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WVDP participates in equipment sharing

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WEST VALLEY—Cost savings continue from two EM cleanup sites sharing highly specialized equipment for packaging and relocating nuclear waste to storage locations. When completed, the sharing of equipment between sites will help achieve a total savings valued at approximately \$2.4 million.

“Repurposing highly specialized equipment like this helps save money for taxpayers and the government,” CH2M HILL Plateau Remediation Company’s Hanford Fuels Facilities Maintenance Manager Scott Garrison said. “It also saves cost and time on schedule because the equipment is already built, tested and used, even with minor retrofitting for our application.”

Workers at the West Valley Demonstration Project shipped a large tow tractor and vertical transporter to the Richland Operations Office at the Hanford Site in Washington on June 7 to assist in proposed packaging and moving of radioactive cesium and strontium capsules to dry storage. The equipment was previously used by CHBWV to move 56 casks containing canisters of vitrified high-level waste to an onsite interim storage pad. The two specialized pieces of equipment were designed and built to move each 87.5-ton, steel-reinforced vertical storage cask, each of which contained five high-level waste canisters, to the interim storage pad at the WVDP.

“Gaining insight from lessons learned is not a one-time activity,” Lettie Chilson, WVDP Facilities Manager said. “Our learning has not stopped. It continued throughout the equipment relocation process and doesn’t end just because the final loaded truck left the site. Hanford and WVDP will continue to share lessons learned to further assist Hanford in their success with their relocation workscope.”

The tow tractor, which was used at the WVDP to safely relocate storage casks to an onsite storage pad, weighs 50,000 pounds and is capable of generating approximately 35,000-48,000 pounds of tractive effort.

Accompanying the tow tractor was the 47-ton Vertical Cask Transporter which uses multiple hydraulic actuators designed for accurate and precise lifting and movement of heavy loads. In addition, it is designed to be very stable, which is important to safety when lifting and moving heavy loads.

Earlier this year, a robotically-operated welder that was used in WVDP’s high-level waste relocation project was shipped to Hanford as part of this equipment sharing partnership.

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Teams from both sites continue to share best practices, from both current and previous site visits. In addition, frequent communications between employees from RL's cleanup contractor CH2M Hill Plateau Remediation Co. and their counterparts at CH2M BWXT West Valley continue to discuss best practices and lessons learned from WVDP's successful relocation of 278 canisters of vitrified high-level waste to an onsite interim storage pad. CHBWV accomplished this task in November 2016, a year ahead of schedule.

At Hanford, a team is scheduled to relocate 1,936 cesium and strontium capsules stored underwater at the Waste Encapsulation and Storage Facility to an outside storage area. The planned storage area at Hanford, similar to the one at WVDP, is modeled after dry spent fuel storage systems at commercial nuclear power plants in the U.S. It will feature above-ground, shielded cask storage, which requires little maintenance.