

Pueblo exchange

A Partnership for Safe Chemical Weapons Destruction



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Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant

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Construction Momentum Gets Thumbs Up from Leaders

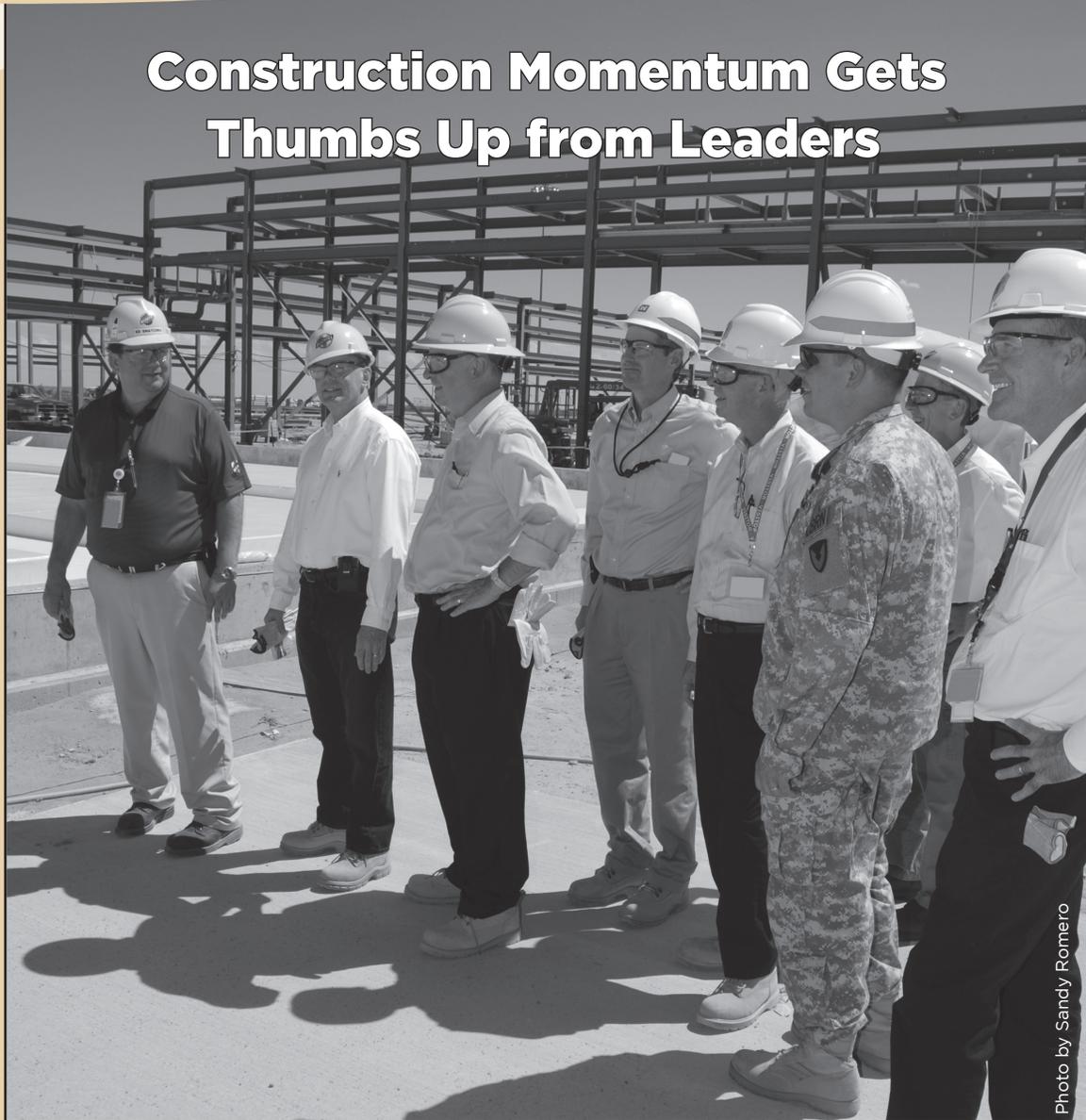


Photo by Sandy Romero

During a recent visit to the Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant (PCAPP), Deputy Assistant to the Secretary of Defense (Threat Reduction and Arms Control) Dr. Tom Hopkins, third from left, evaluates construction progress with, left to right, Bechtel Construction Manager Ed Snatchko, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army (Elimination of Chemical Weapons) Carmen Spencer, PCAPP Acting Site Project Manager Scott Susman, Bechtel National, Inc., Manager of Operations Chris Midgett, U.S. Army Pueblo Chemical Depot Commander Lt. Col. Robert Wittig, Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives Deputy Program Manager Joe Novad and Bechtel Project Manager Paul Henry.

Birds Get a Second Chance

By RENEE MARTINEZ
PCAPP Public Outreach Specialist

Construction workers at the Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant (PCAPP) aren't empty nesters. In fact, they go out of their way to ensure that bird's nests containing eggs get the "Do Not Disturb" treatment.

Because the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) prohibits disturbing active nests of some protected species, the Bechtel environmental compliance team regularly monitors the site for nesting activity, and relies on all employees to report nests. Western kingbirds and common grackles can sometimes be seen nesting on raised steel, around buildings and on equipment at PCAPP.

Once a nest is reported and determined to be a species protected by the MBTA, equipment and work areas are shut down, sometimes for several weeks, and the area is barricaded to prevent further disturbance. So far this year, the project has protected and monitored 13 active bird nests.

Sarah Glass, Bechtel's environmental permitting engineer, reports that on occasion deprecation permits are awarded by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to remove nests. On two occasions, PCAPP has received such permits and the eggs were taken to the Second Chance Wildlife Rehabilitation Center in Pueblo, which is licensed

by Colorado Division of Wildlife and the USFWS to rehabilitate injured and orphaned wildlife. While at the center, the eggs were incubated and hatched.

Birds injured at PCAPP are also taken to Second Chance. This spring, a sparrow, and later a grackle, encountered a sticky adhesive caulk being used to finish building roofs. Both birds were taken to the center so that the adhesive could be removed.

Nancy Kelly, director of the center, explained that the protocol used on the PCAPP birds is the same one that is used on oil contaminated birds. First, canola oil was massaged into the bird's feathers; then the birds were given a bath in dish soap. This was repeated several times for many days to ensure that the feathers were clean. The birds stayed at the center for approximately two weeks before they were released near the PCAPP construction site. Kelly explained, "Because the birds were found quickly and brought to us quickly, we were able to clean and care for them."

Wildlife protection is very important to the PCAPP project. It is emphasized to employees during their first day of



Photo by Sarah Lynne Glass

Common grackle eggs were found on the Pipe Rack in June. The nest was removed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and taken to Second Chance Wildlife Rehabilitation Center for incubation.

work at the New Employee Orientation and Safety Training. During the session, employees receive training on how to report wildlife activity on the site. Most wildlife responses begin with a call from a worker to an operator at the PCAPP Communications Center, who contacts an environmental compliance representative or a USFWS trained member of the craft.

"I am quite proud of our wildlife response here on site," said Glass. "Currently, we are developing a training course which we can offer to employees on a regular basis."

Western kingbird hatchlings, discovered in the Pipefitter's Pole Barn, fledged successfully.

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Plant Moves to Second Shift, Longer Work Week

By SANDY ROMERO
Bechtel Communications Manager

An accelerated construction effort, combined with the increased presence of the start-up group for plant systemization, made the Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant (PCAPP) site a busy hub of activity this summer.

Construction

Installation of a road and gates near the Munitions Service Magazines (MSM) kept workers busy. This roadway will allow for easy access to the munitions by allowing Modified Ammunition Vehicles to transport them from their current location to the MSMs. The MSMs will serve as buffer storage for munitions to allow for 24/7 plant operations.

Workers were also positioned in the Biotreatment Area, as parts arrived for the Standby Diesel Generator.

These parts, many over-sized, were delivered via truck and were assembled on site. The generator will supply backup power to the plant.

In August, the much anticipated Immobilized Cell Bioreactors (ICB) made their way to the PCAPP site for installation. The ICBs will hold the microbes that will further break down the hydrolysate, the byproduct of mustard agent neutralization.

“We’re continuing to hire electricians and pipe fitters,” said PCAPP Site Superintendent Steve Thieme. “In June, we moved from a 4-day to a 5-day work week and from one to two shifts.”

Plant Systemization

Systemization continued during the summer months. Pre-systemization is the development of the necessary documents, which include plans, procedures and instructions required for commissioning and start-up, as well as operations and maintenance of the plant.

The start-up group will take control of the medium voltage switchgear from the construction group. According to PCAPP Plant Manager Jerry Tiller, a total of 65 systems and 250 subsystems will be turned over to the start-up group for commissioning.

“We’ll work hand in hand with the construction group as they start turning over about three subsystems per week,” Tiller said. “The last of the turnovers will be completed in early 2012.”



Photo by Ken Young

The first of two Standby Diesel Generators was lowered into place on July 2. These generators will provide an emergency power-supply if the power grid fails.

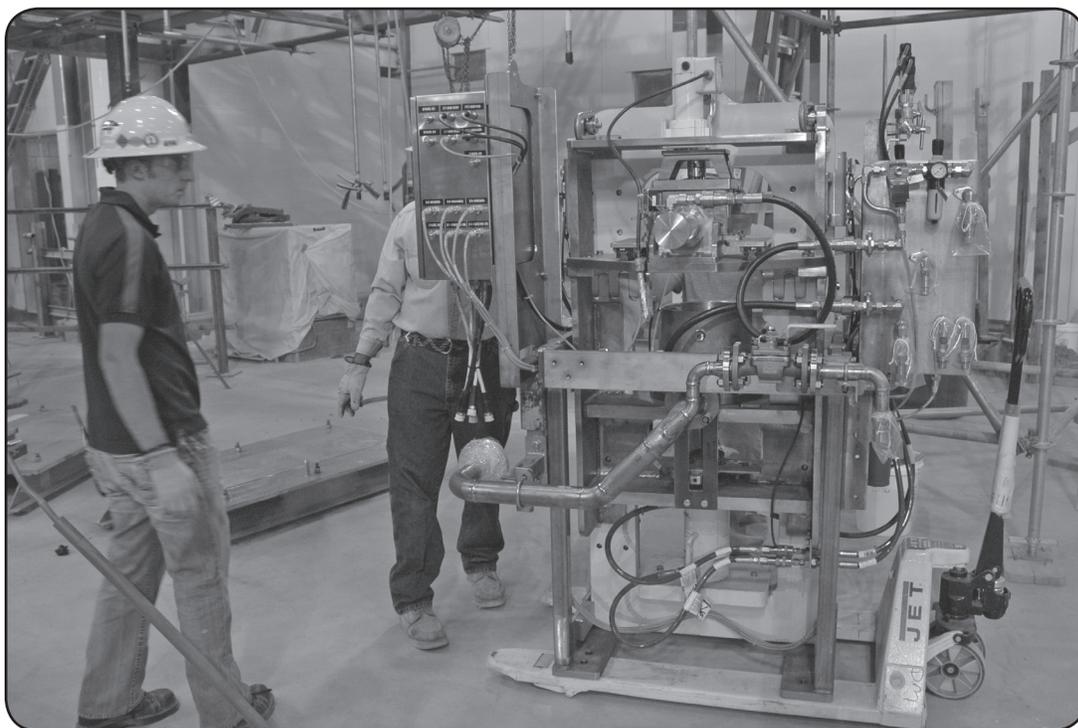


Photo by Ken Young

The first of eight Cavity Access Machines was placed in the Agent Processing Building on Sept. 14. This machine will be used to internally access and then wash out mustard agent within the chemical munitions.

Safety First

The *Exchange* asks, "How has the safety culture at the Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant influenced you?"



"I've practiced safety at home, so I am safe at work, too."

Eddie Pacheco
Electrician, Local Union #12



"I no longer stand on the top step of a ladder!"

Pat Baca
Pipefitter, Local Union #58

"I really keep an eye out away from the job, too. Safety is very important to Bechtel. The safety culture has made me aware of my surroundings."

Mike Bond
Electrician, Local Union #12



"After being in the trade for 13 years, I didn't think that I had anything left to learn, but I learned new safety techniques on day one, during the new staff orientation."

Theresa Rasmussen
Pipefitter, Local Union #58



"I started in 2007 and was an original member of the Safety Culture Observation Unit Team (SCOUT); I was co-chair. Safety has become important at home, too, for example, I won't use a chair to change a light bulb."

Mike Esquibel
Ironworker, Local Union #24



"Other companies preach safety, but it is practiced here. Because my kids have heard me preaching safety so much, they now tell me how to be safe. Just the other day, my daughter reminded me to wear my safety glasses."

Michael Palma
Carpenter, Local Union #515

"The whole safety program has influenced my behavior at home. It [the safety program] is probably the best one I've seen."

Robert Horn
Pipefitter, Local Union #58



"I have served two terms on the SCOUT team. I have learned that safety is my responsibility. Safety comes before anything else."

Gloria Murphy
Pipefitter, Local Union #58



"I share the safety culture philosophy with my friends."

Larry Ranals
Foreman Ironworker, Local Union #24



"If I am cutting the lawn, I am wearing steel toes. If I am climbing a ladder, I make sure that it is level. If I am changing a light bulb, I turn off the power."

David Williams
Electrician, Local Union #12



"The safety culture here has made me more aware. I have my wife wear safety glasses and ear plugs while she mows."

Dustin Miller
Foreman Ironworker, Local Union #24



"I am more conscientious of fire and the importance of maintaining smoke alarms and fire extinguishers at home."

Johnny Lujan,
General Foreman Concrete Masons,
Local Union #577

"Safety is an every day walk. I no longer take things for granted."

Chris Bradshaw
Carpenter, Local Union #515



"I pay attention to body mechanics while I am working at home."

Victor Tenorio
Electrician, Local Union #12



"The safety culture here is different than on any of the other jobs I have worked. We are encouraged to do things right."

Dawn Patton,
Carpenter, Local Union #515



"I have learned that you can only lift so much, as you get older."

Duane Carter
Carpenter – Scaffold, Local Union #515

"The Bechtel safety culture is a good thought process. It is something that I am passing along to my children."

Brett Higbee
Foreman Equipment Operator, Local Union #9



"The safety culture here is an eye opener. When I am working at home, I look around before I start and make sure that my kids are out of harm's way."

Jason Morriss
Pipefitter, Local Union #58



"I keep my eyes on the path. Bechtel has an excellent safety culture. It's the best I've ever seen."

Cameron Mueller
Carpenter, Local Union #515



"Safety first; quality next; production last."

Everett Trujillo
Ironworker, Local Union #24



Employees of the Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant were recognized for completing 2 million hours without a lost time injury and were honored for their commitment to safety with a barbecue lunch on June 30.

Hotter Than July

By BOB KENNEMER
PCAPP Public Outreach Manager

Keeping cool during the hottest months of the year, got a little easier this summer at the Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant (PCAPP). The construction site saw temperatures over 100 degrees Fahrenheit as early as May, so management implemented specific measures to ensure all workers on the site stayed safe through the summer months.

“Heat injuries range from less severe symptoms like heat cramps and heat rash to more serious health problems such as heat exhaustion or heat stroke,” explained Ken Young, PCAPP’s emergency preparedness manager. “The latter two can be fatal if not treated in time.”

The PCAPP site has a heat status notification system that measures radiant heat, temperature and evaporation rate in order to calculate a heat index. The heat index helps supervisors determine what kind of safety measures need to be taken in order to protect their staff. The color green represents optimal conditions. The color yellow means caution; hence, supervisors are encouraged to give more frequent breaks to their staff, depending upon their activity. The color red requires mandatory breaks and black requires that the work site be shut down.

In the summer months, the goal is to keep workers cool. First and foremost, the project’s safety team encourages and promotes proper hydration. Water stations are located throughout the construction site.

In addition to water, the project provides an electrolyte replacement drink similar to a sports drink. This

drink replaces minerals like potassium and magnesium, which the body loses via perspiration.

Three air conditioned change houses can be found on the PCAPP site. Here, workers can take breaks to eat lunch and escape the heat. The project also supplies workers with Sun Protection Factor (SPF) 30 sunscreen, brimmed hardhats or a special wider brim that can be attached to a hard hat and free standing shade umbrellas. Large fans with misters can be seen throughout the construction site.

Special bandanas and chill packs that fit inside hard hats are also provided to workers. “The hard hat chill packs and the chill bandanas work great,” commented David Bell, a PCAPP electrician. “They really can make working in 100 degree temperatures feel more like 85 degrees.”

With all of the strides taken to relieve heat, PCAPP construction workers can say that they have a “cool” work place.



Photo by Ken Young

This device, known as a Wet Bulb Globe Temperature Monitor, is used to measure radiant heat, temperature and the water evaporation rate on the PCAPP site.



Photo by Ken Young

Umbrellas, in a wide variety of sizes, are utilized on the PCAPP site to provide needed shade.



Photo by Ken Young

Large industrial fans, measuring four feet in diameter, can be found throughout the PCAPP site. This fan has been fitted with a mister, which moistens and cools the air in an area that normally would be hot and dry.

Employee Corner

Irons in the Fire

By ROSEMARY PATTERSON
PCAPP Public Outreach Assistant

The trick to having lots of irons in the fire is to know which is the hottest and which can wait a little longer. Karen Irons is very experienced with managing numerous tasks at once and, in her new job as administrative assistant to the Bechtel project managers, she has lots of opportunity to show off her skills.

Irons manages the daily activities of the project manager and two deputy project managers, including scheduling meetings, activities and appointments. Since dozens of requests for new meetings and emergency sessions happen minute to minute, it can be challenging handling three separate schedules. Irons handles travel arrangements and expense reports and assists with the organization of project meetings with corporate and government officials, which requires months of preparation.

Irons was hired in April and feels that her previous job as an office manager for a commercial builder provided her the necessary experience for her current position. "I enjoy learning new policies and procedures and developing new relationships," commented Irons. "Understanding the various job roles of individuals throughout the organization has been very challenging."

Irons was born in the small town of Worchester, Mass. The daughter of an Air Force senior master sergeant who eventually retired in Colorado Springs, Irons traveled throughout the country. She recounts that as a child her father was stationed in Alaska. Although just a youngster, Irons remembers experiencing the Great Alaskan Earthquake, the most powerful earthquake recorded in U.S. and North American history.

Irons calls Colorado Springs home. When she is not being entertained by her 3-year-old grandson, Irons enjoys gardening, cooking, exploring the great outdoors and has recently discovered the enjoyment of lake kayaking.



Photo by Rosemary Patterson
Although learning a new job is challenging, Karen Irons, administrative assistant to Bechtel's project managers, is enjoying the demands her position brings.

Chem Ops Officer is "All Shook Up" About New Job

By RENEE MARTINEZ
PCAPP Public Outreach Specialist

While driving 25 miles to work every day at the Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant (PCAPP), you can be sure that Debra Michaels is listening to Elvis Presley tunes.

Before joining the PCAPP team, this avid Elvis Presley fan worked for the U.S. Army Pueblo Chemical Depot (PCD), first in the Surveillance Division for 14 years and later in the Chemical Operations Division, serving as its manager, for 10 years. In May, Michaels joined the PCAPP team as its chemical operations officer.

At PCAPP, Michaels is responsible for government oversight of the Laboratory and Monitoring Program, Chemical Surety Program, and Chemical Treaty Program. The position requires knowledge of the Army's chemical stockpile storage and disposal mission and an understanding of long and short-range planning and resource requirements for toxic chemical agent operations, as well as the application of regulatory guidance to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of operations.

Michaels believes that the best aspect of her new job is the ability to utilize her PCD experience. "My background in managing the laboratory and monitoring program, in addition to supervising the handling of toxic materials, protective clothing and equipment, will help me to make a difference at PCAPP," Michaels said. "Everyday is a learning experience."

This Pueblo native studied chemistry, biology and math at the former University of Southern Colorado. When not at work or at home in Pueblo West, Michaels enjoys skiing, traveling, reading and knitting.



Photo by Renee Martinez
Debra Michaels, PCAPP's new chemical operations officer, enjoys collecting Elvis Presley paraphernalia and owns most of his music on 45-inch records.

Information | Exchange

The Pueblo *Exchange* is designed to keep you up to date on the chemical weapons destruction project. Submit your feedback and potential story ideas by contacting the editor, Renee Martinez, by phone at (719) 546-0400 or e-mail at renee.martinez@iem.com.

Online Resources

Find out more about ACWA's mission to safely destroy the chemical weapons stockpiles located at the Blue Grass Army Depot, Ky., and U.S. Army Pueblo Chemical Depot, Colo., by visiting www.pmacwa.army.mil. Interested stakeholders may provide feedback to the program by clicking on the "Give Feedback" icon.

Additional information regarding chemical weapons destruction in Colorado and Kentucky can be found at the following websites:

- ACWA Website: www.pmacwa.army.mil
- ACWA Page on Facebook: www.facebook.com/pmacwa
- ACWA Page on Twitter: www.twitter.com/acwanews
- ACWA Photostream on Flickr: www.flickr.com/photos/acwa
- ACWA YouTube Channel: www.youtube.com/usaacwa

You may also subscribe to the ACWA Real Simple Syndication, or RSS, feed by visiting http://www.pmacwa.army.mil/connect/acwa_rss.html.

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