



U.S. Army Element, Assembled
Chemical Weapons Alternatives

ACWA QUARTERLY BRIEF

A Partnership for Safe Chemical Weapons Destruction

June 2012



HOT TOPICS

Explosive Destruction Technology Discussions Continue in Colorado. Work continues in Colorado to explore the use of explosive destruction technologies (EDT) to destroy portions of the chemical weapons stockpiles that cannot be safely and quickly destroyed using the automated processes of the neutralization plant. The Pueblo Chemical Depot (PCD), in conjunction with the Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives (ACWA) Program, completed and released for public comment an environmental assessment which complies with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The environmental assessment concluded that no significant impacts would occur as a result of the construction and operation of an EDT facility at the U.S. Army Pueblo Chemical Depot in Colorado. A formal comment period was held from April 9 - June 7, 2012. The Department of Defense will review all comments received to determine a path forward in accordance with NEPA regulations.

More Equipment Makes the Trek to Kentucky. The Blue Grass Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant (BGCAPP) team received another special delivery in May. The Rocket Cutter Machine (RCM) arrived at the site at the end of May from Pasco, Wash., where it was fabricated and tested. The RCM is the first of two nerve agent rocket disassembly machines that will be used at BGCAPP. The remote-controlled machines will be placed in the Munitions Demilitarization Building (MDB), where most of the chemical weapons destruction process will occur. During BGCAPP plant operations, they will safely separate the rocket motor from the warhead. The machines will operate inside a blast-proof room behind steel-laced concrete walls measuring more than 2-feet thick.



Coming Full-Circle

The National Research Council (NRC) has played an important part of the ACWA program since the days of the ACWA Dialogue when PCAPP was just a concept. This spring, George Lecakes, Chief Scientist, Bechtel Pueblo Team (center), was able to show visiting representatives from the NRC how the concept has become a reality at the nearly completed PCAPP site.

MESSAGE FROM THE PROGRAM EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Progress, progress, progress.

This has and continues to be the mantra of the ACWA program and of our teams in the field at the Blue Grass and Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plants (BGCAPP/PCAPP). Our focus on progress has triggered an important and satisfying shift; for the first time, our list of construction accomplishments exceeds our list of construction “to-dos.” The Blue Grass team hit the 50% complete mark this spring, and our team in Pueblo expects to wrap up major construction activities in the fall. With only the remaining minor construction activities required towards the end of the calendar year, the PCAPP team will be moving full throttle into systemization activities.

As we get closer to wrapping up construction, our program’s first priority remains maintaining the top-notch safety and environmental standards that have been established at the BGCAPP and PCAPP construction sites. Along those lines, with 90% of the nation’s chemical stockpile safely destroyed, it is more critical than ever that we remain closely aligned with the Chemical Stockpile Emergency Preparedness Program (CSEPP). Over the course of the next few years, I expect to interact more and more with our partners in preparedness. I recently had the opportunity of presenting an ACWA program update to the 2012 CSEPP National Conference, which allowed me to bring attendees up to speed on our latest accomplishments and to discuss future preparedness needs. This was a worthwhile experience, and I look forward to engaging with our CSEPP partners and the local responders in the Pueblo and Blue Grass communities in the future.

The CSEPP conference also provided a forum to reinforce ACWA’s commitment to transparency and public involvement. With that in mind, I want to take a moment to remind all our readers of the many resources available for obtaining more information on the program, as well as those outlets through which stakeholders can provide feedback to us. We have a number of online resources; our website – www.pmacwa.army.mil – offers a wealth of information, as well as links to multiple social media platforms that highlight photos, videos and more. And lastly, the doors to our public outreach offices in Richmond and Pueblo are always open to the many stakeholders who have shaped this program from its inception and those we’re just getting to know.

Thanks again for your continued support and have a safe and enjoyable summer.

Conrad F. Whyne
Program Executive Officer



Committed to Stakeholder Engagement

ACWA Program Executive Officer Conrad Whyne (second from right) shared his perspective on the ACWA program path forward at the March 2012 Kentucky Chemical Demilitarization Chemical Destruction Community Advisory Board (CDCAB) meeting. He is flanked, left to right, by Blue Grass Chemical Activity Commander Lt. Col. Steve Basso, Blue Grass Army Depot Chief of Staff George Shuplinkov and CDCAB member Harry Moberly, Jr.



PILOT PLANT UPDATES

Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant (PCAPP)

Construction Update: Though the Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant (PCAPP) expects to complete site construction activities this year, work has not slowed. In the Agent Processing Building where mustard agent will be drained and the munitions bodies washed out, PCAPP workers completed piping, electrical and mechanical equipment installation and are now working through final minor construction activities. The team is also focused on completing the construction checklists for the Brine Reduction System, having recently completed piping, supports and instrumentation work. Throughout the rest of the site, in the Enhanced Reconfiguration Building, Laboratory, Medical Facility and Filter Press Building, workers are installing equipment and piping, conducting tests to ensure that facilities work, and scheduling systems and buildings for turnover to systemization teams.

Systemization Update: Additional buildings and systems were turned over from the construction team to the systemization team, including the Enhanced Reconfiguration Building, Multipurpose Building and Laboratory Building. Systemization encompasses all the planning, technical work, training and testing activities required to ensure buildings and systems are prepared for start-up operations.



Two is Better than One
Sets of hands, that is. Electricians place brackets on the monorail crane support inside the PCAPP Agent Processing Building (APB). The bracket will hold electrical conduit, which will provide power to the APB monorail crane.

Blue Grass Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant (BGCAPP)

Construction Update: This spring, the BGCAPP team reached a significant near-term goal—the halfway point towards completion. Recent accomplishments that contributed to this milestone included: completion of the second lift concrete placement and blast gates for the MDB, where the bulk of destruction operations will occur; the concrete foundation for the Hydrolysate Storage Area, where tanks will store hydrolysate, the byproduct of the neutralization process; and HVAC systems in the Utility and Laboratory Buildings. BGCAPP workers also started filter area excavations and HVAC systems work in the MDB. Structural steel, lighting, piping, wiring, and alarm systems continue to be installed on the site.

Systemization Update: Systemization of the Fire Water Pump House was completed. The 138kV substation underwent partial systemization for its current operations. Work continues to connect the 138kV substation to the Facility Control System.



SCWO Building at Blue Grass Takes Shape

The Supercritical Water Oxidation, or SCWO, Processing Building is rising from the ground, as workers install structural steel to frame it out. This building will house all equipment to further treat hydrolysate, the byproduct of the chemical agent neutralization process.

NEXT 90 DAYS AT ACWA

Pueblo: Major construction activities are scheduled to be complete in the fall. The PCAPP team, in concert with ACWA leadership, will be reviewing public comments submitted in response to the environmental assessment developed for evaluating the use of an Explosive Destruction Technology.

Blue Grass: In the next quarter, workers at Blue Grass expect to complete additional MDB concrete placements, Hydrolysate Storage Area site work and Laboratory Building assembly. BGCAPP will receive another major piece of equipment, the Rocket Shear Machine, which will punch holes in rocket warheads, drain chemical agent and flush the interior of the rockets with high-pressure hot water.

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