



# U.S. DEPARTMENT OF **ENERGY**

Portsmouth/Paducah Project Office, 1017 Majestic Drive, Suite 200  
Lexington, Kentucky 40513  
[www.pppo.energy.gov](http://www.pppo.energy.gov)

**NEWS MEDIA CONTACT:**  
Loretta Avera (859) 219-4010  
[Loretta.avera@lex.doe.gov](mailto:Loretta.avera@lex.doe.gov)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
April 1, 2010

## **Paducah achieves major waste disposal milestone**

**PADUCAH, KY** – Trucks carrying the last containers of stored legacy waste from the Paducah Gaseous Diffusion Plant have left Paducah for disposal. The shipment marks the end of a project that took more than eight years to complete.

“This is a significant event for several reasons,” said Reinhard Knerr, Paducah site lead for the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE). “It reduces the cost of long-term storage, surveillance, and maintenance of waste materials. It frees up space on the site to support other environmental remediation work, and it frees personnel and financial resources to complete the environmental mission at Paducah.” The project was called “legacy” waste removal because the materials were left from previous operations from the plant, both ongoing uranium enrichment activities and earlier environmental cleanup work.

When the legacy waste removal project began in October 2001, Paducah had more than 570,000 ft<sup>3</sup> of legacy waste material stored on the Site. The amount of waste disposed of during the Paducah Legacy Waste Project was enough to fill a football field 10 ft. high. Most of that waste was stored in more than 35,000 containers in 12 indoor and outdoor facilities across the

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Site. The waste was a mix of hazardous and radioactive debris and sludges and other process waste material.

“DOE made getting rid of this legacy of the Cold War period a priority,” Knerr said.

“DOE is pleased to mark the completion of this very challenging project.” Mixed waste and PCB (polychlorinated biphenyls) disposal was accomplished in accordance with Site Treatment Plan milestones set in consultation with state environmental regulators.

William Murphie, manager of DOE’s Portsmouth/Paducah Project Office, applauded the effort it took to complete the project. “This is a major milestone in our mission to restore the site,” he said. “It was a difficult and tedious task and I thank the men and women whose dedication made it possible for us to remove yet another Cold War legacy.”

The \$102 million cost of the Legacy Waste Removal Project was paid for out of base operating funds. The FY10 budget was approximately \$4.5 million.

“Being a long term resident, with roots in the community, it was very satisfying to be able to close out this project,” said Rob Seifert, the DOE project manager who has supervised the project for the last three years. “It was very challenging. There was a lack of details for many of the approximately 35,000 containers were deteriorating.”

Disposal of the Site’s hazardous wastes was very complex, requiring shipments to multiple states, meeting extensive federal and state transportation rules, and ensuring that every

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container of waste met the criteria of the receiving disposal facility. Approximately 70 people worked on the project.

“We had items as basic as PPE [personal protective equipment] to higher activity radiological material such as Alumina trap mix and magnesium flouride pellets,” Seifert said. “Every container had to be evaluated for content and repackaged as appropriate to current DOE standards.”

This was the second major project completion at the Paducah Site in a six-month period. In September 2009, the Site completed characterization of all materials stored in 160 indoor and outside storage areas. Completing characterization by September 30, 2009, was part of an Agreed Order with the Commonwealth of Kentucky. Not only was characterization completed by that date, nearly 60,000 ft<sup>3</sup> of waste material was dispositioned.

With the completion of the legacy waste disposition, the site’s waste disposal personnel can focus on characterizing, packaging, and shipping waste materials generated by ongoing environmental remediation projects, D& D projects, and projects funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

**-DOE-**



Workers repackage waste material for disposal.

