

Honeywell's 2,100-Worker Nuke Plant Breaks Ground

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — A groundbreaking ceremony is scheduled this week at the site of a privately developed plant in south Kansas City where non-nuclear parts for nuclear weapons will be built.

The facility being built for Honeywell Federal Manufacturing & Technologies will employ 2,100 people and replace the current Honeywell plant at the Bannister Federal Complex, also in south Kansas City. That plant produces 85 percent of the non-nuclear parts that go into a typical weapon.

The new plant will be smaller and more efficient than the current one and is expected to save about \$100 million a year, federal officials said.

The Kansas City Star reports that another 1,500 construction workers also will be needed to build the 1.5 million-square-foot campus.

Because the new plant is a private development, it will be on the local tax rolls, and is expected to generate \$5.2 million annually in property tax revenue when it's fully operational.

The groundbreaking ceremony set for Wednesday at the 185-acre site is expected to be attended by Sen. Kit Bond, a Missouri Republican; Rep. Emanuel Cleaver, a Missouri Democrat; and Thomas P. D'Agostino, the top executive with the National Nuclear Security Administration, the federal agency in charge of the Honeywell contract.

Opponents and peace activists also are to attend the groundbreaking.

"There's no justification to the local economy that justifies putting the whole planet at risk," said Ann Suellentrop, a registered nurse who leads the area chapter of Physicians for Social Responsibility.

The Kansas City plant is an integral part of the U.S. nuclear arms infrastructure, producing 85 percent of the non-nuclear parts that go into a typical weapon, federal officials said.

The project is being developed by CenterPoint Zimmer LLC for the National Nuclear Security Administration. The construction price is \$443 million, but other costs, including \$263 million to relocate operations from the Bannister complex, will drive the final cost near \$1 billion.

The decision to build the plant privately will make the Kansas City facility an

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exception among the seven other facilities around the country used to make nuclear weapons, including the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in California and Sandia National Laboratory in New Mexico.

All are owned by the U.S. Department of Energy, the parent agency of the National Nuclear Security Administration.

"I think it's huge for Kansas City at a time Kansas City needs good news," said Brad Scott, a former federal official who helped guide the deal.

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