



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF **ENERGY**

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First Trainload of Uranium Mill Tailings Leaves Moab

Project starts to move 16 million tons of uranium mill tailings

Moab, Utah – The U.S. Department of Energy today began a process that will eventually move 16 million tons of uranium mill tailings away from the Colorado River near Moab, Utah. The mill tailings are being moved by train to a location 30 miles away, near Crescent Junction, Utah, where they will be safely and permanently disposed of in an engineered cell.

The Moab Project site, northwest of Moab in Grand County, includes the former Atlas uranium millsite that ceased operations in 1984. The 439-acre site is on the west bank of the Colorado River. About 130 acres of the site is covered by the 16-million-ton uranium mill tailings pile.

“These first mill tailings shipments, starting today, will be used as an additional operational check to ensure all equipment and processes are working in a manner that protects the environment and emphasizes our focus on worker safety,” said Donald Metzler, Moab Federal Project Director. “We will recognize our transition into full operations at a ribbon-cutting ceremony to be held the afternoon of May 4.”

“The preparations and coordination needed to haul the mill tailings by train has been a long process made possible through teamwork with our contractors, EnergySolutions and S&K Aerospace and a great deal of cooperation from Union Pacific Railroad. I would also like to thank the Moab community for its continued support of the project,” said Metzler.

To prepare for the transport of the mill tailings, workers excavated a 25-foot deep, 40-acre section of the Crescent Junction disposal cell; constructed the haul road to the rail load out area; lowered the rail bench up to 14 feet to attain a safe grade for loading; made improvements to drainage and erosion control systems; and constructed a support area where lids will be placed on containers filled with mill tailings.

After May 4, full operations will commence with trains of 88 containers, running each evening Monday through Thursday.

During the summer of 2009, train shipments are planned to increase to a 7-day-a-week operation. The increase in shipments will be made possible by the recent selection of the Moab Uranium Mill Tailings Remedial Action Project to receive funds through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009. The ARRA will provide \$108 million that will be used to relocate an additional 2 million tons of tailings by the end of fiscal year 2011.

“The Moab Project is in a good position to apply these funds in a timely manner because we are a shovel-ready project,” Metzler said. “The Recovery Act funds allow us to accelerate shipments and create local jobs.”

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