Battelle Part of Team to Award Chornobyl New Safe Confinement Contract

Congratulations to the Chornobyl project team including: John Fallon, Andrei Glukhov, Bill Heertz, Joel Hoyt, Don Kelly, and Eric Schmieman, serving in Ukraine, and home office support staff Dan Couch, Diane Showers, Connie Sanders, and Bob Gruel, on the successful award of the Chornobyl New Safe Confinement Contract. The approximately $500M contract was awarded for the construction of a confinement building known as the Arch to cover Unit 4, which was heavily damaged by the 1986 Chornobyl accident.

The accident at the Chornobyl Nuclear Power Plant in Ukraine resulted in the destruction of the Unit 4 reactor core and most of the reactor building. The explosion propelled radioactive material as much as six miles high, where it was then dispersed mainly over 60,000 square miles of Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia. The cloud of material made its way through Europe and was detected as far away as the U.S. While fires from the accident were still burning, Soviet specialists worked steadily to contain the remaining radioactive material by encasing the damaged unit in a massive concrete and steel enclosure, known as the Shelter.

Over time, the Shelter has severely deteriorated resulting in the need for a new "shell." The Arch will be constructed over the Shelter so disassembly of the Shelter can occur without radioactive material being released into the atmosphere. Top priorities for the Arch include:

- protect the shelter from weather and condensation to minimize further corrosion
- provide remotely operated equipment, such as cranes, for orderly deconstruction of unstable structures
- confine radioactive dust resulting from deconstruction activities or from a possible collapse, and
- convert the destroyed Unit into an environmentally safe system.

The New Safe Confinement proposal review and contract award process was carried out by the Shelter Implementation Plan (SIP) Project Management Unit (PMU), which is made up of Battelle, Bechtel and Electricité de France, Chornobyl plant employees, and local contractors. Battelle's role involves managing industrial, environmental, and health safety, and providing regulatory oversight for the project. This contract award culminates nearly ten years of effort to design and prepare for the construction of the Arch. The project team overcame complex technical, political, and economic issues in the international arena to achieve this outstanding project milestone.

Congratulations team on this outstanding accomplishment!