

# Rocky Flats Site

## February 2003

### A History of Success

The Rocky Flats Site performed a crucial role in the nation's defense effort for more than 40 years, producing plutonium and uranium components used in nuclear weapons. Throughout its history, Rocky Flats was part of many historic firsts and milestones, setting new records for safe work hours, fabricating components that couldn't be done elsewhere, protecting classified information, and consistently meeting demanding delivery schedules. In fact, the site holds the unprecedented distinction of never once missing a required product delivery deadline.

### From National Defense to Cleanup

Today, Rocky Flats is attempting to complete another first – the safe cleanup and closure of an entire former nuclear weapons production site. A project of this magnitude and complexity has never before been attempted or accomplished anywhere in the world.

Early forecasts estimated it would take more than 60 years and \$37 billion to complete a cleanup and closure that is now on track to be finished in 2006, at a total cost of approximately \$7 billion. The DOE has established a clear vision, an innovative contracting approach, and extraordinary cooperation among regulatory agencies, the U.S. Congress, and stakeholders to complete the cleanup no later than 2006.

### The Challenge...The Future

When Rocky Flats officially became a closure site following the collapse of the former Soviet Union (*then-President George Bush canceled its last mission in his January 1992 State of the Union address*), the site was left with a daunting task: the removal of 12.9 metric tons of plutonium in various forms, the demolition of hundreds of aging and contaminated buildings and structures, and the disposal of thousands of tons of radioactive and hazardous waste materials. After years of struggling the site has made significant progress over the last two years. Within the last two years the site is now shipping its plutonium to South Carolina for storage and potential future use, has begun large scale demolition of facilities, and has become the nation's largest shipper of transuranic waste.

This Administration is committed to providing the needed resources and management attention to ensure completion by 2006 with the potential for further acceleration. When the historic cleanup is complete, the site will be transitioned to a National Wildlife Refuge under the auspices of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (*Allard-Udall legislation signed by President George Bush in December 2001*). It will demonstrate that the U.S. Government can, indeed, clean up the legacy of the Cold War and turn the 6,000+-acre reserve from a perceived public liability to a true public asset.