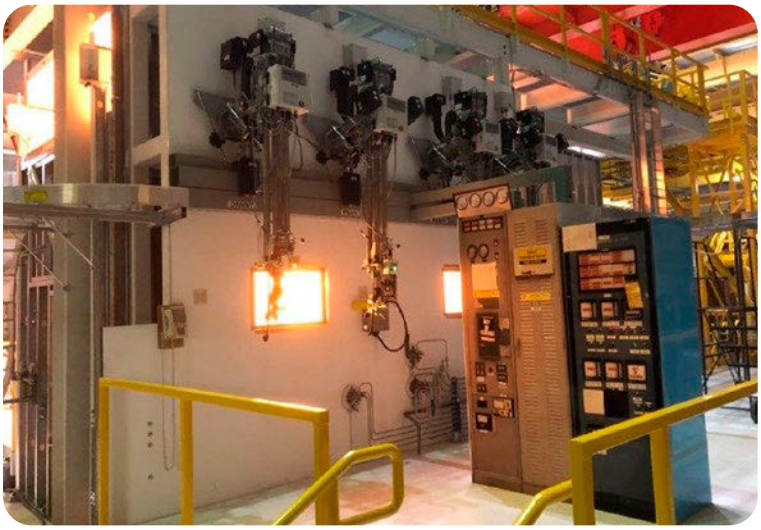
from the underwater basin into dry-storage casks, onto trucks, and into a new storage area close to the facility. Final construction activities at the dry-storage area were completed last fall.



Workers recently installed manipulator equipment at a full-scale mock-up of areas of the Hanford Site's Waste Encapsulation and Storage Facility. (Photo: DOE)

Additional upgrades are needed at WESF's truck transfer area to enable the half-mile trip to the dry-storage concrete pad.

The 1,335 cesium capsules and 601 strontium capsules have been stored in an underwater basin at WESF since the mid-1970s. Cesium (in the form of cesium chloride, mostly Cs-137, with minor amounts of the much longer-lived Cs-135) and strontium (as Sr-90 in strontium fluoride) were removed from Hanford's underground waste storage tanks to reduce the internal temperature. While the capsules are currently in safe storage in the underwater basin, moving them to dry storage eliminates a longer-term risk of a radioactive release in the unlikely event of a loss of water from the basin during a beyond-design-basis earthquake. Dry storage will also reduce operating costs.

EM also noted that progress continues at a full-scale mock-up about 15 miles south of WESF at Hanford's Maintenance and Storage