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DEQ approves closure plan for UMCDF

UMATILLA CHEMICAL DEPOT, Hermiston, Ore. – The Umatilla Chemical Agent Disposal Facility (UMDF) has taken another step towards successful project completion and establishing a legacy of environmental responsibility in northeast Oregon. On Thursday, Jan. 17, the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) issued its final approval of the UMCDF Closure Plan permit modification request and associated permit conditions, allowing the closure of the UMCDF to industrial performance standards.

“Approval of the UMCDF Closure Plan permit modification request was the result of hard work, tough negotiations, and perseverance,” said Gary Anderson, UMCDF Site Project Manager. “The public should be confident that the closure of the UMCDF facility will be conducted efficiently, and, most importantly, safely. My thanks to everyone who played a critical role in the successful completion of the permit modification.”

Originally submitted to the DEQ in 2009, the closure plan is the culmination of significant effort between the URS, the U.S. Army Chemical Materials Activity and external stakeholders, such as the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

“Getting approval on the UMCDF Closure Plan today is the culmination of hard work on the part of many folks at UMCDF, within our URS business unit, and within CMA, not to mention our many stakeholders,” said Julia Hamrick, Project General Manager for URS, which built and operates UMCDF. “Now that we have the plan, the task is to execute it with distinction, to be safe, compliant and finish the closure mission as promised to the public.

The closure plan allows for industrial closure performance standards in designated portions of the facility, retention of specific buildings identified for future use, and establishes performance standards for areas outside of the designated industrial zone.

Since the completion of chemical agent destruction operations in October 2011, the UMCDF team has worked diligently to decontaminate and decommission the Munitions Demilitarization Building, where chemical agent and chemical weapons were processed. Each portion of the Munitions Demilitarization Building will be cleaned and monitored with state-of-the-art equipment to assure the chemical agent hazard has been alleviated before final demolition of the building.

To date, the facility's Deactivation Furnace System and both Liquid Incinerators have been taken out of service and decommissioned. The final furnace, the Metal Parts Furnace, is planned to be shut down in March.