



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF **ENERGY**

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DEMOLITION SAFELY UNDERWAY AT K-25 BUILDING

One of the largest environmental cleanup projects in the Department of Energy

OAK RIDGE, Tenn. – Today workers began the monumental task of demolishing the K-25 Building at the East Tennessee Technology Park Heritage Center (ETTP), the first facility ever built to enrich uranium using the gaseous diffusion process.

“This is a visible sign of progress by the Environmental Management Program to deliver results in Oak Ridge as we begin safely demolishing this massive building,” said Inés Triay, Acting Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management for the Department of Energy (DOE).

Constructed in 1944, as part of the Manhattan Project to develop the first atomic weapon, the massive structure enriched uranium for defense and commercial nuclear power uses until it was shut down in 1964, when more modern facilities at the Oak Ridge site and sites in Kentucky and Ohio replaced the K-25 facility. All uranium enrichment activities at the Oak Ridge site were ceased in 1985.

The U-shaped building covers 1.64 million ft², or 44 acres under one roof, and contains 540 stages of gaseous diffusion and associated auxiliary equipment. Each stage consists of a converter, two compressors, two compressor motors, and associated piping. The building contains more than 400 miles of piping alone.

“The workers on the project have diligently prepared the building to be demolition ready, and today we see the results of this extensive planning and commitment to undertake this job in a safe manner,” said Gerald Boyd, Manager of DOE’s Oak Ridge Office.

Activities undertaken to prepare the K-25 Building for demolition include: process system stabilization by injecting a foam material into the equipment and piping to immobilize residual low levels of uranium that may remain in the systems; removal and segmentation of high-risk components; removal of transite panels; and shipment of some equipment off site for disposal. Measures have also been taken to improve the safety of workers, including the installation of nets and barriers to add protection from falling debris.

The building’s demolition is part of DOE’s long-term reindustrialization strategy at the site, which includes demolishing old, contaminated, and unsafe facilities and reclaiming the property for future use as part of a private sector industrial park now known as Heritage Center. This initiative includes the reuse of some of the more modern, uncontaminated facilities at the site. Many older facilities, such as the K-25 Building, are not fit for reuse and pose potential long-term environmental and safety problems and are therefore being demolished.

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The demolition is being accomplished by DOE environmental cleanup contractor Bechtel Jacobs Co. LLC, whose president and general manager, Paul Divjak, said it has taken a long time and a lot of hard work to get to this point, but noted that the job is just beginning and “we must continue to focus on doing this very hazardous work safely.”

The west wing of the building is scheduled to be completely demolished by the end of 2010. The entire facility is scheduled to be demolished with all waste disposed by the end of 2011. Most of the waste from the demolition is being taken to the Environmental Management Waste Management Facility on DOE’s Oak Ridge Reservation for disposal.

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Photos available by contacting the DOE Public Affairs Office at (865) 576-0885.