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HANFORD'S 242-A EVAPORATOR SUCCESSFULLY REDUCES NUCLEAR WASTE VOLUME IN HANFORD'S TANKS

480,000 gallons of volume created in double-shell tanks

Workers at Hanford's only nuclear processing facility, the 242-A Evaporator, have completed two operating campaigns that successfully reduced the volume of waste in the double-shell storage tanks by 480,000 gallons, creating additional space to store radioactive and chemical waste that will be removed from aging single-shell tanks.

Hanford's 28 double-shell storage tanks have a capacity of about 1.1 million gallons each. This evaporator campaign reduced the volume of waste in Hanford's tanks equal to nearly one-half of one of the double-shell tanks.

"The evaporator is critical to the safe and timely cleanup of Hanford's tank waste," said Stacy Charboneau, DOE-Office of River Protection Assistant Manager for the Tank Farms. "It's the evaporator's job to remove moisture from the waste, creating additional storage space in the double-shell tanks. Without the evaporator, we would have limited storage space and that impacts our ability to retrieve waste from the single-shell tanks."

The evaporator last ran in 2009, when it reduced the waste volume in the double-shell tanks by more than 940,000 gallons. This evaporator campaign created double-shell tank storage space that will allow waste to be retrieved from single-shell tank C-111 later this year.

Originally expected to operate for 10 years, upgrades have kept the evaporator operating safely for more than 30 years. A series of additional upgrades are expected to keep the facility operational until 2040. These upgrades include modernizing the ventilation system, updating the monitoring and control system, replacing the raw water system and decontaminating the condenser room to make it safer for workers. Several of the recent upgrades were funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

Since it began operating in 1977, the 242-A Evaporator has reduced the total volume of waste in Hanford's 28 double-shell storage tanks by more than 67 million gallons. Managing the liquid volume helps DOE avoid the cost of building new double-shell storage tanks at Hanford, which would cost hundreds of millions of dollars.

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