

Recovery Act Funding Accelerates Building Demolition at New York SPRU Project

Significant progress is being made in the decontamination and demolition (D&D) of two contaminated buildings at the Separations Process Research Unit (SPRU). The two buildings, designated G2 and H2, are contaminated with radioactivity and have large quantities of hazardous materials such as asbestos.

They are located at the Knolls Atomic Power Laboratory (KAPL) near Schenectady, New York, which is a Department of Energy – Naval Reactors site. The work is being performed by Washington Group International (WGI). About 50 percent of WGI's work at SPRU is funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

WGI, with the Recovery Act funding has accomplished a number of important activities. WGI took advantage of a site-wide electrical outage on October 17, and worked with the KAPL site contractor to disconnect most site power from Buildings G2 and H2, and install temporary power. This allowed asbestos removal, which is a substantial part of the near-term D&D work, to restart on October 29.

Asbestos waste is packaged in inter-modal containers and shipped off site for disposal. Asbestos removal will be a major component of preparing the buildings for their ultimate demolition. In addition to asbestos removal, WGI is performing radiological and chemical characterization in previously inaccessible areas of the SPRU buildings. Some of these areas were last entered in the 1960's. WGI anticipates that the buildings will be "demolition ready" in August of 2010.

Additionally, as part of the work being funded by the base program, WGI began excavation of soil above the subterranean tank vaults in Building H2. This soil is being handled as radioactive waste and is being packaged in inter-modal containers and shipped off site for disposal. WGI expects to ship up to four inter-modal containers per day of soil. The excavation is expected to continue through the month of November.

The SPRU D&D project is scheduled to finish in September 2011. ARRA provides \$37 million in funding for D&D efforts at SPRU. As of October 2, WGI had saved or created 55 jobs at SPRU using ARRA funds.

SPRU was a research project located at KAPL in the early 1950's. Its purpose was to research chemical process for separating plutonium and uranium from irradiated materials. The SPRU project includes remediation of approximately 30 acres of contaminated soil, in addition to D&D of the SPRU buildings. The SPRU building D&D and other work is overseen by the department of Energy's SPRU Field Office.

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