

Construction Project to Demolish Navy's Last Coal-Fired Power Plant and Build Energy-Efficient System

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By Gary Wagner, Naval Support Activity South Potomac Public Affairs

INDIAN HEAD, Md. (NNS) -- A ground-breaking ceremony July 9 celebrated the start of construction for a \$62 million project that will both decrease energy costs for military commands on Naval Support Facility (NSF) Indian Head, Md., and demolish the last remaining coal-fired power plant operated by the Navy.

The project will modernize utility services on Naval Support Facility Indian Head, Md., that are critical to sustaining key mission capabilities on the installation. It will provide the installation with decentralized steam and a 3.5 megawatt co-generation facility for electricity and steam.

Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Energy Thomas Hicks praised the project for its cost savings and efficiencies, as well as its strategic value.

"What it's about is improving our capabilities in the fleet-our combat capabilities, our warfighting capabilities-by reducing our vulnerabilities to increasingly volatile fuel costs. Ashore, [it's about] reducing our vulnerabilities associated with increasingly brittle electric grids and modernizing our system to be more resilient, more efficient," said Hicks.

Energy efficiency is critical as the Navy seeks to meet half of its energy needs through alternative sources by 2020, said Hicks. "What you see here is a project that is going to save the Navy \$7.5 million a year in the tough fiscal environment that we're in and that we're going to be facing for several years, if not a decade or more. We're going to need projects like this that deliver those types of savings."

"This project will fundamentally transform the steam distribution system at Indian Head," said Capt. Peter Nette, commanding officer for Naval Support Activity South Potomac, as he welcomed guests in the opening program for the ground-breaking event.

"This utility is essential to specific mission capabilities on NSF Indian Head that are critical to our nation's armed forces," added Nette.

A combination natural gas turbine and heat recovery steam generator will replace the installation's Goddard Power Plant. Constructed in 1957, the Goddard Power Plant generates steam, compressed air and approximately 67 percent of the electric power used at NSF Indian Head. The power plant requires frequent costly repair and maintenance. Because of the outdated equipment, both steam production and steam transmission have become unreliable, directly affecting the mission of the supported commands on NSF Indian Head.

Capt. Kenneth Branch, commanding officer of Naval Facilities and Engineering Washington (NAVFACWASH), said maintenance of the aging facility was a "constant battle" and praised cost-savings the project will provide.

"This project stood the test of every single accountant that went after it; the numbers are

there. If you truck coal and you lose steam over 30 miles [of line], the numbers are there."

Branch highlighted the environmental benefits of the project and thanked the state of Maryland for its cooperation as the Navy worked to meet rigorous environmental standards.

"I am pleased we have a plans and agreement with Maryland to cease our coal-fired emissions soon," he said. "The Navy's commitment to the environment and the Chesapeake's health is strong and stronger today with this project. Thank you to the state of Maryland for your support to make it happen."

In order to become compliant with new Clean Air Act standards, the Goddard Power Plant would require extensive upgrades. Once the new natural gas facilities are completed, the deactivation and demolition of the Goddard Power Plant will result in a significant reduction in environmental impacts.

The new system will cut energy use by 50 percent, water consumption by 75 percent and steam requirements by 80 percent, resulting in approximately \$7.5 million savings each year. Additionally, more than 50 billion pounds of carbon emissions will be reduced each year.

Natural gas, a cleaner and more efficient fuel source, will serve as the primary fuel for the new steam- and power-generation facilities. NSF Indian Head currently does not have any natural gas distribution infrastructure, and the nearest natural gas supply line is located approximately five miles northeast of the installation in the Bryans Road, Md. community. The project will include the construction of a new natural gas transmission line from Bryans Road to NSF Indian Head.

"This new project will save millions of dollars for the Navy and allow us to be better stewards of the local environment," said Branch.

"This is a great success for not only Naval District Washington and NAVFAC Washington, it's a tribute to the Chief of Naval Operation's Task Force Energy and Secretary of the Navy's energy and environmental focus," said Branch. "Each year with the current plant, we're moving 46 million pounds of coal more than 400 miles by rail, barge and finally truck to Indian Head."

The Navy coordinated an environmental assessment with federal and state resource agencies to evaluate the potential impacts of the proposed project on the human environment. The assessment highlighted adverse effects to historic properties at NSF Indian Head, including the demolition of three buildings, seven miles of steam lines, and 5,000 feet of railroad tracks that have been determined eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

In accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, the Navy notified the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the Maryland Historical Trust's State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and federally recognized tribes of these adverse effects. Documentation is underway to mitigate the adverse effects to historic buildings within the Naval Powder Factory and Extrusion Plant Historic Districts on the installation.

The Navy and SHPO have completed a memorandum of agreement regarding the military construction project, and a separate agreement for the disposal of excess railroad tracks associated with NSF Indian Head. These agreements include appropriate stipulations to alleviate the remaining adverse effects to historic resources.

The Navy completed the environmental assessment and signed a finding of no significant impact Sept. 21 last year, and the military construction contract was awarded to Clark Construction and The Bell Company Sept. 28.

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