EM Recovery NEWS FLASH

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Recovery Act Workers Demolish Facility Tied to Project Pluto History

LAS VEGAS – Workers recently razed a facility used in the historic Project Pluto, the latest American Recovery and Reinvestment Act accomplishment helping clean up traces of past nuclear testing at the Nevada National Security Site (NNSS).

Recovery Act workers safely hauled the last demolition waste from the Pluto Disassembly Facility to disposal facilities Jan. 11. The project is slated for completion this spring after workers finish installing a concrete cap over the below-ground level where the facility stood.

"Without Recovery Act funding, the demolition of Pluto would not have been feasible for several more years," Federal Sub-Project Director Kevin Cabble said.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the Pluto facility was used to develop the world's first nuclear-powered ramjet engine for nuclear-propelled, low-altitude missiles. Project Pluto was the code name for the project, which also referred to the weapon itself. The project ended in 1964.

The DOE National Nuclear Security Administration Nevada Site Office (NSO) received $44 million from the Recovery Act to assess and clean up industrial sites and install groundwater monitoring wells at NNSS and the nearby Tonopah Test Range.

The Recovery Act is accelerating cleanup across NNSS, helping NSO satisfy requirements in an agreement with the State of Nevada Division of Environmental Protection to remediate contaminated sites.





Before-and-after photos of the site of the Pluto Disassembly Facility show the Recovery Act at work at the Nevada National Security Site.

The Recovery Act has funded the demolition of 50,000 square feet of structures at NNSS, including Pluto and facilities at other industrial sites involved in the former nuclear rocket development program.

In 2010, Recovery Act workers completed demolition of the Reactor Maintenance, Assembly, and Disassembly Facility (RMAD), which was built by the Atomic Energy Commission to develop nuclear rocket reactors in the space program. Most demolition debris from that 80-room, five-level facility was disposed at NNSS's Area 5 Radioactive Waste Management Site.

In 2009, the Recovery Act funded the demolition of structures at the Test Cell C Facility, which also was used for nuclear rocket reactor development.