

Pueblo exchange

A Partnership for Safe Chemical Weapons Destruction



Spring 2008

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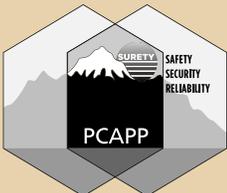
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Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant

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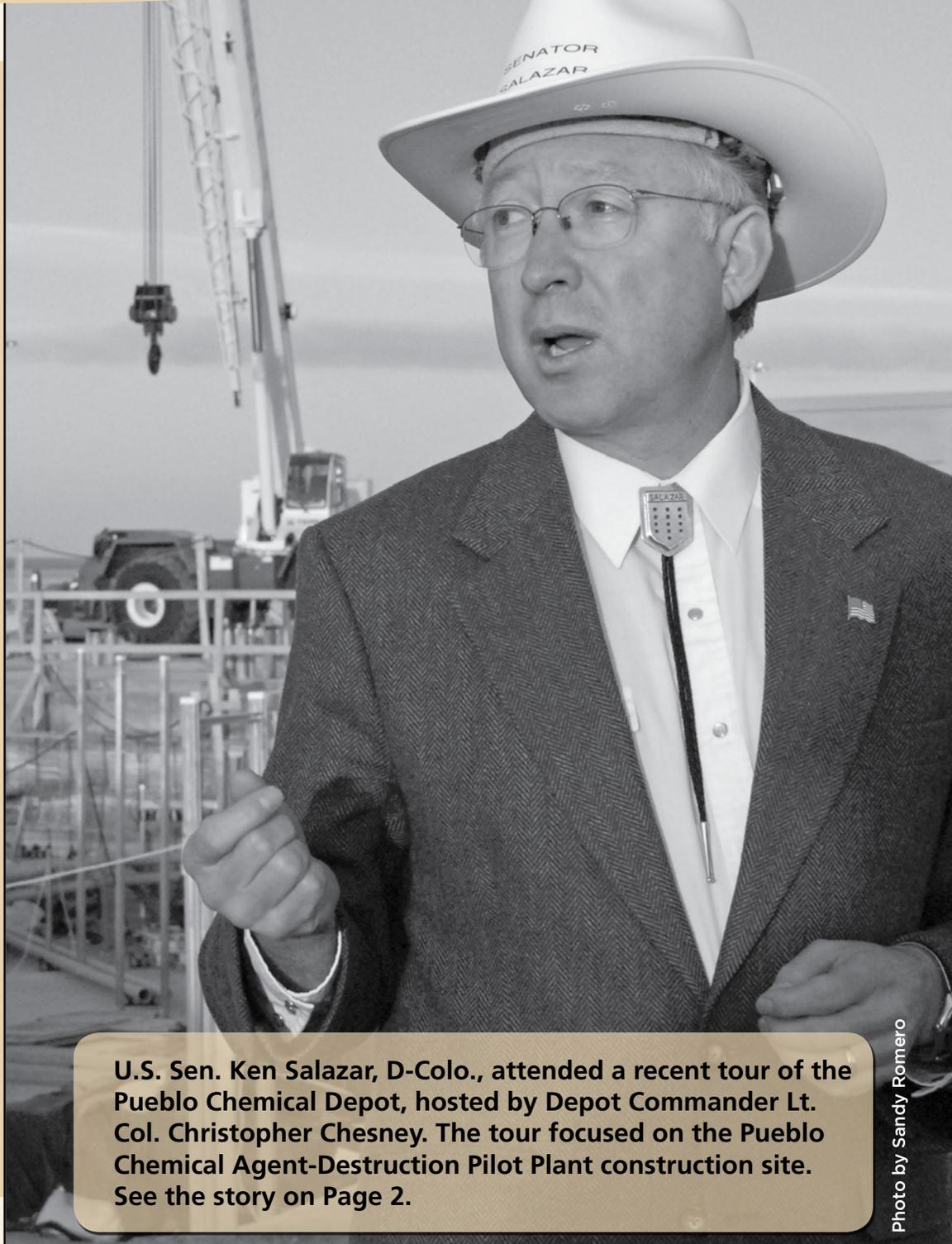
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U.S. Sen. Ken Salazar, D-Colo., attended a recent tour of the Pueblo Chemical Depot, hosted by Depot Commander Lt. Col. Christopher Chesney. The tour focused on the Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant construction site. See the story on Page 2.

Photo by Sandy Romero

Senator Salazar Tours PCAPP

By BOB KENNEMER
PCAPP Community Outreach Manager

U.S. Sen. Ken Salazar, D-Colo., went to work on President's Day, touring the Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant (PCAPP) site with several members of his Pueblo and Denver staff.

While en route to the pilot plant, the senator expressed interest in the benefits that the Defense Access Road (DAR) project would bring to the area around the Pueblo Airport Industrial Park. Gary Anderson, PCAPP site project manager, explained that the DAR provided a second access and egress point for the industrial park, dispersing traffic and improving

safety by creating another emergency evacuation route.

At the site, Salazar observed construction progress and met with members of the media. Salazar said that he was pleased to see the pilot plant making significant headway, and added that he would like the project to be accelerated as much as possible.

Salazar has been working with U.S. Sen. Wayne Allard, also from Colorado, to secure additional funds for the PCAPP project.

"This project is one of my top priorities in the region," Salazar said.



Photo by Sandy Romero

U.S. Sen. Ken Salazar toured the Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant (PCAPP) construction site on President's Day. From left are Paul Henry, Bechtel project manager; Ed Snatchko, Bechtel construction manager; Ken Salazar, U.S. senator; Gary Anderson, PCAPP site project manager; and Lt. Col. Christopher Chesney, commander, U.S. Army Pueblo Chemical Depot.

Detailed Designs Envisioned for Phase III Permitting

By JEANNINE NATTERMAN
Public Information Officer, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

The Hazardous Materials and Waste Management Division of the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) has been tasked with preparing permit requirements for the construction and operation of the Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant (PCAPP).

The challenge of this task lies in the need to envision every detail of what will happen at the pilot plant. From this vision, CDPHE must create a detailed analysis of engineering design and operating conditions and transform it into a regulatory compliance. The final result will be the physical reality of the PCAPP facility.

The pilot plant must not simply work, but work safely. Safe operations will ultimately protect both public health and the environment to the highest standard that science, the systems

contractor and the government experts can possibly achieve. Phase III permit work is particularly important because this will determine how the munitions, including the mustard agent and energetics, will be handled from their storage in igloos to end-wastes of metal, wood (dunnage), water and salts.

The state health department is in the process of writing a draft modified permit that will include all of this work. The permit will be presented to the public for review and comment in spring 2008. It will include sections on the following:

- Waste analysis plan
- Containment buildings
- Munitions and energetics storage magazines
- Enhanced reconfiguration building
- Agent processing building
- Corridors for both the enhanced reconfiguration and agent processing buildings

- Biotreatment area
- Brine recovery

In addition, the permit will also contain the following conceptual plans:

- Pilot test plan
- Hazard preventions and inspections plan
- Contingency plan
- Training plan
- Closure plan

These plans will require additional detailed information from the Bechtel Pueblo Team and the Army in accordance with enforceable deadlines established in the permit.

CDPHE is offering several Phase III permitting activities to provide the community with an opportunity to examine and comment on plans regarding the permitting process. Check your mail and the *Pueblo Chieftain* to learn more about these opportunities and other permit news.

Medical Facility Adds to Project Safety

By BOB KENNEMER
PCAPP Community Outreach Manager

As the Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant project moves forward, there is a need to expand on-site emergency medical services. To meet this need, a temporary medical and safety trailer has been built, where staff can provide all basic first aid, advanced cardiac life support and specialized care for eye and other injuries.

Leading a medical team of three is Ken Young, a paramedic and veteran of other chemical demilitarization sites. Young is proud that the pilot plant project has recently reached a major milestone in medical safety.

“We are at 3 million job hours without a lost time injury,” Young said. “Our team is here to support construction. As the project grows, we will grow.”

At their peak, the medical staff will total 31 members and will ultimately move into an expanded setting. Currently, the medical trailer is a mini-clinic where an injured worker can receive the necessary medical treatment. The team also works in concert with the Pueblo Chemical Depot’s fire department and several other local medical facilities in Pueblo.

“Those clinics specialize in occupational medicine, and they are experts at treating non-urgent, on-the-job injuries,” Young said. “Of course, we also work with staff from local hospitals, but we haven’t had to do so thus far. I plan to keep it that way.”

Another member of Young’s team is Jennifer Wilson, a registered nurse. Cristina Sigala rounds out the team



Photo by Bob Kennemer

Ray Aguirre, a journeyman carpenter, allows Ken Young, emergency preparedness manager, to demonstrate the Slit Lamp test on his eye. The device is housed in the new medical and safety trailer located on the construction site and is used to locate foreign particles in the eye.

as an EMTB+, which means she can also insert IVs in patients. (See related article on Page 7.)

The medical and safety trailer is also home to the site’s radio communications center. The staff there closely monitors the weather, allowing workers to take shelter before a storm hits.

With the low patient count, the staff keeps busy developing safety training programs and producing a construction newsletter that includes safety tips.

“By focusing on hazard awareness and prevention, we will reach the 4 million job hour mark without a lost time injury,” Young said.

Safety Milestone Reached

On March 12, the Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant (PCAPP) project reached an important safety milestone, celebrating 3 million job hours without a lost time injury.

“I am very proud of our safety environment and the strong emphasis placed on safety by the Bechtel Pueblo Team,” stated Paul Henry, Bechtel project manager.

Henry explained that Bechtel’s safety culture has been adopted by everyone on the project.

“This remarkable achievement couldn’t have been reached without the dedicated building trade workers who have embraced our safety program,” Henry stated. “Their commitment to safety is key to achieving our goal of zero accidents.”

Gary Anderson, the PCAPP site project manager, agreed with Henry’s assessment.

“It is evident that the safety culture, which Bechtel promotes, has caught on,” Anderson said. “Not only are the project’s subcontractors supporting the safety program, they are helping to enforce it. Safety needs to be part of everyone’s work day.”



Photo by Bob Kennemer

Cristina Sigala, project emergency medical technician, monitors severe weather conditions as part of the Bechtel Pueblo Team’s safety program. Advanced monitoring allows workers to take shelter well before bad weather arrives.

Construction Gaining *Momentum*

By SANDY ROMERO
Bechtel Communications Manager

With several buildings, utilities and high-mast lighting in place and construction vehicles scurrying about, the Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant (PCAPP) site is the busiest it has been since construction began in September 2005.

The PCAPP facility will be completed in three stages of construction. Stage 1 has been completed and includes an access road, fencing and guard station. Stage 2 is well under way and includes all “non-process” facilities and aboveground utilities. Stage 3, the most complex part of the project, includes all the processing buildings. Limited Stage 3 work started in February with the foundation for the agent processing building.

“We’ve had a good start,” said Construction Manager Ed Snatchko. “We’re in the initial phases of vertical construction. We put a lot of effort into earthworks and utilities, but almost all that work is hidden underground. It’s gratifying to see buildings coming out of the ground.”

First to go vertical was the multipurpose building, which will be used as a warehouse and laundry facility during PCAPP operations. But, until operations begin (currently slated for 2011), the building will function as a warehouse with personnel occupying the building in July.

Colorado Fire & Sprinkler of Colorado Springs will provide fire protection and detection systems for the PCAPP project. Construction of this system will begin at the end of April.



“Construction is progressing smoothly. We’re very pleased with the quality of local craft workers who are available to work on this project.”

— **Ed Snatchko**
Bechtel Construction Manager

While much of the early construction was accomplished with subcontractors, Bechtel is now using direct-hire construction workers for most of the project. The company has a project labor agreement with the Colorado Building and Construction Trades Council, which provides skilled craft workers through local union halls.

The number of construction workers on the project will top 250 by the end of the year, up from approximately 100 in March 2008. By fall 2009, the project will peak with nearly 400 construction workers building the PCAPP facility. Snatchko says the total project will take 2.5 million labor hours of construction.



Photo by Bill Marchi



Photo by Bob Kennemer

The metal framework of the multipurpose building marks the first vertical construction at the project site. The building will be used as a general warehouse.



Photo by Rosemary Patterson

Armando Avitia is a laborer with the project. Thus far, more than 4,000 cubic yards of concrete have been placed at the site.



Photo by Rosemary Patterson

Workers prepare a concrete pad, which will hold a large tank called the Process Water Tank. Water from this tank will be used to wash out the munitions stored at the U.S. Army Pueblo Chemical Depot.

Depot's New Public Affairs Officer Supports Honest Mission

By ANNA FALKENSTINE
ACWA Public Affairs Team

After a two and a half year stint in Kuwait, Chuck Sprague has been lured back into the chemical weapons storage business.

Sprague, the new public affairs officer for the Pueblo Chemical Depot, was a toxic material handler in Utah prior to working seven and a half years in the public affairs office at Deseret Chemical Depot, Tooele, Utah.

"This position in Pueblo fit like a glove because of my unique perspective within the chem demil program," Sprague said.

"Trust is the key," Sprague said. "And if you're honest, you develop a good rapport with the public and the media, and operations can continue without problems."

Most recently, Sprague was the public affairs officer for the Army Sustainment Command. While there, he published a monthly newsletter for distribution to civilian and military employees deployed in Qatar, Kuwait and Afghanistan, which featured news regarding three different battalions.

A staunch believer in the importance of the depot's mission, he looks forward



Photo by Sandy Romero

Chuck Sprague has worked as a public affairs officer since 1996, previously serving in Utah and the Middle East.

to seeing the success of the project and ensuring that the community remains accurately and honestly informed.

"Our goal is to safely get rid of these hazardous chemicals," Sprague said. "Everyone at the depot looks towards that one goal."

CSEPP Strives for Community Safety

By LISA SHORTER
Public Information Officer, Chemical Stockpile
Emergency Preparedness Program
Pueblo County Department of Emergency
Management

Pueblo County is one of seven remaining communities in which World War II era chemical agents are stored. The commitment to safely store and destroy these agents has led to a whole cadre of people working together to offer these communities the maximum protection available.

Each year, the Pueblo emergency response community comes together in a mock exercise involving a hypothetical accident with the mustard agent stockpile at the U.S. Army Pueblo Chemical Depot. The exercise is coordinated by the Chemical Stockpile Emergency Preparedness Program (CSEPP), but federal evaluators are also on site to provide feedback and suggest improvements.

The outreach and public affairs staff of the Colorado Division of Emergency Management, Pueblo County Department of Emergency Management, the depot and the Pueblo Chemical Stockpile Outreach Office staff a Joint Information Center (JIC). This is designed to ensure that citizens know how to protect themselves in the unlikely event of a mustard agent-related accident impacting the communities outside depot boundaries.

New this year for JIC volunteers in the center will be a stress reduction program, which leads various activities designed to reduce stress, such as proper hydration, breathing techniques and stretching.

This annual event tests our local agencies, including medical, public safety and emergency medical responders, to ensure that the community is prepared in the event of a chemical accident. Sheriff's deputies, local police and state



Photo by Bob Kennemer

Lisa Shorter, right, public information officer, Pueblo County Department of Emergency Management, meets with a resident of Avondale during Back to School Night, which was recently held at the Avondale Elementary School.

troopers are trained to staff designated traffic control points, identify symptoms of hazardous material exposure and help with evacuations. The fire departments and medical personnel are also trained in hazardous materials decontamination and early treatment of agent exposure.

The safety of the citizens of Pueblo County is CSEPP's priority. This year's exercise is scheduled for June 4.

Employee Corner

Emergency Responder Enjoys Work, Volunteering

By SANDY ROMERO
Bechtel Communications Manager

Cristina Sigala loves an adventure.

Not long ago, she was studying nursing in college. Today, she works as the EMT for the Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant (PCAPP) project and volunteers as an EMT and firefighter in her hometown of La Junta, Colo.



Photo by Bob Kenemer

Cristina Sigala serves as an EMT on the PCAPP project. She currently resides in La Junta, where she volunteers as an EMT with the local fire department.

“My last prerequisite for a nursing degree was on hold, so I decided to take an EMT course,” said Sigala. “I took it thinking I’d never do anything with it, but I loved it.”

She went on to get IV certified and registered with the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians. That was seven years ago. Today, she’s on the front line of the PCAPP Emergency Response Team and ready to tackle different situations that come her way.

Sigala is excited to be a part of the project. “This is the best job I’ve ever had,” she said. “It’s a fantastic team.”

Once Sigala’s daughter graduates from high school in May, their family is moving to Pueblo so she can be closer to work. Sigala is busy looking for their new home. She hopes to volunteer as an EMT and firefighter in her new district.

As far as a nursing degree, Sigala intends to complete one last course so she can take state boards. For the past several years, Sigala has taken adventurous paths that have led her to where she is today.

“It’s nice to get up every day and love what you’re doing,” Sigala said.

Chemical Engineer Works to Improve Pilot Plant Operations

By ANNA FALKENSTINE
ACWA Public Affairs Team

Fred Haemer’s first job as a chemical engineer was to develop flat batteries for Polaroid cameras. Today, he’s still a chemical engineer, celebrating his fifth anniversary as a member of the Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant (PCAPP) team.



Photo by Sandy Romero
Fred Haemer recently celebrated his fifth anniversary working at the PCAPP as a chemical engineer.

At PCAPP, Haemer performs technical evaluations of equipment designed by Bechtel to be used in the pilot plant. He also acts as a liaison between Bechtel and the Army, ensuring that this equipment is doing what the Army expects in terms of safety and efficiency.

Once destruction operations at PCAPP begin, Haemer will begin training operators to safely handle the hazardous chemicals, ensuring that the process exceeds the facility’s commitment to safety.

“Teaching my operators how to properly handle the chemicals is the best part of my job,” Haemer said. “I enjoy empowering hard-working people and ensuring that everything proceeds as planned.”

Believing that there is always room for improvement, Haemer also makes it a priority to identify and implement improved technical design ideas for the plant.

“I’m constantly looking for new solutions, and listening for the right information to find them is especially important when dealing with extremely hazardous chemicals,” Haemer said.

With all of these responsibilities to oversee, Haemer still finds time to serve on the Knights of Columbus, where many of the members are retirees from the Pueblo Chemical Depot.

“I enjoy hearing stories of their experiences at the depot,” Haemer said. “It makes me appreciate my own experience and the project that I’m dedicated to.”

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, Bob Kennemer, by phone at (719) 546-0400 or e-mail at kennemer_bob@bah.com.

Virtual Information | Exchange

Find out more about ACWA's mission to safely destroy the chemical weapons stockpiles located at Pueblo Chemical Depot, Colo., and Blue Grass Army Depot, Ky., by visiting www.pmacwa.army.mil.

Current and past editions of the Pueblo *Exchange* can also be found online. To locate the newsletters, click on the Information Products link and then on the word "Newsletters."

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Pueblo Chemical Agent-
Destruction Pilot Plant

