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## **Recovery Act Creates Jobs, Accelerates Cleanup at DOE's Paducah Site**

**PADUCAH, KY** – Over the past three years, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) touched nearly 1,000 lives at the U.S. Department of Energy's Paducah Site, including new and existing workers, vendors, suppliers, and subcontractors.

Brandon Henderson, one of about 240 people hired for full-time work on Recovery Act projects, said his engineering job followed a year of unfruitful searching during the last recession.

"I can't tell you how grateful I was to find the job because that was my last stop," said the May 2009 graduate of the University of Kentucky College of Engineering at Paducah.

The bulk of Recovery Act workers removed more than 230,000 cubic feet of waste, enough to fill a football field five feet deep.

Nearly \$79 million in funding, which ended Sept. 30, led to the demolition of five inactive Cold War-era structures exceeding 57,000 square feet. ARRA funding also supported demolition-readiness activities for two large buildings with a total footprint over 250,000 square feet. Those buildings are expected to be razed in 2012. All the complexes were heavily contaminated and, without Recovery Act funding, would not have been cleaned up for many years to come. Accelerating cleanup avoided \$28 million in inflationary costs.

"ARRA enabled us to further our mission of cleaning up the site by getting rid of structures with no reuse potential and reducing that environmental liability," said Rob Seifert, the Department's Paducah Site Recovery Act project director.

### **Recovery Act Projects**

**East End Smelter** – Recovery Act funding accelerated by 22 years the cleanup and demolition of a 21,000-square-foot complex known as the East End Smelter, used until 1986 mainly to smelt nickel. The Smelter project was completed one year ahead of the Recovery Act schedule and \$12 million under budget. Before the Smelter was razed in September 2010, Recovery Act workers removed more than 60,000 cubic feet of contaminated waste, notably a bedroom-sized furnace and equipment weighing up to 250,000 pounds.

**Feed Plant** – Once a nine-facility complex spanning nearly 200,000 square feet, the Feed Plant operated from 1957 to 1977 to produce uranium hexafluoride (UF<sub>6</sub>) and fluorine.

Recovery Act funding accelerated the dismantlement and disposal of major Feed Plant systems and large process equipment, as well as the removal of 25 percent of total piping and equipment, by June 25, 2010.

The \$12 million of Recovery Act funding saved on the Smelter project was then applied to further accelerate Feed Plant cleanup. Heavy equipment demolished the half-acre eastern third (31,000 square feet) of the Feed Plant in late June 2011, three months ahead of schedule. Cleanup of the rest of the complex is ongoing in anticipation of 2012 demolition.

Feed Plant work involved comprehensive recycling. Placing debris in the plant on-site landfill avoided about \$1.5 million in costs associated with transporting the material to an approved off-site disposal facility. Workers removed more than 60 tons of reusable copper bus bars and decontaminated more than 100 fluorine-generation cells that were turned over to private industry for reuse, avoiding about \$2.5 million in disposal costs. The equipment was used to make fluorine.

**Metals Plant** – The 65,000-square-foot Metals Plant was declared demolition-ready in early August, saving \$2.5 million due to accelerating cleanup five years ahead of schedule. Workers demolished 4,000 square feet of ancillary facilities in July 2010. Bid evaluations are ongoing for anticipated demolition of the main part of the complex during the first half of 2012.

A remote-controlled demolition machine and mobile cranes helped expedite work and improve worker safety. Used at the Paducah Site for the first time, the demolition machine has a hydraulic arm that can reach about 23 feet and snip materials loose.

The Metals Plant operated until the mid-1980s, mainly to convert depleted UF<sub>6</sub> into uranium tetrafluoride (UF<sub>4</sub>), known as green salt.

### **Jobs, Small Business**

All Recovery Act funding at Paducah went to prime and subcontracts awarded to small business, reflecting the Department's efforts to support small firms. The number included more than 60 equipment and mobile home suppliers, uniform rental stores, and other vendors.

In late 2009, Randy Scott's Ballard County engineering company, Diversified Management Consultants LLC, hired nine engineers involving Recovery Act funding. DMC is a small business teaming partner with LATA Environmental Services of Kentucky, the Department's cleanup contractor.

"Experience like this from a new engineer's perspective is hard to find in the Paducah area," said Scott, Engineering and Technical Services manager for LATA Kentucky. "The Recovery Act afforded them this opportunity."

One of the engineers was Henderson, who grew up in Paducah, now works with the U.S. Enrichment Corp., which enriches uranium at the Paducah Site.

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“The Recovery Act work gave me a chance to work with veteran engineers as well as engineers closer to my age,” said Henderson, 30. “Those experiences got me involved in some things that will help in my work here at USEC.”

Other former Recovery Act engineers are with Babcock & Wilcox Conversion Services, which operates a Paducah Site facility to convert depleted uranium hexafluoride (DUF<sub>6</sub>) into more stable material; and Honeywell Specialty Chemicals in Metropolis, Ill., which manufactures UF<sub>6</sub>.

### **Safety Spotlight**

Extensive safety training and rigor under the Recovery Act paid off. In August, LATA Kentucky celebrated a milestone of 750,000 hours without a lost workday due to job-related injury or illness.

Experienced workers were paired with new workers in the complexes, which had been inactive for many years.

Dedication to safety and efficiency was a key reason for successful cleanup, said Wes Adams, a heavy equipment operator and member of United Steelworkers Local 550. He started Recovery Act work in November 2009 after a slump in the lumber industry threatened his heavy equipment business.

“The company (LATA Kentucky) has gone above and beyond on the training,” Adams said. “The supervisors have done an excellent job keeping people from getting hurt in the time frame they’ve had to work in.”

**-DOE-**

### **Cutlines**

**Henderson:** Brandon Henderson checks a pump in the water treatment facility at the Paducah Gaseous Diffusion Plant. The former Recovery Act engineer now works for the U.S. Enrichment Corp.





# U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

**Wildharber-Adams:** Scott Wildharber, left, and Wes Adams discuss blueprints for the Metals Plant (background) that was declared demolition-ready in August 2011 as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act program at the Paducah Site.



**Demo machine:** A remote-controlled demolition machine improved safety and efficiency in accelerating cleanup in the Metals Plant. Heavy equipment operators such as Wes Adams specialize in using the equipment.



**Tie lines:** A night crew in summer 2011 dismantles uranium hexafluoride tie lines linking the Feed Plant with other buildings at the Paducah Site. Adding night shifts helped accelerate cleanup and keep workers cooler.

