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NRC RELEASES B&W APOLLO SITE IN PENNSYLVANIA

FOR UNRESTRICTED USE

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has released the Babcock & Wilcox Apollo, Pennsylvania, site for unrestricted use, following cleanup of radioactive contamination to safe levels.

The first license for the site--located in Armstrong County, about 25 miles east-northeast of Pittsburgh--was issued in 1957 to Nuclear Material and Equipment Corporation. Atlantic Richfield Company was the operator from 1967 to 1971, and B&W since 1971, although active operations at the site ceased in 1983. Decommissioning activities were completed in 1995.

The primary activity at the site was conversion of uranium hexafluoride to uranium dioxide, a step in the manufacture of nuclear fuel. A majority of the material processed was for use by the Department of Energy and its predecessor federal agencies.

B&W decommissioning activities included dismantlement of the main building, removal or replacement of three sewer lines, remediation and reconstruction of the riverbank, and remediation of other contaminated areas. More than 800,000 cubic feet of contaminated soil and building rubble were removed and sent to low-level waste disposal facilities.

The company conducted radiation surveys for each phase of remediation, which the NRC reviewed. The NRC and its contractor, Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education (ORIS), also performed confirmatory radiation surveys. The final surveys showed that the site meets NRC's criteria for unrestricted use.

Based on NRC inspections, the B&W radiation surveys, the NRC and ORISE confirmatory radiation surveys, and groundwater monitoring program results, NRC concluded that decommissioning activities are complete. It has therefore notified the company that the site is suitable for unrestricted use.

The NRC has also removed the B&W Apollo site from its Site Decommissioning Management Plan, which identifies about 50 sites throughout the United States that are contaminated with radioactive materials and warrant special attention.

