concrete achieves 80 percent of design strength.

"Completing the third elevation of concrete, and moving onto the fourth elevation, really shows the progress we are making on this complex facility," Leon Lamm, area project manager for the PT Facility, said.

Currently, construction on the PT Facility is more than 25 percent complete. The PT Facility spans approximately one and one-half football fields in length and more than one field in width. When complete, it will contain more than 113,000 cubic yards of concrete, nearly 17,000 tons of structural steel and 102 miles of piping.

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.

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