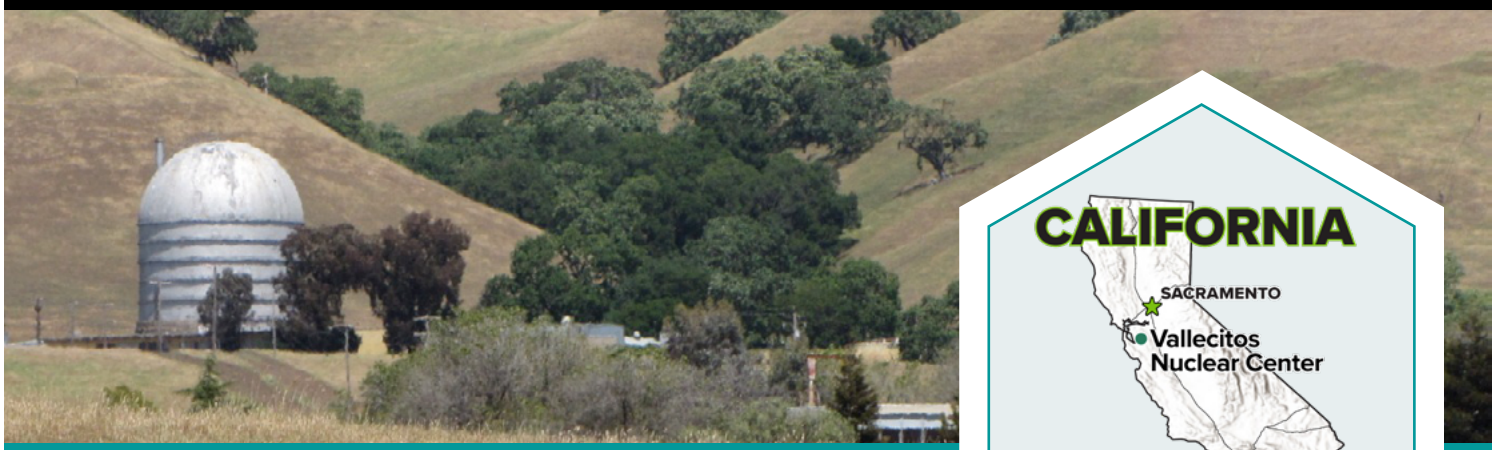
Fact Sheet

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY | Legacy Management



Vallecitos Nuclear Center, California, Site

An MED/AEC legacy site

This fact sheet provides information about the **Vallecitos Nuclear Center site**. This privately owned site is managed by the **U.S. Department of Energy Office of Legacy Management** as a **Manhattan Engineer District/Atomic Energy Commission Legacy Site**.

Site Information and History

The Vallecitos Nuclear Center (VNC) is a 1,600-acre nuclear research facility and the site of a former electricity-generating nuclear power plant located in Sunol, California, about 40 miles east of San Francisco.

General Electric (GE) Hitachi Nuclear Energy, an affiliate of the GE Company, owns the facility. The first commercially owned nuclear plant to supply power to the general public was operated at the site from 1957 until 1963. From 1965 through 1975, VNC was used to conduct research work for the Atomic Energy Commission's (AEC) Nuclear Energy Program and the civilian nuclear power industry. AEC is a predecessor agency to the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE). The research activities were also performed between 1981 and 1982. DOE contract work was subsequently discontinued. The facility is still used as a nuclear research center.

DOE and GE Hitachi Nuclear Energy decontaminated and removed nuclear waste materials from a hot cell and a glove box used for government-sponsored research. The hot cell facility is a shielded, confined area used for remote work on radioactive materials. The decontaminated hot cell can be reused for research and other commercial nuclear work.

Waste removal from VNC began in September 2009 and was completed in 2010. Most of the nuclear waste generated from the decontamination work was transuranic waste (TRU) that consisted of clothing, tools, rags, debris, and other items contaminated with small amounts of radioactive TRU elements. The TRU waste was packaged and then shipped to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant in Carlsbad, New Mexico, for permanent disposal.

Regulatory Setting

VNC is a privately owned and operated facility licensed by the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) for commercial nuclear research and development. Decontamination and restoration activities were conducted in compliance with the requirements and license provisions of NRC and the California Department of Health.

Admiral Lewis Strauss (center), Chairman of the AEC, at the Opening of the Vallecitos Site, 1957.

Legacy Management Activities

DOE Office of Legacy Management (LM) activities include managing the government-sponsored research records and responding to stakeholder inquiries.

CONTACT INFORMATION

IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY AT THE SITE, CONTACT 911

LM TOLL-FREE EMERGENCY HOTLINE: (877) 695-5322

Site-specific documents related to the **Vallecitos Nuclear Center, California, Site** are available on the LM website at **www.energy.gov/lm/vallecitos-nuclear-center-california-site**

For more information about LM activities at the **Vallecitos Nuclear Center, California, Site**, contact:

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