

## PGE to take down Trojan nuclear cooling tower

*It's taken twelve years to get to this decommissioning task ... that's shameful*

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RAINIER, Ore. -- Portland General Electric said Wednesday it is almost ready to destroy the 499-foot cooling tower at Trojan Nuclear Plant. The hourglass-shaped structure, scheduled for implosion on May 21, is one of the most widely recognized icons of Oregon's only nuclear power plant.



Trojan Nuclear Plant

The power plant closed in 1993 after 17 years of operation. Since then, PGE has gradually phased out the facilities at the plant, located roughly 40 miles north of Portland on the Columbia River. Trojan is the first large-scale commercial nuclear plant to be decommissioned in the United States and the cooling tower the largest to be destroyed.

Controlled Demolition, Inc., the Maryland-based contractor handling the implosion, said it will take 8 seconds to bring down the 41,000 tons of cement and steel. The company will place roughly 2,000 tons of explosives at the base of the structure, which is expected to tilt slightly sideways then collapse upon itself.

The structure has already been stripped of all its machinery; radioactive material was never contained in the tower.

PGE sent a letter to area residents and businesses Friday with details of the upcoming event. The company said debris will be primarily contained to the explosion area. Some fine dust may be caught in the wind, but the company said it does not pose a safety risk. The contractor said vibrations will only be felt in the half-mile radius surrounding the building. The explosion is expected to be no louder than a thunderclap.

"It's been done before but never this big," said Mark Loizeaux, president of CDI, which also managed the destruction of the Kingdome in Seattle.

The complete decommissioning of Trojan will not be complete until 2024 but for area residents the most notable step was when the plant closed in 1993.

The plant closed after a crack in the steam tube, which was located in the containment building, released radioactive gas into the air. PGE and regulators found the price of repairs outweighed the cost of replacing the system.

Surrounding cities lost jobs, businesses and tax revenue after the closure. For them, the tower is a bitter reminder of better times, but many want it to stay.

"I hate to see the waste of money and potential," said Freeman Ryder, 80, who owns an RV Park with his wife one mile south of the plant. "There should be some way to see the facility reused."

Others said it should be left as a piece of history of the plant, which caused enormous controversy between environmentalists and PGE. But most locals simply bemoan the plant's demise.

"No one here cared," said Bob Burns, 68, who grew up in Rainier. "It's all the (people) 60 to 80 miles up the river...Trojan was probably one of the safest things we had around here."

The remaining buildings will be destroyed gradually through 2008. The final step in decommissioning the plant is the removal of the spent fuel rods, which are the only remaining radioactive material at Trojan. The rods are stored in concrete casks that sit above ground there and will be moved to a federal repository. The move has been delayed at the federal level and is now scheduled for 2024.

CDI said the casks will not be affected by the explosion.

PGE, which has primary ownership of the facility and total ownership of the land, said it has not finalized plans for the property. The company said a new power plant could be put there or a public park. The property cannot be sold until the decommissioning process is complete.

There will be no public viewing areas for the demolition. Highways and air space will be temporarily closed. Fog or lightning storms could delay the implosion. No time has been set for the event yet.

PGE has a \$429 million decommissioning budget but would not release the cost of the implosion. By the end of 2005, it has used \$300 million of the budget.