

Blue Grass *exchange*

A Partnership for Safe Chemical Weapons Destruction



Winter 2010

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Blue Grass Chemical Agent-
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Plant Goes 3-D: A Look Back on Moving Forward in 2009



At the Blue Grass Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant construction site, thousands of yards of concrete, hundreds of tons of steel rebar, truckloads of structural steel and many skilled man-hours helped the facility take shape in 2009. The efforts of many diverse project employees, from iron workers to document control clerks, have helped develop the newly three-dimensional facility.

Messages From the Managers



By JEFF BRUBAKER
Blue Grass Chemical
Agent-Destruction Pilot
Plant Site Project Manager

The Blue Grass Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant (BGCAPP) project has experienced a very busy, yet positive, year. Several major milestones have occurred during the last 12 months, which you can read about on pages 4 and 5, including governmental approval of program acceleration and the processing facility blast-area design, as well as the installation of structural steel on the processing facility foundation.

These events are very important to the program, and I want to recognize the driving force behind each of the milestones – the people of BGCAPP.

From government to private sector, many organizations are involved with the BGCAPP project, and millions of man-hours have gone into this project, from design to site preparation and construction. Behind each one of those hours, one will find a person connected to BGCAPP, whether it's at a desk reviewing applicable regulations or out at the construction site installing footers for a building foundation. It is the knowledge, expertise and commitment of project personnel that is building the plant structure from the ground up.

As the government lead for the BGCAPP project, I have the opportunity to work with these men and women on a daily basis, and I am always impressed with the focus and skills they bring to the job. And while the project grows and gains more personnel, my commitment remains the same – to make sure they receive the support and training they need to enhance their skills, and above all else, provide them a safe workplace so that they return to their families every day.



By MARK SEELY
Bechtel Parsons Blue
Grass Project Manager

The Blue Grass project has a talented and dedicated group of employees, as noted by Jeff. In addition to their competence and commitment on the job, our employees make significant contributions to the community outside of work, so I'd like to mention just a few of the many ways they support civic and charitable organizations.

- We recently completed our annual United Way campaign, and once again the combined employee and corporate contribution from Bechtel Parsons was among the largest in Madison County.
- Our employees donated two pick-up truck loads of toys to the Toys 4 Kids drive of the Richmond Firemen's Club; they also contributed several barrels full of food for the Salvation Army Holiday Food Drive.
- More than \$5,000 was raised during the annual Walk for Diabetes and a similar amount for Big Brothers/Big Sisters in the Bowl for Kids' Sake. One of our employees, Keith Slaughter, was recently featured in Bechtel's worldwide employee newsletter for his work with Big Brothers.
- Our employees also installed blinds throughout the recently opened Liberty Place Recovery Center for Women in Richmond. Some of our staff members continue to volunteer there and recently contributed a table to the Center's annual fundraising team.

Our employees are an integrated team of people who share a commitment to community involvement. I'm very proud of them and the tremendous contributions they make to the community.



Experienced Employees: A Major Program Asset

By JOHN SCHLATTER
Bechtel Parsons Blue Grass
and SUSAN KAHLER
Blue Grass Chemical Stockpile Outreach Office

A major strength of the chemical weapons destruction program lies in the expertise and background of its people, as it requires many people with specific experience and knowledge, such as engineers, permitting specialists, safety experts and quality control personnel. It is generally hard to find all of these skills in one place, however, the Blue Grass Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant (BGCAPP) was able to leverage and learn from the previous actions of the U.S. chemical weapons destruction program. When assembling project staff for the first chemical weapons destruction facility at Johnston Atoll, the Program Manager for Chemical Demilitarization, now known as the U.S. Army Chemical Materials Agency, hired people from many different places, such as areas near the other chemical stockpile sites within the United States. Fortunately, the training and expertise was paid forward to the other chemical weapons destruction sites as their facilities were constructed and became operational.

Expertise transfer from the other sites is a reality at BGCAPP. While many of the project personnel are locally sourced, a number of BGCAPP workers have extensive and varied backgrounds in chemical weapons destruction from the other sites: Johnston Atoll; Anniston, Ala.; Aberdeen, Md.; Newport, Ind.; Pine Bluff, Ark.; Tooele, Utah and Umatilla, Ore.

On the government side, about one-fifth of the project's employees hail from previous chemical destruction backgrounds. Jeff Brubaker, the BGCAPP site project manager, recently transferred to the area after successful management of the Newport chemical

weapons facility. He will now use his leadership experience and expertise to lead the BGCAPP project.

Similarly, a number of government team members are sharing their expertise from several different chemical weapons destruction projects. Pamela Smith, a contract administrator for BGCAPP, previously supported contract administration for the Aberdeen, Md. chemical agent disposal facility and the Chemical Demilitarization Training Facility (CDTF). "I enjoy the fact that I have continuing professional relationships in the field, due to my background," she said.

Jeff Krejsa, a mechanical and environmental engineer, also has past experience from the Aberdeen facility, in addition to other various, related projects, such as the Pine Bluff, Ark. Non-Stockpile Chemical Materiel Project. "The fact that every day brings new challenges and chances to learn really made me want to stay in the field," he said.

About one-third of Bechtel Parsons Blue Grass non-manual employees have worked at other chemical weapons destruction projects, many of them at multiple locations. Several members of the BGCAPP construction management team worked at the Anniston, Ala. Chemical Agent Disposal Facility or Aberdeen, including construction superintendent Otis Drinkard and electrical superintendent Tim Hale. "The experience at Aberdeen helps me understand our mission and responsibility to the community to deliver a safe working plant," said Hale.

Dale Harris, a planner for the systemization efforts at BGCAPP, is a native of Irvine, Ky., about 15 miles from Richmond. He joined the Blue Grass project in October after serving



Photo by Susan Kahler

Pamela Smith, contract administrator.



Photo by Susan Kahler

Jeff Krejsa, mechanical and environmental engineer.



Photo by John Schlatter

Dale Harris, systemization lead.

as a control room operator at the Pine Bluff chemical disposal facility for three and one-half years. "I'm originally from this area and accepted a job at Pine Bluff to get the proper training and skills that I needed to return here and work," he explains. "My time at the Pine Bluff disposal facility was very informative. I can take a lot from there and apply it here. That's the beauty of the chemical weapons destruction program."

What a Difference a Year Makes: BGCAPP 2009 Year-In-Review Timeline

By SUSAN KAHLER
Blue Grass Chemical Stockpile Outreach Office

Highlights from 2009 at the Blue Grass Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant are detailed below.

JANUARY

- Start of construction on the mock wall

FEBRUARY

- First Munitions Demilitarization Building foundation concrete placement

MARCH

- Bechtel Parsons Blue Grass begins Occupational Health and Safety Administration's Voluntary Protection Program application process

APRIL

- Completion of Operation *Swift Solution*

MAY

- Department of Defense acceleration assessment completed
- On-site hydrolysate destruction decision announced
- Project staff complete four million hours without a lost-time accident
- Project staff move to Richmond Mall

JUNE

- Completion of the Personnel Support and Maintenance Buildings

JULY

- Completion of the mock wall project

AUGUST

- Department of Defense Explosives Safety Board design approval of Munitions Demilitarization Building blast area
- Sen. McConnell and Rep. Chandler tour the construction site

SEPTEMBER

- First Control and Support Building structural steel installation
- First Munitions Demilitarization Building blast-area rebar installation

OCTOBER

- First Utility Power Center delivered and set in place

NOVEMBER

- Metal Parts Treater fabrication and testing completion
- Completion of Fire Water Storage Tanks

DECEMBER

- Metal Parts Treater components begin arriving at construction site



The Blue Grass Army Depot's first chemical agent destruction under the chemical weapons demilitarization program, Operation *Swift Solution* safely and successfully completes the destruction of the contents of three containers that held a mixture of the nerve agent GB and its breakdown products.



Following site preparation and reinforcing steel (rebar) installation, the first concrete is placed for the Munitions Demilitarization Building foundation. This is the building that will process the chemical weapons stored at the Blue Grass Army Depot.



U.S. Sen. Mitch McConnell (R-KY), center, and U.S. Rep. Ben Chandler (D-KY, 6th District), right, tour the project construction site with Site Project Manager Jeff Brubaker to view progress made since their last visit in 2008.



Project workers unload and maneuver a metal blast door, the first component of the Metal Parts Treater to arrive at the Blue Grass site.



Completion of the mock wall project helps project workers gain knowledge about the techniques and materials necessary to construct the processing facility blast area.



Placement of vertical rebar begins on the Munitions Demilitarization Building, one of the two main processing buildings that will destroy the chemical weapons once the pilot plant is operational.



Project personnel, previously located in several area offices, are now located in a newly-prepared office space at the Richmond Mall location on the Eastern Bypass. This consolidation improves project efficiency and communications.



Workers move into the Personnel Support Building (PSB), one of the two major site structures completed in 2009. The PSB houses construction team personnel, while the Maintenance Building contains maintenance and acquisition services functions.



The first structural steel is installed on the Control and Support Building foundation—part of the combined building that will be used for the destruction of the chemical weapons.

“The Craft That Serves the Crafts” Laborers Are Essential to the Blue Grass Project

By SUSAN KAHLER
Blue Grass Chemical Stockpile Outreach Office

If you think about it, without the hard work of laborers, not much would get completed on a construction site. Laborers are an essential component and integral part of the Blue Grass Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant (BGCAPP) construction team and work in association with all of the other trades. Their skills include survey work, referred to as “shooting the grade;” preparing and leveling the ground, base materials and concrete; groundwork preparation for foundations, underground utilities, roads and parking lots; laying of underground utilities, such as storm and sanitary sewers; placing and curing of concrete; and reviewing permits.

Exchange Editor Susan Kahler sat down with several BGCAPP laborers to ask them about their jobs.

Kahler: What brought you to this particular project?

Ann Mortiere, labor foreman for the Munitions Demilitarization and Control and Support Buildings: “It’s a good, long-term job – I’m happy to have the opportunity to work here for several years.”

Keith Conrad, laborer:

“It’s close to home and it’s a good job to have to take care of the community [referring to destruction of the chemical weapons].”



Ann Mortiere, labor foreman for the Munitions Demilitarization and Control and Support Buildings, listens to her radio in communication with her crew on a concrete delivery.

Josh Spicer, site labor foreman, noted: “Yes, it’s close to home and we are going to be getting rid of some bad stuff. We can’t lose sight of that.”

Alex Applegate, laborer: “My union, Local 189 from Lexington, sent me on this job.”

Kahler: What do you like most about your job here?

Spicer: “The people I work for, and the safety. It means a lot to talk the talk AND walk the walk.”

Applegate: “Everyone tries to help each other out. And I agree Bechtel is a good company – they furnish our safety and protective gear and take good care of us.”

Mortiere: “For the good cause of it, for the great people, and again, the safety. I have never been on a job before where all of the craft workers got along like they do here.”

Kahler: What do you do on a daily basis?

Mortiere: “A variety of things – we get concrete placements ready, clean, do water cures of placed concrete, brush surfaces for new concrete and place the concrete.”

Conrad: “I dig, tamp, backfill ... a laborer stays pretty busy.”



Keith Conrad, laborer, puts the finishing touches on a foundation footing for the Utility Building.

Applegate: “Anything they need us to do. We have core-drilled concrete samples from the mock wall, installed sewers, do cleaning, haul drinking water to workers and lots of other things.”

Kahler: What are some challenges you face in your job?

Conrad: “Unexpected problems, like things not where they should be, design changes, weather.”

Mortiere: “As the only female foreman, every day is a challenge. Integrating new crew members can be challenging.”

Spicer: “Definitely weather, since we do a lot of digging.”



Josh Spicer, site labor foreman, “shoots the grade” on the tanker drop and swap lot, an area where process chemicals will be delivered to the site, in preparation for concrete work.



Alex Applegate, laborer, removes or, “brushes,” the smooth surface of a cured concrete foundation in preparation for a concrete footer wall that will be placed on top of it.

Kabler: How do you work with the other craft groups?

Applegate: “We are the craft that serves the other crafts. We help carpenters set up forms, dig trenches for utilities and prepare sites for concrete or other construction.”

Spicer: “All of the general foremen talk and discuss upcoming needs. We have meetings to discuss future efforts and organization of work groups.”

Conrad: “We assist others with their jobs, but serving other crafts isn’t all we do – we place concrete, for example.”

Kabler: What would you say to people who may want to become a laborer?

Spicer: “It’s hard work. If you want to work and stay fit, come on. If you can work with your hands, you’re in demand.”

Conrad: “It can be hard work, but it’s a good job. I have learned a whole lot just from being on this job.”

Applegate: “We have retirement benefits, medical insurance and training and apprenticeship programs. There are a lot of advantages.”

Mortiere: “Laborers are jacks of all trades. It’s a great job for variety.”

Arrival of Major Processing Equipment is Next Step for Pilot Plant

By JOHN SCHLATTER
Bechtel Parsons Blue Grass

Fabrication and testing are complete for two major pieces of equipment that will process munitions at the Blue Grass Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant (BGCAPP), and the component parts of the equipment have begun arriving at the construction site from manufacturing facilities in Washington and California.

The Metal Parts Treater (MPT) is a large electrically-heated chamber to treat munitions bodies and other metal parts after the chemical agent is removed to ensure that no residual quantities of agent remain. The metal is then recycled. The MPT was fabricated and tested by Parsons at a facility in Pasco, Wash., and shipped by truck to the construction site. Components of the MPT began arriving at the site on December 1, 2009. This equipment will be installed in the Munitions Demilitarization Building during the next few months.

Fabrication for the Energetics Batch Hydrolyzer (EBH) at the General Atomics facility in San Diego, Calif., is also complete. Resembling a large cement mixer, the EBH uses a chemical process to neutralize explosive components removed from the munitions. The EBH is currently stored in San Diego and will ship to the site later this year.

With the completion of these two pieces of equipment marking the end of the first part of work to test and fabricate specialized equipment for the BGCAPP facility, the focus is shifted to several other pieces of equipment that will disassemble the munitions, then remove and neutralize chemical agent.

The Bechtel Parsons team is working on several systems needed to successfully destroy the Kentucky chemical weapons stockpile, including:

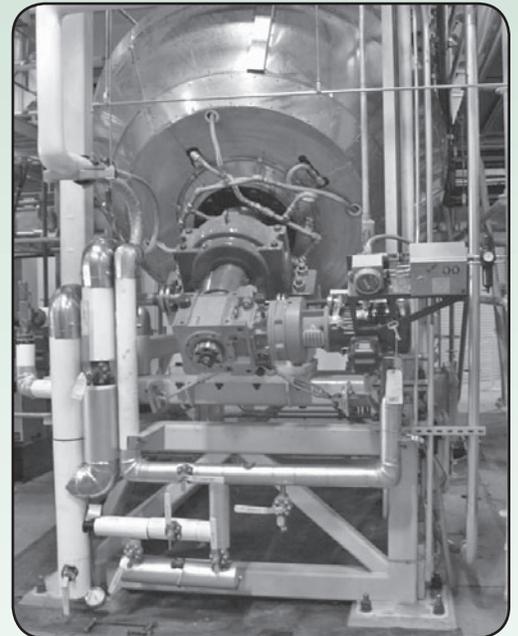


Photo courtesy of Bechtel Parsons Blue Grass

The Energetics Batch Hydrolyzer is the second part of Phase 1 Blue Grass-Specific Equipment and was designed and constructed at a General Atomics facility. It, and the Metal Parts Treater, went through systemization and testing at each of the originating locations, respectively, before shipping to the Blue Grass project.

- Rocket Cutter Machine – To separate the rocket motor from the part containing agent.
- Rocket Shear Machine – To cut rockets into pieces and drain the agent.
- Munitions Wash Station – To disassemble and remove agent from projectiles.
- Agent Neutralization System – To neutralize the agent by mixing it with hot water and caustic chemicals.

Future work at General Atomics in San Diego will focus on the final step in treating neutralized agent, referred to as hydrolysate. Using the Supercritical Water Oxidation system (SCWO), hydrolysate is subjected to extremely high temperature and pressure to produce water and salts. The water is then recycled into the plant for use in facility processes, while the salts are disposed of at a permitted landfill.

Information | Exchange

The Blue Grass *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, Susan Kahler, by phone at (859) 626-8944 or e-mail at bgoutreach@bah.com.

Online Resources

To learn more about the Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternative (ACWA) program's mission to safely destroy the chemical weapons stockpiles located at the Blue Grass Army Depot, Ky., and the U.S. Army Pueblo Chemical Depot, Colo., visit www.pmacwa.army.mil. There, interested stakeholders can sign up for Blue Grass Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant E-News, a monthly newsletter highlighting the plant's progress and other project information. You can also 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 Web sites:

- ACWA Photostream on Flickr: www.flickr.com/photos/acwa
- ACWA YouTube Channel: www.youtube.com/usaeacwa

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

Mark Your Calendar

Your involvement is essential to the success of the project. Please share your views at the Kentucky Chemical Demilitarization Citizens' Advisory Commission and Chemical Destruction Community Advisory Board meetings. Upcoming meetings are scheduled for **March 9, 2010** and **June 8, 2010** at **1:30 p.m.** in the **Carl D. Perkins Building, Rooms A and B** at **Eastern Kentucky University**.

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