



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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World-class tunnel rescue facility to be built at Satsop Business Park

SATSOP – The Grays Harbor Public Development Authority Board of Directors has authorized \$250,000 toward construction of a state-of-the-art tunnel rescue training facility based on a commitment from the Seattle Fire Department to conduct specialized safety and rescue training at the facility.

The Seattle Fire Department’s interest in the Satsop Tunnel Rescue Facility is based on using the existing 12-foot in diameter water pipes located 27 feet below the ground that were part of the infrastructure for the never finished Satsop nuclear power plants, said Tami Garrow, CEO of Satsop Business Park.

“There is nowhere in the United States that has the potential for tunnel training as this place does with its 12-foot tunnels,” said Alan Vickery, assistant chief of the Seattle Fire Department. “These pipes are similar to the real world of tunneling work that is taking place in the Seattle area as well as internationally. Nothing that I’m aware of in the U.S. even compares,” he said.

The pair of parallel water pipes, which were intended to carry water to and from the nuclear power plants’ twin cooling towers, will be dissected by an open vault that will provide access to the surface and allow for four separate areas to set up various training scenarios.

“To create a rescue training center like this from scratch would cost millions of dollars,” said Garrow. (When the pipes were installed in 1979, the cost was \$7 million.) “But at Satsop, we have this valuable infrastructure right beneath our feet that will benefit tunnel construction workers, repair crews, a wide range of rescue workers and the general public. Redeploying these pipes into training props makes all kinds of sense when you think about it – but like everything else at the Park, it is recycling at its most creative.

It's like uncovering a precious resource that we know is already here, in this case, one that can help save lives and prevent injuries," she said.

With several current and upcoming huge tunneling projects in the Seattle area, including the next phase of the Sound Transit project to the University District and the Alaskan Way Viaduct project in downtown Seattle, the Seattle Fire Department is responsible to have trained firefighters at the ready to rescue workers and others, Assistant Chief Vickery told the Satsop Business Park's board. This new facility will be set up to deliver more realistic training scenarios – and thus make it safer for tunnel workers and firefighters who may be called to the scene of a tunnel emergency, he said.

In addition to the Seattle Fire Department's interest, there is growing interest by many other fire departments and safety organizations that are exploring the use of the tunnel rescue facility, so the Satsop Business Park's Board voted unanimously to move forward with construction of the facility.

Plans by Berglund, Schmidt and Associates, Inc., of Hoquiam are nearly complete, and the project will go out to bid in July, with completion anticipated by the end of 2011, according to Stan Ratcliff, director of services at Satsop Business Park. Once completed, the rescue training facility will be available for use to a variety of entities including the military, which already heavily uses portions of the Park for training purposes.

"The Park provides an amazing variety of opportunities, with this facility being a cornerstone of our training infrastructure," said Ratcliff. "I see the (former) reactor buildings, cooling towers, adjacent buildings and land offering a smorgasbord of training scenarios that groups can utilize for a week or two of intensive training, all at once. This will allow them to really maximize their training dollars."

"Satsop Business Park could be a possible location for a Nationwide Rescue Training Competition and Certification exercise with the military and all sorts of emergency response personnel working together," said Ratcliff, who has worked at the Park since 1981 and intimately knows its structures.

Just a stone's throw away from the soon-to-be-built tunnel rescue facility, under the shadow of the operational cooling tower, is a tunnel construction training facility being created by the Northwest Laborers-Employers Training Trust. That facility, complete with the now-retired tunnel boring machine, nicknamed "Helene," was created to teach tunnel workers how to safely operate in tunnels.

"The new tunnel rescue facility fits in with what we're doing but is completely separate," explained Mike Warren, the training director of the Northwest Laborers-Employers Training Trust.

"Having this tunnel rescue facility at the Park dovetails nicely with what we're doing to create a national tunnel training facility. I can see fire departments from across the U.S. and Canada using this facility. It will be a very unique set up. Tunnel rescue training will be provided to union laborers as well," Warren said.

“I think this is a great opportunity for Satsop Business Park,” said Steve Poler, Chairman of the Board. “Anytime we can add a world-class training center to the Park it’s great, and to have something like this that is so different and where you can do things you can’t do anywhere else in the country is very exciting. Secondly, working with an organization like the Seattle Fire Department is exciting as well,” said Poler.



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June 1979 Satsop water pipe install

Satsop Business Park is a 1,700-acre mixed-use business and technology park located in scenic Grays Harbor County in Southwest Washington just 30 minutes from Olympia and the I-5 corridor. It is home to more than 30 businesses, offers 440 acres of developed, pad-ready land and buildings supported by super-sized infrastructure and surrounded by 1,200 acres of sustainable managed forestland.

The Park is managed by the Grays Harbor Public Development Authority, a public corporation whose mission is to create new jobs and investment for the region. More information on Satsop Business Park can be found at www.Satsop.com.