International Mining

Fluor helping ioneer realise Rhyolite Ridge lithium-boron potential

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27 January 2021

Fluor says its leadership and robust experience in mineral production is exemplified by its work to develop the most advanced and significant lithium operation in the United States at Rhyolite Ridge's lithium-boron project in central Nevada, USA.

Fluor says its capabilities and experience in developing large-scale materials production facilities allow the company to address the most important projects with a depth of talent across all disciplines that enables these vital projects to be properly designed, constructed and commissioned on time and within budget. Its global locations, with a focus and expertise on mining and metals, have engineered and constructed multiple successful, sustainable projects in different geographies and taken them from concept development to successful production, according to the company.

"Fluor is united with ioneer in delivering a world-class project that will quadruple American lithium battery material production by 2023," Tony Morgan, President of Fluor's mining and metals business, said. "This project fully supports our two companies' mutual corporate goals of promoting a sustainable future.

"Fluor's wide range of capabilities position us to support clients across the battery value chain and help lead the way in the ongoing energy transition and build up sustainable domestic supply to combat climate change."

Fluor says it is partnering with ioneer for the development of Rhyolite Ridge, which, when complete, will produce more than 20,000 t/y of lithium battery materials, enough to support the production of over 400,000 electric cars per year.

This lithium project is leading the way in US lithium-ion battery supply chain development, according to the engineering group. Fluor, working with the ioneer team and subcontractors, will demonstrate the capability of US engineering to deliver such an important project on schedule and budget, it said.

"The Rhyolite Ridge project is being developed with a rigorous attention to details," Fluor said. "Fluor, working with ioneer and leading metallurgical laboratory, Kemetco Research, have undertaken a standard setting, lock cycle, full simulation pilot plant over the past two years of development. Using extensive data collection and analysis, this robust test facility has allowed Fluor engineers and subcontractors to fully understand the design parameters and performance expectations that allow this unique mineralogical project to not only succeed, but to produce at the very bottom of the global lithium cost curve."

A multi-disciplinary Fluor team has, to date, spent more than 300,000 man hours on Rhyolite Ridge and the project is rapidly progressing toward shovel-ready status. Assuming permitting and final project funding occur in a timely manner, Rhyolite Ridge is expected to be ready to start construction in mid-2021, Fluor said.