

# FERNALD FACT SHEET ~ WASTE PITS REMEDIAL ACTION PROJECT



**From 1952 to 1989, the Fernald site produced 500 million pounds of pure uranium metal products** for the nation's Cold War defense program. When the site ceased operations in 1989 because of declines in demand for Fernald's products and increasing environmental concerns, 31 million net pounds of nuclear product, 2.5 billion pounds of waste and 2.5 million cubic yards of contaminated soil and debris remained on site. Since then, Fernald workers have been dedicated to the environmental remediation of the 1,050-acre site.

**In 1986, Fernald began a 10-year environmental site investigation** to determine contamination levels and develop cleanup plans. The investigation resulted in Records of Decision, or final cleanup plans, for five operable units. Operable Unit 1 includes six waste pits, a burn pit, which was used to burn material such as laboratory chemicals and oil, and a clearwell, which served as a settling basin for process water. The 37-acre waste pit area contains about 1 million tons of low-level radioactive waste generated during Fernald's uranium processing operations.

**In 1995, the Department of Energy (DOE), Fluor Fernald, regulators and stakeholders agreed on a cleanup plan for the waste pit area.** The plan involves excavating the pits; sorting, crushing or shredding the waste; removing excess moisture by drying the waste in thermal dryers; and shipping the waste by rail to a licensed off-site disposal facility.

**The first phase of the project entailed establishing contracts for the remediation subcontractor, the commercial disposal facility and the rail carriers.** In 1997, Fluor Fernald awarded a contract to the International Technology (IT) Group, now called the Shaw Group, to construct the waste processing facilities, excavate the pits, sort and treat the waste and load it into railcars. In 1998, Shaw initiated construction of remediation facilities including the Material Handling Building, the Railcar Loadout Building, the Gas Cleaning System and Water Treatment System Building, miscellaneous maintenance, laundry and laboratory support facilities, and two rotary dryers. The remediation facilities cover two acres and are adjacent to the waste pit area.

*PHOTO: The waste pit area contains almost 1 million tons of low-level radioactive waste generated by Fernald's uranium processing operations (7792-164).*

WASTE PITS