Lab completes first Recovery Act cleanup project

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Demolition of former fusion facility completed ahead of schedule

LOS ALAMOS, New Mexico, August 4, 2010—Los Alamos National Laboratory today announced it has completed the first of four major environmental cleanup projects funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The $13 million project involved demolition of an 18,000-square-foot former nuclear fusion research facility.

“It’s good to get this one under our belt,” said Everett Trollinger, the National Nuclear Security Adminstration’s director of Recovery Act cleanup projects at LANL. “It’s the first completion of Recovery Act work at the Lab, and I’m proud of our team’s ability to finish this work ahead of schedule.”

After months of work gutting the building and removing such hazards as asbestos, lead paint, waste pipes, and mercury switches, demolition of the facility began in May and proceeded quickly. As part of the cleanup, a nearly new backup diesel generator was removed from the building and later donated to a nonprofit hospital in North Dakota.

Waste removal was completed by the Los Alamos office of North Wind, Inc. and demolition work was performed by Innovative Technical Solutions, Inc. of Walnut Creek, California. Both companies are small business subcontractors, used a largely local workforce, and have won additional contracts at the Lab.

The Laboratory received $212 million in Recovery Act funds in July 2009. The money is being used for three demolition projects and for soil remediation and groundwater monitoring wells.

With Recovery Act projects, the Lab has created or saved some 500 full-time jobs, demolished 13 of 24 structures, completed 13 of 16 groundwater monitoring wells, and begun excavation at LANL's first hazardous waste landfill.

"The Recovery Act has been a huge boost to our overall cleanup efforts," said Michael Graham, LANL's associate director of environmental programs. "Completing these projects ahead of schedule saves taxpayer money and allows even more cleanup work to take place. It's our responsibility to complete this work and get as much land as possible ready for turnover to the public."

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