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# C<sup>the</sup> Current



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Please submit story ideas or comments to *WCH Communications*.

The editor reserves the right to edit any submitted articles for length and clarity.

## Weather-Related Work Delays and Closures

This scenario is familiar to all of us – we get up in the morning to find ice or snow has covered our world while we slept, and now we are wondering if there is a work delay or closure in our immediate future. Upon calling the Washington Closure Hotline, it hasn't been updated and it takes longer to update it than we think it should. So what is the process that ends in the hotline being updated, or an email going out to employees with notification of an early release? Why does it sometimes seem to take longer than expected?

Fluor Hanford (FH) has responsibility for checking with road crews and the weather station throughout the night (or throughout the day) for updates on road conditions and weather

predictions. Once FH has made a determination to advise a delay or closure, they must contact the U. S. Department of Energy, Richland Operations Office (RL), who will make the decision for delays or closures, based on the recommendation and information provided by FH. When RL approves the delay or closure, FH starts the notification process, which is lengthy. Many times, there is only one person responsible for making those notifications, which includes



**“We make every possible effort to keep our work force informed regarding work delays and closures.”**

*Tim Quinn, WCH Security Manager*

contacting the news media, updating site communication systems and contacting site points of contact.

Once the point of contact for Washington Closure Hanford (WCH) has been notified, he provides the information to upper

management, who makes the decisions for how WCH will be affected. At this point, the hotline is updated, if appropriate, or Communications and Public Affairs will be asked to make a project wide announcement for an early release.

## Service Awards

The following individuals have reached a milestone in their careers at Hanford.

### 20 Years:

**Vonnie Lindbergh**, WCH

**Dale Obenauer**, WCH

### 25 Years:

**Kevin Bergstrom**, WCH

### Weather-Related Work Delays continued

“We make every possible effort to keep our work force informed regarding work delays and closures,” said Tim Quinn, WCH security manager/single point of contact. “There can be as much as half an hour from the time the decision is made to close or delay the site and WCH receiving the notification.” The need for prompt information is recognized by WCH and “the goal is always to let personnel know as soon as we know of any schedule changes due to weather,” said Tim.

As a reminder, the WCH Hotline number is (509) 372-9002.

## Up, Up and Away at 107-N

Hazardous waste material, including tanks weighing up to 46,000 pounds, is being removed this month from along the bank of the Columbia River.



*Workers at 107-N, located on the bank of the Columbia River, removed two of the five tanks – some of which contain highly radioactive contamination.*

The 107-N structure is located behind N Reactor in Hanford's 100 Area. The facility was in operation from 1984 to 1989 to cool and filter irradiated 105-N fuel storage building water.

“Significant operational and radiological issues confront this project during demolition,” stated Jeremy Hulquist, project superintendent. “The project will remove five tanks from the facility and we are taking every precaution to ensure worker and river safety,” said Jeremy.

The most challenging tank is the 20,000-gallon-capacity, T-1 settling tank, which measures 12 feet in diameter, is 29 feet long with a radiological reading of 10,000 millirem per hour, posing a hazard to workers.

they are working hard and making good progress, and we are working safely and diligently to do the job right the first time,” explained John Carranco, 100-N project manager. “Worker involvement has played a significant role in our preparations and progress.”

The D4 crew removed four roof hatches the week of December 8, after removing hazardous fluids and asbestos from the building. The tanks and remaining hazardous equipment will be removed so demolition can start by spring. The debris will be disposed in the Environmental Restoration Disposal Facility (ERDF) in compliance with regulator guidelines.

## Waste Operations Delivers for Food Bank

River Corridor Closure (RCC) Project employees contributed more than 1,200 pounds of food and \$3,100 toward the KNDU Family Food Drive sponsored by URS and Bechtel.

Special thanks go to the Waste Operations crew at ERDF. A competition between Operations, Transportation and Construction yielded more than 50 percent of the total collected by the project – 700 pounds of food and \$2,300. Thanks also go to Kristy Johnson, Training, who coordinated the drive for the RCC project.

“Washington Closure, Eberline, Stoller, Delhur and Envirotech and their subcontractor employees responded very generously,” said Bruce Covert, director of Waste Operations. “Whether it’s disposing of waste at Hanford or helping feed people in the Tri-Cities, Waste Operations delivers.”

Washington Closure joined its parent companies, URS and Bechtel, in the food

## New Hires

WCH welcomes the following new employees who have joined our project:

**Dave Warren:** WCH, Environmental Project Specialist-Environmental Protection

**Mike Thurman:** WCH, Waste Transportation Specialist-Environmental Protection-Waste Services

**Gerald Bergeron:** ESHI, Radiological Control Technician

**Ahbreza Bleux:** ESHI, Radiological Control Technician

**Phillip Cole:** ESHI, Radiological Control Technician

**Thomas Craft:** ESHI, Radiological Control Technician

**Robert Dickenson:** ESHI, Radiological Control Technician

**Leslie Easley:** ESHI, Radiological Control Technician

**Mischelle Fillmore:** ESHI, Radiological Control Technician

**Ann Kiely:** ESHI, Radiological Control Technician

**Scott Koeppen:** ESHI, Radiological Control Technician

**Kenneth Larson:** ESHI, Radiological Control Technician

**Pamela Ann McMenus:** ESHI, Radiological Control Technician

**Gary Robinson:** ESHI, Radiological Control Technician

**Derek Wilkie:** ESHI, Radiological Control Technician

### Waste Operations Delivers continued

Washington Closure joined its parent companies, URS and Bechtel, in the food drive this year. Together, they collected seven tons of food and more than \$50,000, "which is an amazing achievement," said Bob Fussner, who coordinated



The Waste Operations crew at ERDF generously donated 700 pounds of food and \$2,300 to the Family Food Drive.

the Hanford portion of the food drive for URS.

Second Harvest will use the donations to buy an average of six pounds of food per dollar. The donated and purchased food will be distributed to area food banks this holiday season and winter.

## 200th Safety Trained Supervisor Recognized by URS

Earlier this month, TC McDowell was presented with a watch for earning his certification as a Safety Trained Supervisor (STS). The container maintenance supervisor at ERDF is the 200th employee working on the RCC Project to receive a wristwatch for attaining STS certification, a record for any URS Washington Division project.

"It is safe to say your project not only has the most STSs in the Washington Division, but also in the country," said Brad Giles, who made the presentation. Brad is vice president of Environmental, Safety, Health and Security for URS Washington Division.



Brad Giles, left, and Bruce Covert, right, make a presentation to TC McDowell, who is the 200th person on the River Corridor Closure Project to receive Safety Trained Supervisor certification.

Bruce Covert, director of Waste Operations for WCH, said, "We strongly encourage

"The knowledge and involvement of our STSs focus safety at the work activity level – where it matters most."

*Ray Skwarek*

*Safety, Quality & Health Director*

our employees, in addition to our subcontractors, to take the training and certification. From a safety standpoint, it is of great value to us to incorporate our management and the subcontractors' management into the STS program. The benefits from the program will be realized on this project and by the STSs working on future projects," said Bruce.

Ray Skwarek, director of Safety, Health & Quality Assurance for WCH, said having 200-plus safety trained supervisors on the project provides

New Hires continued

**David Aardal:** WCH, D&D-D4

**Michael Anderson:** WCH,  
D&D-D4

**Jason Brooks:** WCH, D&D-D4

**Bryan Brophy:** WCH, D&D-D4

**Chris Catron:** WCH, D&D-D4

**Craig Gottsch:** WCH, D&D-D4

**Julie Gradisher:** WCH, D&D-D4

**John Parker:** WCH, D&D-D4

**Richard Verellen:** WCH, D&D-D4

**Rodney Robinson:** WCH,  
Waste Management Lead-  
Environmental Protection-Waste  
Services

200th STS Recognized continued

more eyes and ears to ensure work is done safely at each job site. “The knowledge and involvement of our STSs focus safety at the work activity level – where it matters most,” said Ray.

About three dozen RCC Project employees are in various stages of certification for the continuing program.

## Drawing in Young Recruits to WCH

Brandon Nixon had never heard of WCH when he interviewed at a University of Idaho career fair last spring. Matter of fact, the Coeur d’Alene native had never heard of Hanford.

Brandon was hired last spring and is one of about 40 people under the age of 30 who work a project where the average age is 48. He works at ERDF as a project controls specialist.

“What attracted me to the Tri-Cities was the job,” said Brandon. He interviewed at the career fair with Theresa Whitcomb, formerly of Human Resources and Brian Stubbs of Engineering Services. Based on that, and a follow-up interview onsite, Brandon felt Washington Closure offered the most opportunities of the companies he talked with.

“I really appreciate everything people have done to explain things,” he said. “I had a steep learning curve – from knowing absolutely nothing about Hanford to doing project controls for Waste Operations. The work is very interesting. The people are good. It’s a good place to work,” Brandon said.

Faith Powers, WCH Human Resources manager said “one of the things that is attractive to recent graduates is that you can start your career on the RCC



Brandon Nixon joined WCH as a project controls specialist after being recruited at a University of Idaho career fair.

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“The work is very interesting. The people are good. It’s a good place to work.”

*Brandon Nixon, Project Controls*

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Project, and when you’re ready to move, you have access to many opportunities with our parent companies. URS, Bechtel and CH2M Hill are three large, successful companies with operations and opportunities across the globe.”

personal as well as career interests. “If they like the outdoors – hunting, fishing, skiing, hiking – this can be a great place for them,” said Faith. “If they like a more urban setting, somewhere else could be a better fit.” And, she said that could be with one of the parent companies, all three of which have active recruitment programs.

When recruiting, Faith said they listen to determine a prospective employee’s

Brandon says the best thing companies like WCH can do to attract younger workers is to provide interesting, challenging work – which he’s found at ERDF.

“Brandon brings fresh ideas and a different perspective,” said Bruce Covert, director of Waste Operations. “It’s good to have a diverse organization, and in

Young Recruits continued

our case, that means hiring younger workers.”

Outside of work, Brandon is a triathlete and filled his spare time last summer by training for a half-Ironman. How did he do? He finished the 1.2-mile swim, 56-mile bike ride and 13.1-mile run in 6 hours and 1 minute – in 100 degree heat.

## Valve Seals Returned to Russia

In mid-November, D4 workers removed six seals from steam valves in the 109-N Building. Removal of the seals clears the way for cocooning the building.

In 1997, the United States and Russia signed the Plutonium Production Reactor Agreement, which ended weapons-grade plutonium production in both countries.

During their second visit to Hanford in 1999, members of the Russian delegation placed seals in strategic locations at N Reactor. The Russian delegation has returned every year, under a program managed by the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (PNNL), to verify compliance.



*Charles Reed, left, a laborer with the Wm. Dickson Co., removes one of six seals from steam valves in the 109-N Building. Nancy Maguire-Moffitt of PNNL, will give the seals to members of a Russian delegation who monitor compliance with the Plutonium Production Reactor Agreement.*

The agreement requires that the Russian delegation be notified so they can be present when the seals are removed, should they so desire. In this case, PNNL documented removal of the seals, which will be transferred to the Russian delegation.

Steve Hamblin, WCH subcontract technical representative who oversees work performed by Wm. Dickson Co., said the amount of time to remove the seals was insignificant, but it had international implications far beyond environmental cleanup.

“The signing of the agreement and placing of the seals meant that the United States and Russia would no longer be producing plutonium. It represented a significant moment in history for the United States and for Hanford,” said Steve.

One seal remains in the 105-N W elevator. Once N Reactor is cocooned, it will be declared irreversibly dismantled by the Russians, as have C, D, DR, F and H reactors. Until then, N Reactor will remain in the monitoring agreement along with B, KE and KW reactors.

## Columbia River Sampling in Full Swing

An extensive sampling effort of Columbia River sediments in and along the shoreline is underway, along with the collection of water, island soils, fish, and deep sediment cores behind several dams. More than 1,300 samples are being collected between October 2008 and September 2009. The sampling locations and schedule are outlined in a plan prepared for the U.S. Department of Energy,



Richland Operations Office (RL) by Washington Closure's Mission Completion team.

Thousands of samples have been collected during Hanford's history in and around the Columbia River to measure the concentration of compounds in river water, the river bottom and shoreline, fish and other animals, and plants. The data to be collected, as defined in the Remedial Investigation Work Plan document, will provide valuable information for RL and the regulators to determine final cleanup decisions for the river corridor.



*A WCH subcontractor collects water samples in the Columbia River for future cleanup decisions by DOE and Hanford regulators.*

"After the sampling we'll know where and what the contaminants are and who or what might be exposed to them," said Jamie Zeisloft, RL project lead.

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"After the sampling we'll know where and what the contaminants are and who or what might be exposed to them."

*Jamie Zeisloft, RL Project Lead*

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Sampling will be done between Wanapum Dam (above Hanford) and McNary Dam, downstream from the Hanford site, covering around 120 miles of river.

Regulators and RL agree the river is safe for the public. Collecting the additional samples will provide information for cleanup decisions along the Columbia River. The decisions, known as records of decision, are expected to be finalized by 2012 and the river corridor cleanup is planned to be largely complete by 2015.



*Water sampling includes groundwater upwelling into the Columbia River. This investigation will help identify sources of contamination for final cleanup decisions.*

