

Toshiba to Significantly Strengthen Its Nuclear Engineering Facilities

On October 22, Toshiba Corporation announced that it would construct a new engineering building at its Isogo Nuclear Engineering Center (IEC) in Yokohama, Japan. The IEC serves as the core facility of the company's nuclear energy business. The new building will be equipped with state-of-the-art engineering tools, while also featuring a quake-absorbing structure. Construction will begin in February 2008, and is to be completed by the end of March 2009, at a cost of slightly under JPY 10 billion (\$85 billion). The size of the staff at IEC, including personnel from affiliates, currently stands at slightly under 2,000, but is slated to be boosted to more than 3,000 in a few years thanks to the addition of the facility.

The IEC acts as the core of Toshiba's nuclear power division, promoting engineering work for light water reactors (LWRs), fast breeder reactors (FBRs), and the fuel cycle. At present, it comprises of two buildings: the main building (built in 1982), and the new building (built in 1991). The recently announced building will be the first to be constructed on the site in 17 years, and is aimed at allowing Toshiba to meet the surging global demand for new nuclear power plants (NPPs) as well as to service existing plants so as to improve their usage effectiveness.

The building itself will have a steel-framed concrete structure, with five stories and a total floor area of approximately 21,400 square meters. The new facility will be equipped with latest engineering tools, such as computer-aided design (CAD) systems and high-speed massively parallel processing computers. Moreover, information exchange between customers and equipment suppliers will be enhanced through an advanced security network and a newly-established collaboration space.

In addition, the building will feature a quake-absorbing structure that can resist giant earthquakes as strong as the one that struck Niigata Prefecture last July; anti-liquefaction measures will also be put in place. Those are aimed at maintaining secure infrastructure and data for engineering functions in the event of disasters such as an earthquake, providing continuity of operations and customer technical support.

Engineers from Westinghouse (U.S.) will be stationed at the facility as well, reinforcing the support framework for the pressurized water reactor (PWR) business.

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