



Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Pueblo Chemical Stockpile Outreach Office  
104 West B Street  
Pueblo, CO 81003  
(719) 546-0400  
PuebloOutreach@iem.com

Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant Public Affairs  
(719) 549-4959

U.S. Army Pueblo Chemical Depot Public Affairs Office  
(719) 549-4135  
usarmy.pueblo.usamc.mbx.pcd-pao@mail.mil



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# First Chemical Weapons Processed Today In Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant

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**CONTACT: Thomas Schultz**  
[thomas.c.schultz.civ@mail.mil](mailto:thomas.c.schultz.civ@mail.mil)  
719-549-4959

PUEBLO CHEMICAL DEPOT, Colo. – Officials confirmed processing has begun of the first mustard agent-filled munitions today in the heavily automated facility built to destroy the chemical weapons stockpile stored at the U.S. Army Pueblo Chemical Depot.

"This is a momentous day for all of us involved in the U.S. chemical demilitarization program," said Colonel Thomas A. Duncan II, depot commander. "After years of design, construction and systemization, the Pueblo plant, its operators and the depot workforce have proven their readiness. The entire Pueblo community can take pride in this event, as it could not occur without everyone's support. As we move forward, we continue to keep the workforce, the community and the environment safe."

"The start-up of this facility reflects the diligence and determination of multiple local, state and federal agencies, all dedicated to ensuring safe, secure and environmentally sound operations," said PCAPP Site Project Manager Greg Mohrman. "Every aspect of the plant, including worker safety and environmental protection, was examined and validated by external experts before we were allowed to begin."

The 85-acre Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant, also known as PCAPP, will employ neutralization followed by biotreatment to safely destroy more than 2,600 tons of mustard agent in artillery projectiles and mortar rounds stored at the Pueblo depot since the late 1950s, Mohrman said.

"I couldn't be more proud of the dedication of the employees of the Bechtel Pueblo Team who made the PCAPP project a reality," said Bechtel Project Manager Rick Holmes. "We will leave Pueblo a safer and more secure community because of the work that's been done here."

Responsibility for the design, construction and operation of the state-of-the-art facility was contracted by the government in 2002 to Bechtel National, Inc. with subcontractors AECOM, Parsons and Battelle Memorial Institute, known collectively as the Bechtel Pueblo Team.

The plant will now operate under a pilot phase that includes ramp-up, testing, demonstration and an integrated facility demonstration to validate final operating conditions, Holmes said.

PCAPP is forecast to complete its destruction mission by mid-2020, at which time the chemical destruction facilities will be decontaminated, decommissioned and dismantled in compliance with public law.

Problematic chemical munitions not easily processed by the automated equipment in the plant will be eliminated in the PCAPP Explosive Destruction System (EDS). In its initial 10-month campaign which ended this past February, the EDS destroyed 560 artillery projectiles, mortar rounds and sealed steel bottles containing agent samples. The unit remains on site ready to destroy any future reject munitions found during each of the main plant's three planned destruction campaigns.

The Pueblo stockpile, together with that at Blue Grass Army Depot in Kentucky, accounts for the last 10 percent of what was originally a national stockpile of more than 30,000 tons of chemical weapons stored at nine sites across the U.S. and on Johnston Atoll in the Pacific. The Kentucky site is currently scheduled to begin destroying munitions in 2017.

For more information, please visit <http://www.peocwa.army.mil/>.