



PORTSMOUTH GASEOUS DIFFUSION PLANT CLEANUP

A History Remembered

PURPOSE OF THIS FACT SHEET

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) is developing its overall cleanup strategy for the Portsmouth Gaseous Diffusion Plant (GDP) located in Piketon, Ohio. Because the Pike County plant played an important role in the Cold War, DOE is making plans to preserve the legacy of the site for future generations. The purpose of this fact sheet is to provide information and request input from the public in general, especially those persons interested in historic preservation.

BACKGROUND

DOE is performing decontamination and decommissioning (D&D), waste disposition and aspects of environmental cleanup under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation & Liability Act (CERCLA). CERCLA is a federal law that provides a framework for identifying and addressing potential hazards to human health and the environment. In April 2010, DOE and Ohio EPA finalized a legally enforceable cleanup agreement, called the *Director's Final Findings and Orders for Removal Action and Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study and Remedial Design and Remedial Action*, that dictates how the CERCLA process will be used during D&D of the Portsmouth Gaseous Diffusion Plant. Historic preservation issues for CERCLA actions will be addressed in the CERCLA process.

EVALUATION

Since 1996, DOE has worked with cultural resource professionals, including architectural historians and professional archaeologists, to evaluate the DOE Portsmouth site. DOE prepared an "architectural inventory," a report of the buildings built by the DOE since 1953, to document the history of site construction and development phases, the types of buildings, and the buildings' roles in the site missions.

The DOE Portsmouth GDP enriched uranium to higher levels over longer periods of time than any of DOE's other gaseous diffusion plant sites. However, CERCLA obligates DOE to clean-up contamination at the site to protect human health and the environment. Appropriate mitigation will be completed as ultimately determined in



the decision documents. Vince Adams, DOE Site Director, pictured (right) in one of the main process buildings during a site tour with Deputy Secretary of Energy Daniel Poneman (left):

"Because the physical buildings may need to be removed to meet CERCLA requirements for human health and safety, DOE proposes a combination of unique methods to preserve the history of the plant without keeping the physical structures. DOE's proposed mitigation strategy for the Portsmouth site will be implemented in phases as the cleanup activities take place over the next several years."

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DOE'S PROPOSED PATH FORWARD FOR THE DOE-BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Architectural historians have assisted DOE in identifying several methods that could be used to preserve the history of the plant, even if the buildings are removed. DOE is seeking input on the following proposed methods to preserve the history of the DOE Portsmouth Gaseous Diffusion Plant and for other ideas that the public may have.

Historic Context Report

A written history of the site, from acquisition in 1952 to the end of the Cold War in 1992, will capture the role of the Portsmouth Gaseous Diffusion Plant in the Cold War and its relationship with other facilities throughout the nationwide DOE complex.

Photo Documentation

Black and white panoramic photographs of the facility were taken monthly when the site was under construction. New black and white photos will be taken from the same locations during D&D to show changes to the facility resulting from cleanup.

Geographic Information System

An "atlas" of the site and its systems to illustrate the relationship between site facilities and to show changes made to the site landscape over time.

Individual Preservation Portfolios

Created for select process facilities, the preservation portfolio includes a detailed description and written history of the particular facility; photographs, floor plans, equipment layouts and training manuals; new photography and interpretive graphics.

Archive

An archive would be created to preserve existing hard copies of written and photographic material, plans, maps, drawings, and manuals from the site.



Above: One of the main process buildings during construction.

Virtual Museum

Designed to be the centerpiece of the site's historic preservation activities, the virtual museum allows easy access to the documentation and preservation tools. Oral histories of workers and others whose lives were involved with the gaseous diffusion plant at Piketon will also be included in the virtual museum. The virtual museum would be the "entry point" for the archival information described above.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS

DOE is also working right now with professional archaeologists to characterize the Portsmouth Site to identify historic properties. Surveys are underway to evaluate historic-era farmsteads that existed prior to the construction of the GDP. The undisturbed portions of the Site are also being systematically surveyed to identify prehistoric sites and determine if they are historic properties. Appropriate mitigation through data recovery and other efforts will be completed as ultimately determined in the decision documents. The Archive and Virtual Museum described above will also be used to house and feature information from the archaeological investigations.

United States Department of Energy
P.O. Box 700
Piketon, OH 45661

Comments continued...

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CONTACT INFORMATION (OPTIONAL)

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____

EMAIL: _____

