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K-27 Demolition Will Fulfill DOE's Vision 2016

OAK RIDGE, Tenn., February 8, 2016 – Demolition of the K-27 gaseous diffusion building began today, moving the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) a step closer to fulfilling its Vision 2016—the removal of all gaseous diffusion buildings from the site by the end of the year.

K-27 is the last of five gaseous diffusion facilities to be torn down at the East Tennessee Technology Park, the former Oak Ridge Gaseous Diffusion Plant. Demolition of the four-story, 383,000-square-foot building remains one of DOE-EM's highest cleanup priorities. DOE's Vision 2016 calls for demolition of K-27 to be completed by December. As the last uranium enrichment building falls, it will mark the first-ever demolition and cleanup of a gaseous diffusion complex anywhere.

“Demolition of K-27 advances DOE's plans to transform this former Manhattan Project and Cold War era complex into a viable private-sector industrial park that will contribute to the region's economic development efforts,” Sue Cange, Manager of the DOE-EM Oak Ridge Office, said. “The work we begin today moves us closer to making that vision a near-term reality.”

URS | CH2M Oak Ridge LLC (UCOR), DOE's cleanup contractor, completed deactivation of K-27 in January. Deactivation included removing hazardous and radioactive materials to ensure protection of workers, the public and the environment; isolating utility systems; and ensuring structural stability. All materials that could cause a nuclear criticality were removed, which has allowed DOE to complete one of the final key steps before demolition—declaring that the building is in a Criticality Incredible status.

“Demolition of K-27 is significant in that it completes the first-ever cleanup of a complete gaseous diffusion complex anywhere in the world,” Ken Rueter, UCOR President and Project Manager, said. “It also adds to the inventory of clean land that can be made available for economic development purposes. In place of these outdated facilities, we will eventually see flourishing industries with many workers.”

Tear down of the K-27 Building follows successful demolition of four other uranium enrichment process buildings, including K-29, K-33, K-31 and the mile-long K-25 building. All of these facilities once produced highly enriched uranium for national defense and commercial energy production.

Rueter cited UCOR's safety record in its cleanup activities, noting that the workforce has accrued five million hours without a lost time accident. In 2015, UCOR was awarded Star status in DOE's Voluntary Protection Program, a singular achievement that recognizes the safest sites in the nation.

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