

Clean Up, Don't Build Up the Kansas City Nuclear Weapons Plant!

The Bannister Complex in south Kansas City, Missouri, administered by the General Services Administration (GSA), is the host site of the Kansas City Plant (KCP). The Plant produces and/or procures 85% of all nuclear weapons components for the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), the semi-autonomous nuclear weapons agency within the Department of Energy. The site is contaminated and there is a serious lack of definitive, publicly available information on how the Banister Federal Complex will be comprehensively cleaned up. More seriously, there is no firm, publicly stated federal commitment to final cleanup, which apparently local politicians have been led to believe will cost only “several” million dollars.

*Total through 2030
[for existing Kansas
City Plant] Demolition
and Remediation
\$287 FY06 (\$million).*

“Relocation of Non-
Nuclear Production to
an Alternate Location
Business Case,”
NNSA, October
18, 2007, page 16
(parentheses in the
original).

In contrast, the NNSA “business case” quoted at left indicates that cleanup could cost \$287 million (and even with that DOE has a long, long track record of underestimating cleanup costs). A yet-to-be determined amount of demolition of existing structures dating back to WWII will be necessary for both site reuse and cleanup, given that much of the contamination lies under the buildings. However, the business case does not even begin to document how the \$287 million figure was determined. There are no publicly available credible plans and projected costs for final cleanup, when there is a clear and present need for them. Until there is, the Kansas City municipal government should not offer tax incentives for NNSA to move to a new half-billion dollar plant. Final cleanup of the existing site is crucial so that once NNSA and GSA vacate the Complex the site can be redeveloped, as is strongly hoped for by the Kansas City municipal government. Additionally, final cleanup itself would provide jobs while restoring the environment and preparing the site for potential economic reuse.

In contrast, in its own internal plans, the NNSA says that the “existing building will be sustained in a viable condition until 2015, **after which the property will be excess to the NNSA and final disposition will be provided under separate funding authority.**”¹ This is bureaucratic speak for saying that NNSA will not foot the bill for final cleanup and end state of the existing Plant. Given mushrooming federal deficits, if NNSA doesn't pay for clean up, what federal agency will? The obvious candidate is GSA, but it too has not publicly committed to final KCP cleanup, and simply does not have the political clout that NNSA has. Because of the swelling federal deficits any federal agency could be prevented from final cleanup, unless that cleanup is prioritized over a new, unneeded nuclear weapons production plant.

Locations Where Groundwater Clean Up Standards Are Not Met: 2006

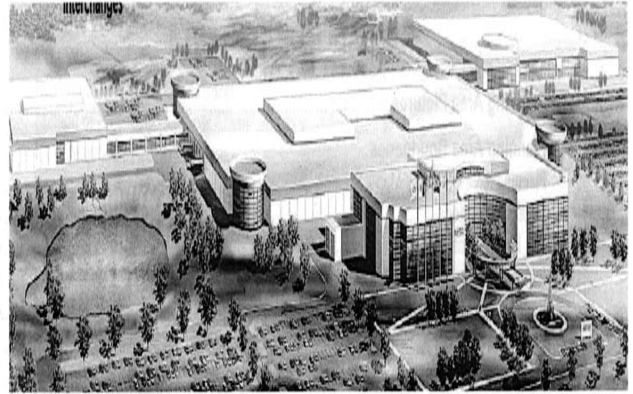


NNSA Kansas City Plant presentation to the Alliance for Nuclear Accountability, October 17, 2007, page 13.

¹ FY 2008 KCP Ten-Year Site Plan, NNSA/Honeywell Federal Manufacturing & Technologies, LLC, p. 18.

NNSA plans to move to its new production plant built by private developers by 2012. The agency says that the “design and infrastructure of the new building will support the LEPs [Life Extension Programs],² RRW [Reliable Replacement Warhead]³ and other future weapons designs.”⁴ The existing Kansas City Plant is NNSA’s highest rated production plant. Contrary to the 1970 NonProliferation Treaty (NPT), the new plant will be central to indefinite preservation of nuclear weapons and any future new designs for nuclear weapons.

Construction of the new plant and associated local infrastructure improvements, as planned, will be funded by a combination of private and local revenue bond financing. The end result is that an instrument of the Kansas City municipal government – the Planned Industrial Expansion Authority – will hold title to the new plant while the private developers gradually acquire ownership through a 20-year purchase-to-lease. However, nuclear weapons production is arguably a declining industry, one in which NNSA explicitly plans to cut the number of full-time employees by 20 to 30% across the nuclear weapons complex over the next decade. In addition to the debatable morality of a municipal government holding title to a federal nuclear weapons production plant, for the long-term welfare of its citizens any Kansas City tax incentives are arguably better and more responsibly directed toward emerging green collar jobs.



ARTIST DRAFT RENDERING OF PROPOSED NNSA/HONEYWELL CAMPUS

Even as it prepares to move to its new production plant, the NNSA is “**a Potentially Responsible Party in a superfund settlement**”⁵ because historic KCP operations have seriously contaminated the site’s underlying groundwater with cancer-causing PCBs and volatile organic compounds (mostly industrial solvents). As a bureaucratic matter, the Department of Energy claims, “All environmental restoration work was completed in FY 2006 at the Kansas City Plant. Long-term Stewardship activities transferred to the National Nuclear Security Administration beginning in FY 2008.”⁶ This put remaining cleanup (if any) firmly in the hands of the nuclear weaponeers who created the mess to begin with. Moreover, this so-called Long-term Stewardship includes contaminated groundwater “pump and treat” remediation of “approximately 28 million gallons of contaminated groundwater annually” which must “be maintained indefinitely.”⁷

The real solution is comprehensive cleanup that eliminates the sources of contamination and makes site reuse possible so that local economic development can be strongly encouraged. Kansas City tax incentives for a new nuclear weapons production plant could well have the adverse effect of not only hastening the physical abandonment of the old site, but also abandonment of the federal responsibility to clean it up. If the federal government does not clean up the existing Kansas City Plant in the relative near term it may never be cleaned up. Kansas City should say no to tax incentives for a new nuclear weapons production plant, and instead insist on clean up and redevelopment of the old site.

² Life Extension Programs extend the operational lives of nuclear weapons for 30 years or longer, and in some cases make them more militarily effective. For more, see <http://www.ananuclear.org/Portals/0/documents/ANA%20LEP%20final.pdf>

³ Reliable Replacement Warheads are new-design nuclear weapons proposed by NNSA by now rejected by Congress for two consecutive years.

⁴ FY 2008 KCP Ten-Year Site Plan (TYSP) NNSA and Honeywell FM&T., page 21-22.

⁵ NNSA FY09 Budget Request, Vol. 1, Weapons Activities/Environmental Projects and Ops, p. 389.

⁶ DOE FY09 Budget Request, Vol. 5, Environmental Management/Overview, p. 356.

⁷ Ibid., p. 355.