

## **America Recovery and Reinvestment Act at Y-12 — Hiring people at Y-12 through the federal stimulus act**

In this series recently, we have focused on the innovations and maintenance actions needed to conduct some of the major projects at Y-12, such as the Manhattan Project magnetic separation of uranium and later stable isotopes and the COLEX (Column Exchange) process for separating Lithium 6 for the hydrogen bomb.

Historic changes are again taking place at Y-12, with American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding providing the most recent opportunities.

On Monday, October 5, 2009, there were 80 new hires brought into Y-12 and 70 of those were in support of the ARRA. This is the largest number of individuals hired on one day in recent history. Since March 2009, efforts have been under way to prepare for the work that these folks will now begin to do. Many of them are craft workers who have been without jobs and are excited by the opportunity to work at Y-12. There is significant work to do.

Using a portion of the \$755 million provided to the Oak Ridge Office, Environmental Management program, Y-12 has initiated three primary projects: removal of legacy materials from two World War II production facilities — Alpha 5 (Building 9201-5) and Beta 4 (Building 9204-4) — and scrap metal cleanup at a salvage yard. A portion of this salvage yard has been the target of clean up already, so that work is literally ongoing with just the need to make a few minor changes to move into the next phase. It was something where we could quickly show progress, and we've done so.

Alpha 4 and Alpha 5 have both been targeted for a number of years as primary sources of legacy materials, sources of huge energy consumption and resulting higher risk facilities because of the legacy materials. These two historic structures have seen tremendous changes over the years, having started life as Calutron buildings, then served the lithium separation mission and then during the Cold War having been right in the middle of the effort.

Beta 4 has been a pressing facility with a 7,500 ton press that formed the huge components of the large nuclear weapons that helped win the Cold War. Alpha 5 has been a metal preparation facility with a large arc melt furnace, machine shops where flexible machining cells produced nuclear weapons components at the height of the 1980s where over 8,000 people worked around the clock producing as many nuclear weapons “secondaries” as could be produced.

Additional ARRA work following these three projects include the demolition of four Biology Complex buildings and Building 9735, demolition of the Building 9206 filter housing and cleanup of the recovery furnace, and remediation of storm sewer pipelines and catch basins in the Upper East Fork Poplar Creek watershed.

Many of the Y-12 leaders of these projects have previous experience doing the type of work that is slated for ARRA. They experienced the Facilities and Infrastructure Recapitalization Program beginning in 2001 whereby 275 World War II era and other outdated structures were removed from the Y-12 site. Others bring extensive and varied experiences to the projects.

Just like the stories of historic maintenance support provided by Harold Cofer and others during the early years, much of the actual work of the ARRA projects falls to the Facilities, Infrastructure and

Services Department (what used to be known as “maintenance”). Innovations such as figuring a way to reduce seven critical lifts to only one lift while removing waste materials from the high bay of Building 9204-4 (Beta 4) and taking the time to check the floor loading to allow a larger package to be removed rather than making many trips with small loads are just two of the time-saving and risk reducing actions that have been taken.

The 80 new hires are paving the way for even more. On Monday, October 12, 2009, there were 40 more new hires (of a total of 52) in support of ARRA, and plans call for 40 more on Monday, October 19, 2009. The Human Resources organization is pulling out all stops to make this transition as smooth as it can be for these workers to get the necessary training and begin productive work as soon as practical.

Darrel Kohlhorst welcomed the first group of 80 new hires on Tuesday, October 6, 2009, with encouragement to understand Y-12’s priorities of Safety (first and foremost), Security (we must first be secure before we can work at all), Transformation (that is what they are being hired to do), and Productivity (which is what the taxpayers expect of us, and rightly so).

The new hires have expressed thankfulness for the jobs and a restlessness to quickly get to the real work. Training classes are hard for anyone, but necessary to be well prepared for the job at hand. We at Y-12 welcome this opportunity to bring new people to our workplace and to have them become a part of the proud heritage that is the Y-12 National Security Complex – welcome aboard!