U.S. Army Element, Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives

ACWA QUARTERLY BRIEF

A Partnership for Safe Chemical Weapons Destruction

March 2012

HOT TOPICS

Revised Acquisition Program Baseline (APB) Approved. Last June, the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics certified a restructured ACWA program to Congress pursuant to 10 U.S.C. § 2433a, commonly known as the Nunn-McCurdy Act. At that time, the Under Secretary directed the development of a revised APB reflecting the restructured ACWA program.

This revised APB, which was approved in March 2012, establishes a life-cycle program cost estimate of $10.6B and a program schedule that estimates complete destruction of the Pueblo chemical weapons stockpile by 2019 and the Blue Grass chemical weapons stockpile by 2023. This revised schedule is not a timetable, but an estimate that reflects a more realistic, experience-based assessment of the risk and uncertainty inherent in designing, constructing and operating these highly complex facilities. If the risks included in this revised estimate do not materialize or can be swiftly mitigated, the schedule can be shortened accordingly.

Explosive Destruction Technology (EDT) Discussions Continue. Efforts to consider the use of EDT to destroy problematic munitions at the Pueblo and Blue Grass chemical weapons stockpile sites are moving forward. In January, the Blue Grass Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant team concluded a series of discussions with the community on the topic and have since received a formal recommendation on the use of an EDT from the Kentucky Chemical Demilitarization Citizens' Advisory Commission and the Chemical Destruction Community Advisory Board. With this recommendation, the Blue Grass team will initiate the studies required by the National Environmental Policy Act. In Pueblo, the team is preparing to release for public comment a new Environmental Assessment for the possible use of an EDT at the Pueblo facility and will be working with the community to collect comments later this spring.

Citizens and Government Coming Together

As part of their ongoing effort to monitor the progress under way at the Blue Grass Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant (BGCAPP), several of Sen. Mitch McConnell's (R-KY) staff toured the construction site in February with members of the community. From left, Terry Carmack, state director; Craig Williams, Chemical Destruction Community Advisory Board chair; Regina Crawford, field representative; Stephanie Parrett, BGCAPP public affairs specialist; Josh Holmes, chief of staff; and, Jeff Brubaker, BGCAPP site project manager.

MESSAGE FROM THE PROGRAM EXECUTIVE OFFICER

In my first column as ACWA's first program executive officer or PEO, I wanted to begin by thanking all of our stakeholders for your support through the leadership transition of the last 14 months.

This new PEO designation will enhance our focus on the expeditious construction and systemization of the pilot plants in Pueblo and Blue Grass and is designed to raise our visibility within the government, as well as obtain additional dedicated resources in keeping with the importance of the ACWA mission. This effort will be largely invisible to stakeholders, but is intended to improve the program management capabilities and functionality of our staff.

These improvements are critical, as we have important work ahead of us. This spring and summer will see some important milestones to celebrate; they will also prompt what I'm sure will be an expansion of the productive and constructive collaboration between the program, our workforce and the Pueblo and Blue Grass communities. The Blue Grass facility is rapidly approaching 50 percent complete, while the team in Pueblo is moving steadily toward closing-out the construction phase this summer. We are also working with stakeholders toward resolving the challenge of safely destroying problematic munitions we know cannot be processed by the automated equipment in our two plants.

These are some of our focus areas for the next several months. I look forward to celebrating and working through them with all of you. Thank you again for all your contributions to the ACWA program. Your active participation continues to be a valued addition to our ongoing effort to carry out this complex and critical national imperative of safe chemical weapons destruction.

Conrad F. Whyne
Program Executive Officer

PILOT PLANT UPDATES

Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant (PCAPP)

Construction Update: In late January, PCAPP's Enhanced Reconfiguration Building (ERB) became the first full building turned over from the construction team to the systemization team. All of the ERB's interior equipment, including conveyor systems, blast gate doors, actuators, and video monitors has been set or installed, allowing the building to be declared "mechanically complete," a term which means the facility and its machinery are functional and workers are completing final paperwork and punch lists. The building exterior of the final vertical structure, the Filter Press Building, was completed, and interior work continues. Piping, electrical and instrumentation workers also have been busy finishing up projects in the Agent Processing Building and with the Brine Reduction System.

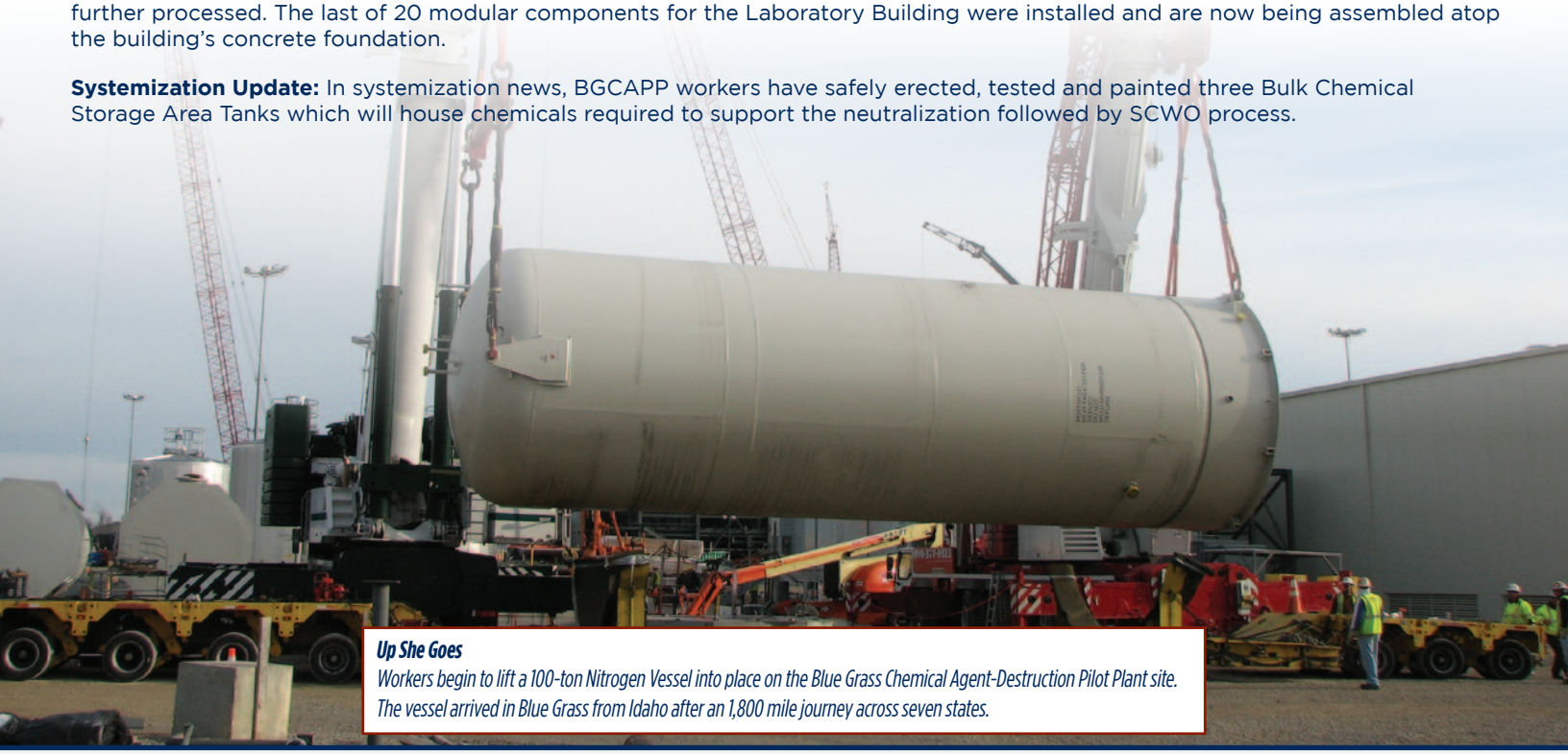
Systemization Update: Twenty additional buildings and systems have been turned over for systemization, including the Control Support Building, Medical Facility, Laboratory and Multipurpose Buildings.

Fine Tuning
With many of the major structures already in place at the Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant, workers have been finishing up smaller projects all across the site, including some work on the three Brine Reduction System distillate carbon filters, which stand out in the Biotreatment Area. The system will be instrumental in recovering the water that will be recycled for reuse throughout the plant.

Blue Grass Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant (BGCAPP)

Construction Update: In the Munitions Demilitarization Building (MDB), where most of the chemical weapons destruction process will occur, BGCAPP workers completed concrete placements in the blast-containment and unpack areas, and continued work on concrete placements, structural steel and wall paneling, as well as protective coatings and blast gates. The Rocket Shear and Cutter Machines, used to remove energetics and chemical agent from the rockets, have been fabricated and are undergoing testing at Parsons' Pasco, Wash., facility. The final major pieces of neutralization equipment, Energetics Batch Hydrolyzers, were installed in the MDB. Elsewhere on the site, structural steel work commenced at the Supercritical Water Oxidation (SCWO) Processing Building, where byproducts of the neutralization process will be stored and further processed. The last of 20 modular components for the Laboratory Building were installed and are now being assembled atop the building's concrete foundation.

Systemization Update: In systemization news, BGCAPP workers have safely erected, tested and painted three Bulk Chemical Storage Area Tanks which will house chemicals required to support the neutralization followed by SCWO process.



Up She Goes
Workers begin to lift a 100-ton Nitrogen Vessel into place on the Blue Grass Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant site. The vessel arrived in Blue Grass from Idaho after an 1,800 mile journey across seven states.

NEXT 90 DAYS AT ACWA

Blue Grass: The team will begin exterior steel assembly for the facility's secondary processing building, the Supercritical Water Oxidation Processing Building, as well as concrete placements for the Munitions Demilitarization Building filter area, the first hydrolysate storage area and the fuel oil storage tank.

Pueblo: Plans are under way to celebrate the end of the Pueblo plant's construction phase this summer, although final construction activities will continue to be wrapped up through September.

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