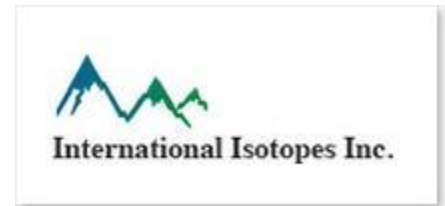


June 6, 2008

## International Isotopes announces major expansion

The Idaho Falls company will build a uranium enrichment tails processing facility



[Additional coverage in [Fuel Cycle Week](#)]

International Isotopes ([OTC:INIS](#)) announced June 4 it plans to construct a commercial facility to process depleted uranium hexafluoride (UF<sub>6</sub>) tails from commercial uranium enrichment operations. There are no facilities in the U.S. today that convert depleted UF<sub>6</sub> tails. The [company's facility](#) would close a significant gap for current and planned uranium enrichment operations in this country.

The company's decision to proceed with a significant investment in an operating facility comes as a result of developing a major intellectual property position with the filing of five patents for using the fluoride gas from the extraction process. It's in demand for applications used to produce certain pharmaceutical and agricultural products. The gas is also in demand for the production of microelectronics, semiconductors, fiber optic cable, and photovoltaic films for solar cell applications.

### Demand for a UF<sub>6</sub> tails facility

During the [uranium enrichment](#) process, uranium in the form of UF<sub>6</sub> is enriched in the isotope U-235 to produce nuclear fuel. Approximately 90% of the UF<sub>6</sub> that goes into the enrichment facility becomes "depleted" and emerges as UF<sub>6</sub> "tails".



By volume, depleted UF<sub>6</sub> from the enrichment process is the largest waste component of the entire nuclear fuel cycle. Depleted UF<sub>6</sub> cannot be disposed of directly, but must be converted into disposable waste forms.

There are no facilities in the U.S. today that can convert depleted UF<sub>6</sub> tails. Steve Laflin, CEO, (below) told me there is strong demand for the services his planned facility will provide to customers.

"The new facility will fill an important need facing commercial uranium enrichment providers. USEC, Louisiana Energy Services (LES), AREVA, and General Electric have all either announced plans to build, or are building, new nuclear fuel enrichment facilities in the United States. When these facilities are completed, at their initial stated capacity, they will produce approximately 60 million pounds of depleted UF<sub>6</sub> tails each year."



### Some plant equipment already purchased

Laflin said his firm has completed an asset purchase agreement with Sequoyah Fuels Corp. to acquire intellectual property and equipment related to an idled uranium deconversion facility. Sequoyah Fuels Corp. [operated](#) a uranium conversion facility in Oklahoma, but it has not had any production since 1993 and is now in decommissioning status.

The purchase agreement includes equipment and engineering design, drawings, procedures, software, licensing documents, and related know-how for construction and operation of a DUF6 to DUF4 deconversion facility. Laflin said the equipment will be disassembled and removed from the facility for use at another location yet to be determined, subject to approval of the NRC.

INIS plans to incorporate best available technology to design and build a new, state of the art, plant that will have the dual purpose of stabilizing DUF6 tails and providing DUF4 feed for the company's Fluorine Extraction Process ([FEP](#)).

### Plant location still in flux

Laflin said he would like to keep his operation in Idaho Falls, which makes sense since Areva has announced it [plans to build](#) a \$2 billion uranium enrichment plant 18 miles west of town. However, he said he would go where it makes the most business sense. He told me there is no agreement with Areva at this time. In the near term if he can get good terms he might go to Eunice, NM, where [Louisiana Energy Services](#) is also building a uranium enrichment plant.



In response Linda Martin, executive director for [Grow Idaho Falls](#), a local economic development group, said she's started working on a plan to keep Laflin's firm here. She mentioned that Areva's plan for a new enrichment plant "does make our city more attractive."

Laflin said the firm plans to begin hiring personnel and put subcontracts in place to carry out engineering design, licensing, site studies, and environmental reviews. His company submitted a letter of intent to the NRC last March 2008, informing the agency of its intent to submit a license applications in early 2009.

The location of the new facility has not yet been determined. Laflin said, "The company will narrow its search for suitable locations as part of our site location review process. He estimates about 100 people will be required for construction and the plant would eventually have 30-50 full time employees."

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