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Workers Demolishing Significant Inactive Facility at DOE's Paducah Site

PADUCAH, Ky. – Heavy equipment operators are demolishing the last of 32 inactive facilities scheduled to be removed as part of the current cleanup scope at the Department of Energy (DOE) Paducah Site.

The C-410 Feed Plant is expected to be razed to slab by this fall, ridding the site of a structure contaminated with asbestos and a low-level radioactive chemical compound called uranium hexafluoride (UF₆). With an original footprint of almost five acres – roughly equivalent to four football fields – the feed plant operated from 1957 to 1977 to produce UF₆ and fluorine.

“This is a significant accomplishment in our mission of safely cleaning up the site and reducing risk to the environment and the public,” said Rob Seifert, DOE C-410 Project Manager.

Demolition of the feed plant began May 13 and is about one-third completed. Large shear-equipped excavators are tearing down the feed plant from east to west. Operators are cutting steel and other debris into smaller pieces to be shipped in heavily lined, covered railcars to a commercial disposal site.

“Our main objective is to remove the building and dispose of the waste safely and efficiently,” said Butch Nolan, feed plant project manager for DOE cleanup contractor LATA Kentucky.

Application of lessons learned about efficiencies gained from other successful DOE demolition projects — such as the C-340 Metals Building razed at Paducah in 2013 and the K-33 Building razed in Oak Ridge, Tenn. in 2012 — are enabling the feed plant team to progress ahead of schedule. Efficiencies include:

- Using much larger shears and equipment specifically designed for demolition;
- Directly loading covered railcars on location; and
- Having a crew on-site to perform preventative maintenance instead of calling off-site crews to perform repairs after equipment has malfunctioned.

To prepare the eastern area for demolition, crews removed about 800 of the facility's 2,600 panels of exterior siding, each weighing up to 175 pounds. The siding, which contains asbestos, was manually removed and double-wrapped with protective material to guard against airborne contamination prior to disposal in the site's industrial landfill. Siding removal continues on the building's western portion.

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C-410 DEMOLITION

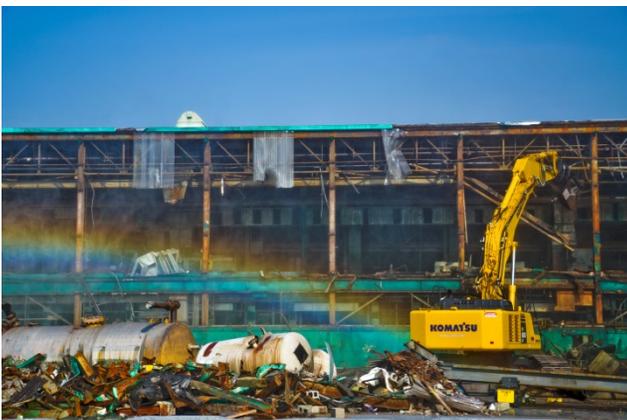
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Demolition of an eastern expansion of the feed plant, covering about half an acre, was completed ahead of schedule in late June 2011 as a result of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding. After the Recovery Act funding ended, workers continued to clean up the rest of the building to prepare it for demolition.

In 2012 and 2013, workers used special equipment to treat nearly two miles of UF₆ piping to make it safe for removal. During pipe removal, more than a ton of residual UF₆ was treated to make it safe for handling and disposal. Workers also removed asbestos wiring and removed and packaged 20 large pieces of equipment known as cold traps. Weighing more than five tons each, the cold traps were used to trap UF₆ gas and turn it into a solid. They were stored at the site for future recovery of UF₆ material during plant decommissioning when systems are in place to remove the material safely and economically.

Video of the demolition may be viewed at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QN_OaKr44bk.

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Top: Panoramic view of the east end of the C-410 complex.

Above left: A rainbow forms as sunlight passes through vapor from misting machines used to suppress dust.

Above right: A shear-equipped excavator cuts beams to allow the roof to safely collapse.

Left: Excavators cut and move debris.

Photo/Video Credit: Dylan Nichols, LATA Kentucky