

The Telegram



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February 01, 2011

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Jobs, economic development opportunities are positive at Piketon Plant

Visioning Teams will help determine future use of plant's excess personal property for economic development



STEVEN P. KELLER
Managing Editor

Over the last several days, a collection of news releases from different sources at the Portsmouth Gaseous Diffusion Plant (PORTS) have been arriving and while the initial news release announced major layoffs, further releases indicate the future is bright in terms of jobs and economic development opportunities at the plant site.

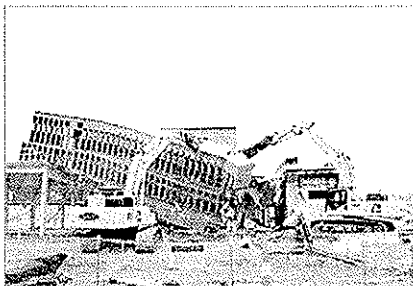
It appears Jackson Mayor Randy Heath, a member of the Southern Ohio Diversification Initiative (SODI) Board and Executive Director of the Jackson Area Chamber of Commerce, may have been correct when he said, "This site may be the single most important economic development tool we have." He was speaking at a meeting of the Jackson County Economic Development Board held Friday, January 21. (See related story, this issue of The Telegram).

The Releases

Last Tuesday morning, January 25, The Telegram received notification of a "mass layoff" of employees at the United States Enrichment Corporation's (USEC) facility in Piketon. That layoff was to affect more than 500 employees and was due to a Cold Shutdown Contract coming to an end.

Later that same day, another notification was received from Fluor-B&W announcing that company plans to hire, "approximately 1,600 local workers - mostly from current site contractors LATA/Parallax Portsmouth LLC (LPP) and the United States Enrichment Corporation (USEC) - as it begins large-scale Decontamination and Decommissioning (D&D) at the former Portsmouth Gaseous Diffusion Plant later this year."

In effect, the layoff notification was submitted based on a legal notification requirement since the one contract was coming to an end and the focus of work at the plant would now change to one of D&D.



Demolition of the East Switchgear House, November 2010.

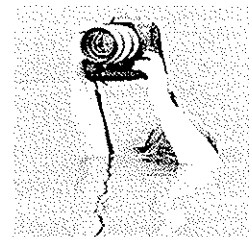


An overview of the X-533 Electrical Switchyard site after demolition was completed in late December 2010.

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Fluor-B&W had been doing D&D work at the plant and had the contract to do so.

Many of the workers referenced in the layoff notice will simply transition to the continuing D&D work.

Contract End Explained

In another related news release which arrived Wednesday, the massive activities taking place prior to the end of the Cold Shutdown contract were explained. As a result of the changes, economic development activities in that area have received an enormous boost.

The newest release reads, "The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) announced its remediation contractor, LATA/Parallax Portsmouth LLC, safely completed the demolition of a 20-acre electrical switchyard at the Portsmouth Gaseous Diffusion Plant in late December. The project was one of five at the site funded by a nearly \$120 million allocation from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).

"The former 345-kV high-voltage switchyard was used to supply power to one of three enormous uranium enrichment process buildings, each a half-mile in length at the site. The switchyard operated from 1954 until being de-energized in November 2008. The plant ended production in 2001 and went into cold shutdown in 2006. Demolition activities at the X-533 Electrical Switchyard started in February 2010. The total cost for the switchyard project was approximately \$28 million.

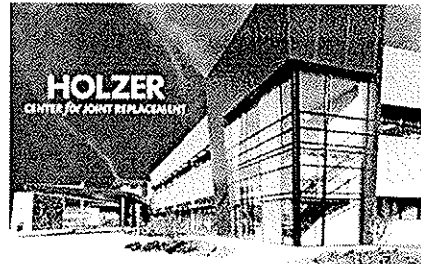
"Workers removed all 160 electrical towers, some 120 feet tall, along with a two-story control room, two switchgear houses, and 18 large transformers. A 600-ton crane was assembled on-site to hoist and remove 10 synchronous condensers, weighing as much as 260 tons apiece, from atop the switch houses."

Benefit to Communities

The latest release includes more good news saying, "the project will also benefit the local communities through a 2009 agreement between DOE and its recognized community reuse organization, Southern Ohio Diversification Initiative (SODI)."

That agreement allows for the transfer of excess personal property assets from the plant to SODI for economic development efforts in the region.

Joel Bradburne, DOE's Portsmouth Site Lead, said, "Through this agreement with SODI, we are making available over 8,000 tons of clean scrap metals and other materials from the switchyard project for recycling or reuse to boost economic development and jobs initiatives."



Nearly 270,000 gallons of transformer oils from the switchyard have already been provided to SODI for recycling. A portion of the proceeds from the recycling of materials will be kept within the local communities to support economic development endeavors.

Visioning Teams

The concept of having Visioning Teams, with the goal of engaging a broad spectrum of community members in developing possible future use scenarios for the facility, came from Ohio

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University through the Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs. The project is funded by a grant from the U.S. DOE, office of Environmental Management.

The goal of the teams is to produce a "publicly approved end-state report that will be presented to the DOE for consideration." To that end, two kick-off meetings have been set with the content of both being the same, except for the location.

The first will be held Tuesday, March 15 from 5:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the PACCAR Medical Education Center, 446 Hospital Road, Chillicothe.

The second will be held Thursday, March 17 at the Scioto County Welcome Center, 342 Second Street, Portsmouth.

Residents of Jackson, Pike, Ross, and Scioto Counties are invited to participate by becoming a member of a Visioning Team and everyone is welcome to attend the meetings.

Plant History

The Portsmouth Gaseous Diffusion Plant (PORTS) is located on more than 3,700 acres of federal land and was constructed from 1952 - 1956 to enrich uranium for the USA's nuclear defense program.

In 1964 uranium enrichment shifted from defense purposes to energy production and DOE assumed responsibility for the site.



In 1992, the Energy Policy Act was passed and DOE leased the production facilities to the United States Enrichment Corporation (USEC) which became a private corporation in 1998. The plant continued to enrich uranium for power plant usage until May, 2001.

The demand for nuclear power began to diminish in the late 1990's and the plant began the process of shutting down.

Today, the site is being cleaned up with oversight from State of Ohio regulations and DOE is seeking input from the community to create a vision (Visioning Teams) for the future of the site once the cleanup is completed.

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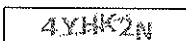
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