

For Immediate Release
Date: February 2, 2021



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Idaho Site Facility Gets New Lease on Life with Substantial Upgrades

IDAHO FALLS, Idaho – The Department of Energy’s (DOE’s) Office of Environmental Management (EM) has made a sizable investment over the last five years to improve infrastructure and support mission needs through 2050 at the 1950s-era Idaho Nuclear Technology and Engineering Center (INTEC) at the Idaho National Laboratory (INL) Site.

INTEC facilities are used for safely storing high-level waste such as calcine and spent nuclear fuel, repackaging remote-handled transuranic waste, and processing remaining liquid sodium-bearing waste.

“Spanning a square mile, INTEC is like a small city,” said Mark Manderbach, infrastructure director with Fluor Idaho, EM’s INL Site contractor. “Like a city, utilities need upgrading, pipes need to be replaced, and roads require repaving.”

Fluor Idaho first focused on further improving worker safety. Walking surfaces and roadways received new asphalt, building lights were upgraded to improve lighting conditions, and additional exterior lighting was installed to enhance visibility. Cold War-era stairs are being replaced to meet current standards. Employees also procured new equipment to make snow removal quicker and more efficient.

Workers upgraded INTEC’s utilities and performed preventive maintenance to satisfy National Fire Protection Association electrical safety requirements, which included the installation of new electrical panels to comply with current electrical standards. Inside a utility tunnel, crews are replacing degraded piping and installing new hatch covers to maintain compressed air, water, and steam distribution networks.

The facility’s emergency communications system is being upgraded with first-of-a-kind wireless communication, including a new alarm and intercom system. Upgrades to utility control and electrical distribution systems, and installation of new air compressors will support the Integrated Waste Treatment Unit when it comes online.

During the last year, workers replaced a spent fuel storage facility’s potable water pump, repaired its chlorinator system, and replaced failing heating and air conditioning units. At the New Waste Calcining Facility, where crews are using hot cells to treat and repackage remote-handled transuranic waste, the roof was replaced to protect internal facility equipment and allow continued safe operations.

“In total, DOE-Idaho has invested millions of dollars in infrastructure upgrades over the past five years,” said Manderbach. “Since the INTEC facility was constructed in the early 1950s, it had to be upgraded to safely extend its useful mission well into the 21st century.”

Fluor Idaho prepared an infrastructure plan for EM that outlines a maintenance schedule for all buildings at INTEC and includes criteria for determining buildings that have served their useful life and can be demolished.

“It’s a comprehensive plan that takes the facility to 2050 or later if needed,” said Manderbach. “INTEC is a vital asset required for the success of the DOE complex and it makes sense to properly maintain that asset to extend its useful life.”

Fluor Idaho, LLC is a wholly owned subsidiary of Fluor Corporation with subcontractor partners CH2M, North Wind Inc., Portage, and Waste Control Specialists. Fluor Idaho manages the Idaho Cleanup Project Core contract at the Department of Energy's Idaho National Laboratory Site located 45 miles west of Idaho Falls. The 5-year, \$1.4 billion project, funded through the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Environmental Management, focuses on safely remediating the Idaho National Laboratory site including dispositioning transuranic waste, managing spent nuclear fuel, and treating high-level radioactive waste.

For more information visit the Idaho Cleanup Project on the Web at <https://fluor-idaho.com>

Suggested Caption

Before-and-after views show a walkway outside the Chemical Processing Plant-1671 that received new asphalt as part of infrastructure improvements at the Idaho Nuclear Technology and Engineering Center.