



NEWS

Post gets the lead out of old barracks

By **Spc. Leah R. Burton, I Corps Public Affairs**

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Many of Fort Lewis' old buildings were painted with lead-based paint, during a time when the harmful effects of lead were not fully understood.

As local contractor MCS Environmental's employees recover usable building materials from 12 World War II barracks on North Fort Lewis, much of what they are encountering is wood painted with lead-based paint — which presents possible liability issues for selling because of the presence of potentially hazardous lead-based paint.

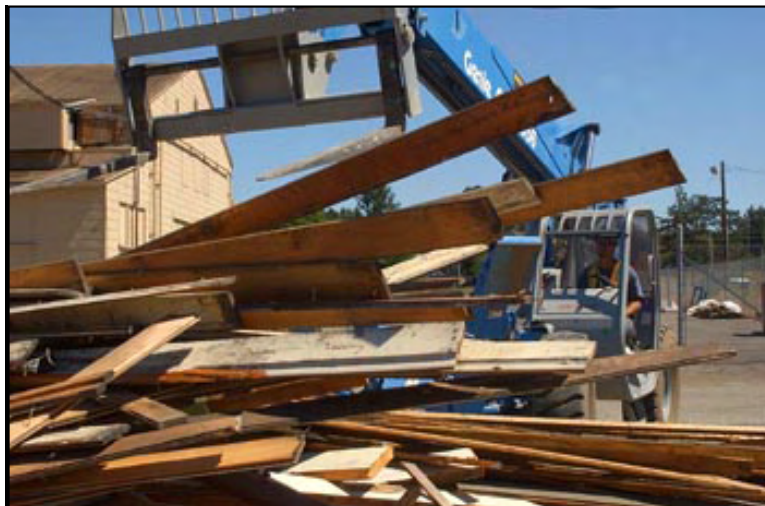
"The Corps of Engineers has been very proactive in recognizing that there are a lot of very useful building materials inside your old barracks. It's all previous building material. There are external marketplaces for those materials," said Matt Schultz, MCS Environmental project manager.

"For example, you guys are blessed with the forward-thinking operations they have at your EcoPark. They take scrap wood, and periodically, wood chippers are brought in to produce chipped material which is used as mulch and other things."

The workers initially work to get the materials off of the building intact, after which they take them to a central processing area on site, where they remove nails and staples.

"Once that's done, we stack it in piles, and it's ready to be sent off to the recycling marketplace," Schultz said.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency's Web Site at www.epa.gov, the chipping process may produce lead dust which can be inhaled or tracked into homes on people's shoes, contributing to many health problems, such as brain and nervous system damage in children or complications in pregnancy, high blood pressure and muscle and joint pain in



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Heavy equipment operator Andy Taylor of MCS Environmental makes piles of the wood that was recovered from the deconstruction of the old barracks on North Fort Lewis. Much of the wood is painted with lead-based paint, which presents liability issues for selling because of the presence of potentially hazardous lead-based paint.

adults.

For several years, USACE has been using woodworking devices to plane off the lead-based paint and a thin veneer of underlying wood to produce a clean, reusable, high-quality wood product. The planing process, however, left the hazardous waste of lead-contaminated wood shavings, said Tom Napier, research architect from USACE's Construction Engineering Research Laboratory.

"If those shavings go to landfills, they can still leach into the groundwater," Napier said.

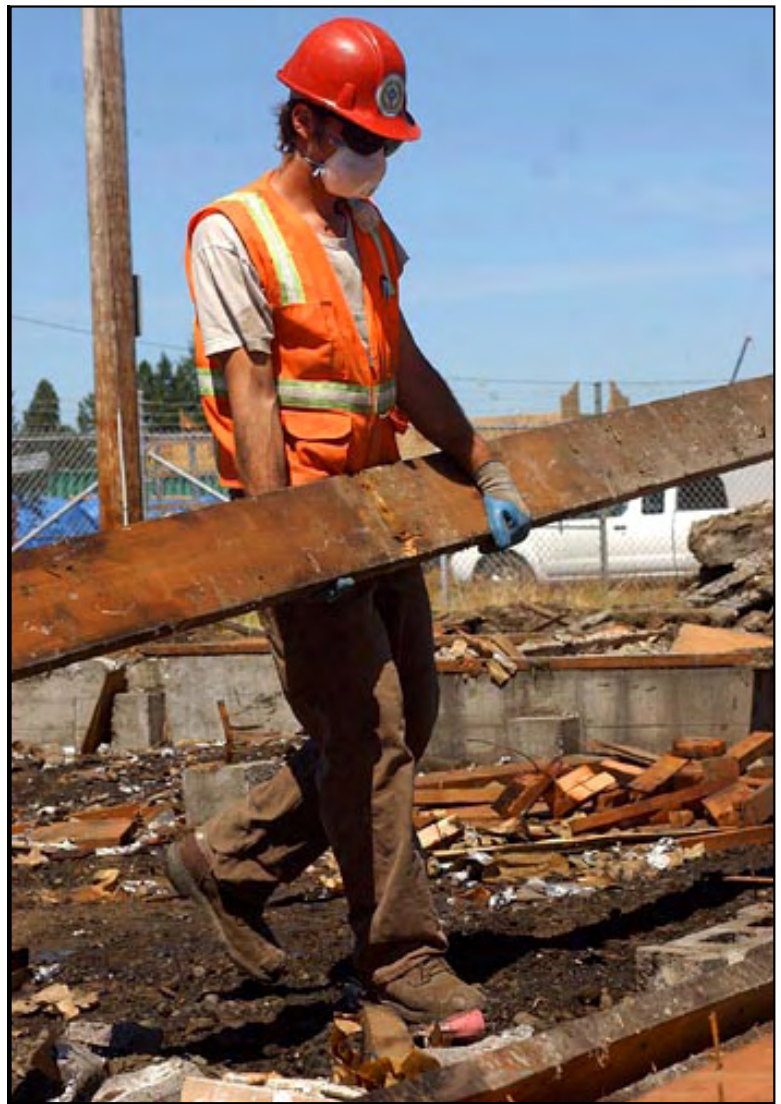
CERL contracted local firm, ARI Technologies, Inc., to design and construct a recovery kiln, which processes the paint and wood shavings into an ash rich with lead compounds. This ash can then be sent to a smelter that can process it into metallic lead, which is still a useful product.

"We've found that there is some prime-quality wood that otherwise would have been destined to landfills, because it has a little bit of paint on it," said Rich Lampo, CERL materials engineer.

"It's old-growth Douglas fir. We think it's just not right to destroy that wood material just because of the paint," Napier said.

While the purpose of the deconstruction project is to recover usable building materials, the project presented an opportunity for CERL and ARI Technologies, Inc., to conduct the first full-scale test of the experimental process.

The process of recycling the lead and the wood will help to achieve the Installation Sustainability Program's goal of achieving net zero solid waste by the year 2025, said Mike Roberts, Directorate of Public Works Environmental and Natural Resources Division Toxic Substances Management Program. If the current testing proves the process successful, it could significantly affect the future of building demolition and deconstruction Army-wide.



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Dean Freeman of MCS Environmental collects wood from an old barracks.

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