Program Executive Office
Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives

PEO ACWA QUARTERLY BRIEF

March 2014

National Research Council to Help Define "Plan B" Contingency Criteria

The National Research Council, or NRC, has been asked to develop a set of criteria for the ACWA program to aid in the "Plan B" decision-making, should hydrolysate treatment facilities at either site encounter technical difficulties. While the ACWA program remains fully committed to current on-site treatment plans – biotreatment at Pueblo and supercritical water oxidation at Blue Grass – operational effectiveness requires a wide array of "what if" contingency planning to address situations that could impede the program's ability to destroy the stockpiles, even if those situations are thought to be unlikely. The intent and purpose of these upcoming NRC studies were discussed in advance with the chairs of the Kentucky and Colorado Citizens' Advisory Commissions and the Kentucky Chemical Destruction Community Advisory Board. They and other key community stakeholders will continue to be involved throughout the progress of the studies.

PEO ACWA Message

Workers Dress to Star on Safety's Red Carpet

What would you do if you had to don 67 pounds of gear in order to go to work? That's the weight of the protective equipment some workers at the Pueblo and Blue Grass plants will have to put on every day. The Demilitarization Protective Ensemble will keep workers safe during entries into toxic areas once agent destruction operations begin. During construction, a different type of protective apparel is worn. In addition to hard hats, safety glasses and steel-toed boots, workers may be seen wearing items such as personal fall-protection harnesses and high-elevation retractable safety reels. Whatever the project stage, worker safety comes first, and this focus prompted the Occupational Safety and Health Administration to award both sites Star Status for their participation in the Voluntary Protection Program, resulting in lost-time and recordable injury rates dramatically lower than the industry average.

"Entry Support Area Tenders Keep Workers Safe"

Watch: "Safety at Blue Grass"

Watching Every Breath You Take

Few elements are more essential to human health and the environment than the air we breathe. That simple premise is the basis of the federal Clean Air Act, which governs the Pueblo and Blue Grass plants, including the cascading ventilation systems installed in those facilities. The processing buildings at each plant are maintained under negative pressure which draws clean air through the plant, "cascading" the flow from areas of least potential contamination to areas of potentially greater contamination. The flow of air is drawn through banks of carbon filters, where it is cleaned, monitored and released back into the atmosphere. The cascading vacuum prevents any potentially toxic vapors from escaping into the environment, while air from inside the plants can only return to the outside after the filtering and monitoring process.

"PCAPP Uses Coconut Shells to Filter Air"

Watch: "Clean-Air Exhaust Stack Installation at Blue Grass"

Operational Readiness: The Must-Pass Final Exam for Chem Demil

Before the Pueblo plant can begin destroying chemical agent, the facility and its workforce will undergo a rigorous and lengthy testing regimen to assess safety, regulatory compliance and efficiency. The Operational Readiness Review is a formal process that will be used to verify the accuracy of more than 60 separate standard operating procedures, the proficiency of 1,200 workers, and the operability of 30,000 equipment items, all before the first chemical munition is allowed to make its way into the plant to start the destruction process.

Watch: "Pueblo Plant Operational Readiness Review"

Discover the Dynamics of ACWA's "Partnership in Motion"

Now there is a single place to gain an overall understanding of the history of chemical demilitarization, and the PEO ACWA mission. A new video presents an overview of the technologies, project phases and partnerships at the Pueblo plant in Colorado and the Blue Grass plant in Kentucky. The program's fundamental commitment to safely eliminate the nation's remaining chemical weapons stockpile for the good of our citizens, the environment and the global community continues through the ongoing development of information designed to increase the knowledge of our stakeholders.

Watch: "U.S. Chemical Weapons Destruction: Partnership in Motion"

PLANTS AT-A-GLANCE

Blue Grass Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant

- Destruction technology: **Neutralization/ Supercritical Water Oxidation**
- Construction complete: **81%**
- Systemization complete: **16%**
- Operations begin: **2020**
- Explosive Destruction Technology operations anticipated: **2016**
- Local project employment: **1,357**
- Local payroll paid to date: **$545 million**
- Anticipated end of destruction operations: **2023**

Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant

- Destruction technology: **Neutralization/ Biotreatment**
- Construction complete: **100%**
- Systemization complete: **49%**
- Operations begin: **2015**
- Explosive Destruction Technology operations begin: **2014**
- Local project employment: **1,008**
- Local payroll paid to date: **$776 million**
- Anticipated end of destruction operations: **2019**

ABOUT PEO ACWA

The Program Executive Office, Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives headquartered at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md., is responsible for managing the safe and environmentally sound destruction of the chemical weapons stockpiles stored at the Blue Grass Army Depot in Kentucky and the Pueblo Chemical Depot in Colorado.

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