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U.S. NAVAL OBSERVATORY

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**U.S. Naval Observatory
Press Release**

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USNO BREAKS GROUND ON NEW MASTER CLOCK FACILITY

On February 10, 2020, RDML John Okon, Commander, Naval Meteorology and Oceanography Command, Oceanographer and Navigator of the Navy, and RDML Dean VanderLey, Commander, Naval Facilities Engineering Command Atlantic, formally broke ground on the United States Naval Observatory's (USNO) new Master Clock Facility. The new building will support USNO's mission as the repository of the most accurate time-scale available in the world and will house an Operations Center that will be staffed around the clock to monitor all aspects of USNO's timekeeping, celestial reference frame, Earth orientation parameters and distribution operations.

The new facility will be built by the Environmental Chemical Corporation and Whiting-Turner Contracting Company under the supervision of Naval Facilities and Engineering Command, Washington.

In his remarks, RDML Okon stressed the importance of precise time to support not only the mission of the Department of Defense, but also the timing needs of the private sector. "Our nation, our national security depends on delivering this facility on time and on budget so that we can continue to be the world's leader [in keeping] precise time and time dissemination."

RDML VanderLey acknowledged the collaboration between the building contractors and the USNO personnel who developed the rigid specifications for the building and its systems.

The U.S. Naval Observatory has been keeping time for the Department of the Navy and for the Nation since the year 1845, when Superintendent LT Matthew F. Maury first put the Washington Time Ball into operation. Timekeeping procedures and technology have evolved dramatically since then and USNO's Precise Time Department continues to develop new timing methods and equipment to meet increasingly rigorous requirements.

The new USNO Facility assures the DoD and U.S. global supremacy in time will be maintained well into the future. USNO will thus remain the Gold Standard for global precision timing.



200210-N-JA159-1002 - Representatives of the building contractors and the U.S. Navy prepare to break ground for the new Master Clock Facility at the U.S. Naval Observatory in Washington, DC. RDML John Okon, Commander, Naval Meteorology and Oceanography Command, Oceanographer and Navigator of the Navy is fourth from the left. To his left are RDML Dean VanderLay, Commander, Naval Facilities Engineering Command Atlantic, CAPT Grahame Dicks, Commanding Officer, Naval Support Activity Washington, and CAPT David Kuehn, Superintendent, U.S. Naval Observatory.

U.S. Naval Observatory photograph