

Demolition ramping up at gaseous diffusion plant

Posted: Sunday, January 31, 2016 12:31 AM

BY DAVID ZOELLER dzoeller@paducahsun.com



Submitted photo

A heavy equipment operator moves a large section of wall from the C-746-B warehouse during demolition at the U.S. Department of Energy's Paducah Gaseous Diffusion Plant.

As a new phase of demolition gets underway at the Paducah Gaseous Diffusion Plant, the process of transferring assets no longer needed at the plant is also moving forward.

Heavy equipment operators recently demolished the building known as the C-746-B warehouse, the first of 12 inactive facilities set for removal in the coming months as part of the ongoing FY 2016 cleanup effort by Fluor Federal Services, the U.S. Department of Energy's deactivation contractor.

On a separate front, the Paducah Area Community Reuse Organization voted last week to proceed with plans to sell between 10,000 and 15,000 tons of coal. The DOE recently replaced three coal-fired boilers in the plant's steam distribution system with five modern, steam boilers. According to Scott Darnell, president/CEO of Paducah Economic Development, which oversees PACRO, negotiations are underway with an unspecified buyer for the sale of the coal. When the coal is sold, half of the proceeds will go to PACRO and the other half to the U.S. Treasury, he said.

"The decommissioning is going very well," Darnell said. "And the asset transfers are starting to come to fruition. This (the coal sale) is starting the process ... it's one of the more sizable transactions to date."

Members of the PACRO board, who approved proceeding with the coal sale at their meeting Wednesday, were encouraged.

"I've been on this committee for years and years, and we've had this same discussion (potential sale of assets) and nothing happened," board member Betsy Flynn said. "I know you all have worked so long to get something. It is so good to finally see something happening there."

The C-746-B warehouse was built in the 1960s. The 72,000-square-foot warehouse stored out-of-service equipment from past operations. According to the DOE, polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) and hazardous metals waste were removed from the warehouse prior to demolition for shipment to an off-site disposal facility.

Forklifts, welders, piping, mills, lathes and other equipment were among the nearly 38,000 cubic feet of material removed prior to the warehouse's demolition. The demolition project also includes a fuel oil storage tank, acid tanks, waste storage facilities, a 50-ton scale building and smaller ancillary facilities.

So far, the demolition has totaled nearly 400,000 square feet.

"We have initiated additional smaller demolition projects after safely finishing demolition of the C-410/C-420 Feed Plant complex in 2015," said Jennifer Woodard, DOE Portsmouth/Paducah Project Office site lead. "Removing these 12 buildings will positively change the landscape of the site and further our goal of making the site safer by removing inactive structures before they deteriorate."