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Rocky Flats demolishes landmark structures

GOLDEN, Colo., Nov. 10, 2003 –Rocky Flats' most visible structure was demolished Saturday, dramatically altering the historic Rocky Flats skyline. The 50-year old water tower was safely razed using small-scale explosives. Workers also demolished the site's last guard tower and a 103-foot high ventilation stack.

"The water tower was a landmark," explained Kaiser-Hill Project Manager Dyan Foss. "Today, its absence is a symbol of the tremendous progress the site is making toward closure." The three demolitions on Saturday bring the number of buildings and structures removed or demolished from Rocky Flats to 315.

Constructed in 1952, the 300,000-gallon elevated tank supported Rocky Flats industrial, domestic and fire protection needs. But for the employees and nearby communities, the 155-foot high tower has been the most prominent feature of the skyline and has served as a symbol for the site.

The elevated tank is constructed of steel and was supported by a center pipe and six perimeter legs. Controlled Demolition Inc. (CDI) used small-scale explosives to safely drop the tank on its side. CDI has performed three projects at Rocky Flats in the past, and since 1978, CDI has demolished over 300 stacks and nine structural steel water towers.

The guard tower, one of four, was built in 1983 as part of an enhanced security zone surrounding the plutonium buildings. Each of the towers was 12 feet square and 45 feet tall and was constructed with bulletproof glass and gun slots. The other three guard towers were successfully demolished in 2001.

The stack supported building 881, one of the four original manufacturing buildings at Rocky Flats Plant. This former enriched uranium processing and machining facility is scheduled for demolition in the spring of 2004. The stack was connected to building 881 with a tunnel that enters the first floor of the facility 30 feet underground.

Rocky Flats is a DOE-owned cleanup and closure site operated by Kaiser-Hill Company under an accelerated closure contract. The Rocky Flats mission includes special nuclear material management and shipment, nuclear deactivation and decommissioning, waste management and shipment, environmental cleanup and site closure.