



U.S. Army Element, Assembled  
Chemical Weapons Alternatives

# ACWA QUARTERLY BRIEF

A Partnership for Safe Chemical Weapons Destruction

December 2008



## HOT TOPICS

**Hydrolysate Decision Imminent.** The Department of Defense (DoD) and ACWA leadership are currently reviewing the results of two technical reports, as well as stakeholder feedback, to make a decision regarding disposal options for hydrolysate, the byproduct of the neutralization process that will be used at the Blue Grass and Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plants. The National Research Council (NRC) report on secondary waste disposal, the Noblis report on hydrolysate disposal, as well as stakeholder feedback provided at public meetings held in December and at a public forum hosted by the NRC in Washington, D.C. in November 2008, will be key considerations for the decision, which is expected to be announced in January 2009. Both reports and formal recommendations from the communities surrounding the U.S. Army Pueblo Chemical Depot in Colorado and the Blue Grass Army Depot (BGAD) in Kentucky are available online at [www.pmacwa.army.mil](http://www.pmacwa.army.mil).

**Nerve Agent Liquid in Containers Successfully Neutralized.** The Operation *Swift Solution* team has successfully completed the first phase of eliminating three deteriorating steel containers holding a mixture of the nerve agent GB and its breakdown products that have accumulated over time. After receiving approval from the Kentucky Department of Environmental Protection, ACWA, in collaboration with BGAD, the U.S. Army Chemical Materials Agency and the Blue Grass Chemical Activity, began destruction operations for *Swift Solution* on Nov. 12, 2008. Next steps involve removing and neutralizing any sludge, rust, or other solids that may have formed over time inside the containers. The containers will then be decontaminated and sampled to confirm that no chemical agent contamination remains, cut in half and sent to a recycling facility. A trained team from the U.S. Army Edgewood Chemical Biological Center, Md., utilized the Chemical Agent Transfer System to drain and neutralize the liquid nerve agent mixture stored in the containers. With the concurrence of the Kentucky Citizens' Advisory Commission and its subcommittee, the Chemical Destruction Community Advisory Board, all secondary liquid and solid waste associated with the operation will be shipped to Veolia Environmental Services near Port Arthur, Texas, for final treatment and disposal following the completion of destruction operations in early 2009.

**Selected Acquisition Report Submitted to Congress.** ACWA is working closely with DoD authorities to address potential schedule delays outlined in the Selected Acquisition Report, or SAR, provided to Congress in November. As reported in the SAR, Pueblo is now estimated to begin operations in December 2016 and Blue Grass in February 2021. These schedule slips are attributable in part to increases in construction commodities and costs, and design challenges in Blue Grass related to the explosive containment room of the Munitions Demilitarization Building, or MDB. This reported slippage does not mean that the current "End Operations" milestones cannot be met, nor does it imply a DoD decision has been made with respect to accelerating the program as directed by Public Laws 110-116 and 110-181. ACWA is committed to working with DoD to achieve the earliest possible destruction of the Pueblo and Blue Grass stockpiles commensurate with safety and environmental protection.

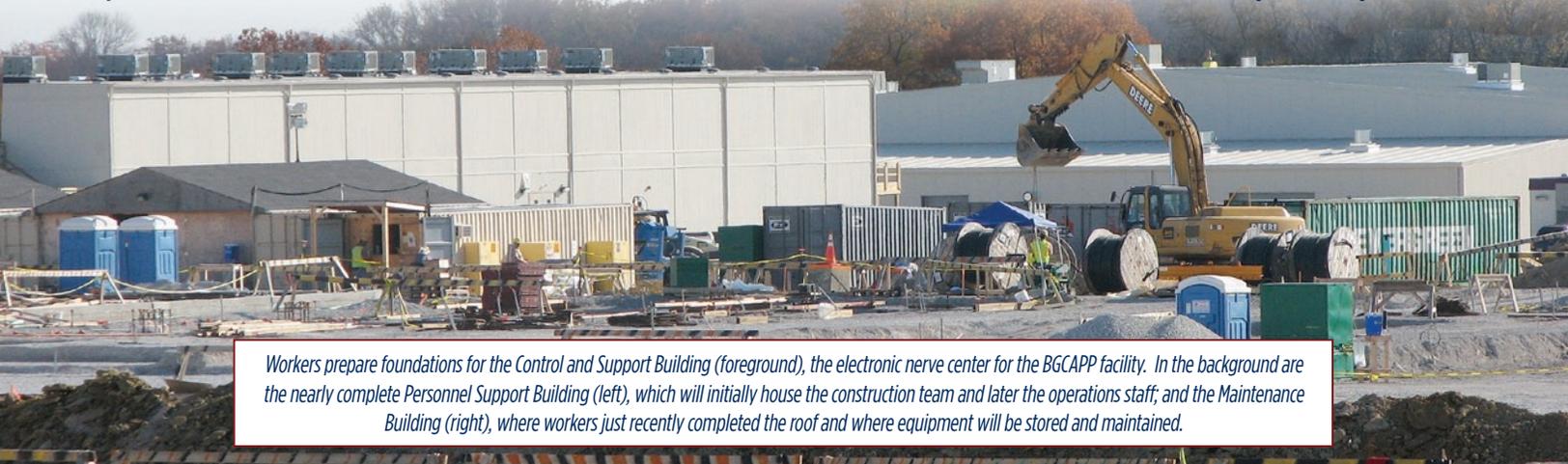
## PILOT PLANT UPDATES

### Blue Grass Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant

**Design Status:** With only 13% of the design to be completed, work continues on design packages for the hydrolysate storage area, above ground site utilities and the Entry Control Building. MDB redesign reviews with U.S. Army Technical Center for Explosives Safety and Department of Defense Explosives Safety Board are expected to occur between February and May 2009.

**Construction Update:** Layout, excavation and foundation concrete work has begun for the MDB. The last module for the Personnel Support Building was installed and interior work is beginning on this building that will provide office space for the construction team and in the future, the plant operations team. Work continues on the 138kV electrical substation with the installation of high-voltage transmission lines. Other buildings in progress include the Control and Support Building and the Maintenance Building.

**Acquisitions:** Bechtel Parsons Blue Grass has awarded more than \$64 million in subcontracts, with 52% obtained by Kentucky businesses.



*Workers prepare foundations for the Control and Support Building (foreground), the electronic nerve center for the BGCAPP facility. In the background are the nearly complete Personnel Support Building (left), which will initially house the construction team and later the operations staff; and the Maintenance Building (right), where workers just recently completed the roof and where equipment will be stored and maintained.*



## Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant

**Final Construction Permit Issued:** Construction of the final stage of PCAPP was given the green light by Colorado authorities on Oct. 20, 2008, with the issuance of a Stage III modification to the facility's initial Research, Development and Demonstration Permit. This modification allows the construction of facilities and systems designed to process and destroy the munitions and chemical agent. Additional permit changes will be required in the future before the pilot plant team is allowed to commence agent destruction operations. Approval of the Stage III permit modification represents a key construction milestone.

**Construction Update:** The PCAPP team received authorization from the Department of Defense Explosive Safety Board to proceed with the remainder of construction for the pilot plant on Oct. 7, 2008. Progress continues on the Agent Processing Building with the foundation installation and placement of vertical steel girders. Vertical construction and pipe installation continues for the pipe rack system which will connect various processing buildings. The PCAPP team is also working on the Automated Guided Vehicle Corridor and underground electrical distribution system as well as the Utility and Multipurpose Buildings.

**Acquisitions:** Bechtel Pueblo has awarded more than \$133 million in subcontracts, with 52% obtained by Colorado businesses.



### Construction Continues

*At the Pueblo pilot plant site, construction workers place beams for the Agent Processing Building. The recently issued Stage III construction permit modification will allow the PCAPP team to build all the facilities that will house chemical demilitarization equipment including the Agent Processing Building.*



*In Colorado, significant construction progress was made this year in nearly every corner of the pilot plant site including the beginning of construction for the Agent Processing Building, the Enhanced Reconfiguration Building and the Automated Guided Vehicle Corridor.*

## NEXT 120 DAYS AT ACWA

Key program priorities include:

- ACWA is expecting the release of a National Research Council evaluation of explosive destruction technologies in early 2009. The report will assist ACWA in identifying technical options for destroying leaking mustard munitions and contaminated explosive components in Pueblo as well as for the Blue Grass program.
- In conjunction with its budget request for FY 2010, the DoD is expected to submit a report on its recently completed assessment of options for accelerating destruction of chemical weapons stockpiles stored in Colorado and Kentucky. The report responds to congressional direction in Public Laws 110-116 and 110-181.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

U.S. Army Element, Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives, known as ACWA, is responsible for the safe destruction of chemical weapons stockpiles at the U.S. Army Pueblo Chemical Depot in Colorado and the Blue Grass Army Depot in Kentucky.

Monthly status updates on chemical weapons destruction in Colorado and Kentucky can be found at [www.pmacwa.army.mil](http://www.pmacwa.army.mil).

For additional information, please contact the ACWA Communications and Congressional Affairs office at (410) 436-3398.