CIVIL
GOVERNMENT SERVICES
MINING & METALS
OIL, GAS & CHEMICALS
POWER

RELEASE DATE:
SEPTEMBER 5, 2014

Media contact:
Todd A. Nelson
(509) 371-2121
tanelson@bechtel.com

Vit Plant places standby diesel generator

One of many safety systems incorporated into design

RICHLAND, Wash.— Workers at the Hanford Waste Treatment Plant, also known as the Vit Plant, set a large standby diesel generator that will be used to power support systems should electricity be lost during the plant's operations.

The generator is designed to start automatically within 60 seconds when standard power is lost. It can supply 2,250 kW of electricity, enough to support 1,800 average American households. In the event of a planned or unplanned loss of normal electrical power, it will provide electricity to the plant's main switchgear building for site-wide distribution to facility lighting, signage and other support systems.

The generator is powered by a 3,570 horsepower, water-cooled engine. The generator is 42 feet long, 12 feet wide, 14 feet tall and weighs more than 50 tons.

"The standby generator is one of the many systems incorporated into the Vit Plant design for safe operations," said Wes Stone, area project manager for the Balance of Facilities and Analytical Laboratory. "Should we lose main power, the standby generator ensures we can continue supplying power to our support facilities."

The standby generator is part of the 20 balance of facilities that comprise the infrastructure necessary to support Vit Plant operations. About half of the support facilities are completed.

The generator was manufactured by Stewart & Stevenson Services Inc. of Houston, Texas.

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Editor's note: Hover over the image below and press Ctrl + click to follow the link for a high-resolution copy.

WTP workers unload the standby diesel generator. Over the next several months, they will install the generator, which will power auxiliary plant systems should main power be lost.

About Bechtel:

Bechtel National Inc. is designing and building the world's largest radioactive waste treatment plant for the U.S. Department of Energy at the Hanford Site in southeastern Washington state. The Waste Treatment Plant, also known as the Vit Plant, will use a process called vitrification to solidify the radioactive liquid waste stored in 177 underground tanks.

Vitrification involves blending the waste with glass-forming materials and heating it to high temperatures. The molten mixture is then poured into stainless steel canisters to cool and solidify. In this glass form, the waste is stable and impervious to the environment, and its radioactivity will dissipate over hundreds to thousands of years.

The Vit Plant will cover 65 acres with four major facilities – Pretreatment, Low-Activity Waste Vitrification, High-Level Waste Vitrification and Analytical Laboratory – as well as operations and maintenance buildings, utilities, other support facilities and office space.