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WRPS given prestigious project management awards

RICHLAND, Wash. – Washington River Protection Solutions (WRPS), an AECOM-led company, received the Project Management Institute's (PMI) 2017 Project of the Year Oct. 28 for its work to remove radioactive waste from an underground storage tank at the Hanford Site in Washington state. WRPS is the Hanford tank operations contractor for the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Office of River Protection.

The international award was given to the Hanford Double-Shell Tank AY-102 Recovery Project, in which workers removed more than 725,000 gallons of nuclear waste from a failed storage tank, meeting a critical Settlement Agreement commitment signed with DOE, the Washington State Department of Ecology and WRPS.

"The work we do at Hanford is difficult and hazardous, making it imperative that safety is at the forefront of everything we do," said Mark Lindholm, WRPS president and project manager. "Our union workers are highly trained, highly skilled and dedicated to completing the job safely. It's fitting and deserving that their work, supported by our skilled engineers, project managers, and safety, radcon and industrial hygiene staff, is being recognized with this prestigious award."

PMI's Project of the Year recognizes large, complex projects that cost in excess of \$100 million and demonstrate superior performance of project management practices, superior organizational results and positive impacts on society.

The other finalists for the PMI Project of the Year award were DeBeers' Gahcho Kue diamond mine in Canada's Northwest Territories and Sound Transit's University of Washington Light Rail Extension in Seattle. The winner was announced at the PMI Global Conference in Chicago.

In addition, WRPS' AP Farm exhauster upgrade project received a PMI Award for Project Excellence, one of only two given in the North American region.

AY-102 recovery project

AY-102, the first of 28 double-shell tanks built at Hanford that went into operation in 1970, was taken out of service in 2012 after a small amount of waste leaked from the inner tank into the gap between the inner and outer tank shells. The waste was contained in between the shells, and there is no indication that it leaked into the environment.

Waste removal began in March 2016, with two sluicers spraying high-pressure liquid to mobilize the waste and pump it from the tank. Workers removed more than 98 percent of the tank's original waste volume by the end of April.

The standard sluicers were then replaced with four extended-reach sluicers mounted on extendable booms. The extended-reach sluicers enabled operators to maneuver around 22

large vertical pipes, called air-lift circulators, built into the tank to help cool the waste. Retrieval resumed in December and was completed Feb. 15, 2017.

Preparing for retrieval required more than two years of preparation and infrastructure upgrades, work on AY-102 and receipt tank AP-102. It also required significant planning to help protect workers against potential exposure to chemical vapors and other hazards.

AP Farm exhauster upgrade project

When the decision was made a few years ago to make the AP Farm the staging point for all tank waste being transferred to the Waste Treatment Plant for vitrification, the AP Farm Ventilation Upgrades Project was established to design, fabricate and install a new ventilation system for the eight AP tanks. The project progressed from an installation concept in 2014 to a fully operable system by Sept. 29, 2016, preparing AP Farm for its pivotal role in receiving, staging and transferring millions of gallons of high-level radioactive waste.

About WRPS

WRPS, owned by AECOM and Atkins, with integrated subcontractor AREVA, is a prime contractor to the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of River Protection and is responsible for managing and reducing the risk posed by the waste stored in Hanford's aging underground tanks.

About PMI

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