

News from Around the Complex

February 2007

February 28, 2007

Utah Governor Lets Dump Seek Expansion, *Associated Press*

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) - Gov. Jon Huntsman refused to sign or veto a bill allowing for the expansion of a radioactive-waste dump in Utah's west desert. Huntsman's inaction means the measure will become law, giving EnergySolutions an easier time at winning approval to nearly double the capacity of its landfill about 72 miles west of Salt Lake City. Huntsman, however, vowed Tuesday to take other steps to limit the radioactive waste sent to Clive, Utah, where EnergySolutions operates the country's largest and only privately owned radioactive-waste dump. The dump, which opened in 1988 with virtually no regulation, primarily takes tainted soil and debris from decommissioned power plants and defense depots.

<http://news.moneycentral.msn.com/provider/providerarticle.aspx?feed=AP&Date=20070228&ID=6550218>

February 28, 2007

SRS gets approval to bury waste: State officials OK modified permit, *Augusta Chronicle*

AIKEN - Savannah River Site officials have the green light to bury radioactive Cold War waste and likely will start this week. The Department of Energy learned late Monday that state environmental officials finally approved a modified permit that allows the burial, spokeswoman Julie Petersen said Tuesday. The state Department of Health and Environmental Control approved the permit last month, but details were being sorted out through last week. "This critical step enables the department to move forward with safe cleanup processes that reduce risk," Ms. Petersen wrote in an e-mailed statement. Authorities are preparing a batch of liquid waste that probably will be piped into a salt-stone burial vault at SRS by Thursday, she said.

http://chronicle.augusta.com/stories/022807/met_118295.shtml

February 28, 2007

K Basins sludge cleanup delayed, *Tri-City Herald*

Engineering problems have slowed work to clean up radioactive sludge at Hanford's K Basins, jeopardizing yet another legal deadline. Hanford regulators have been notified that Department of Energy contractor Fluor Hanford may not be able to remove all sludge from the leak-prone K East Basin by May 31. That must be done before the basin can be cleaned, its water drained, the pool dismantled and contaminated soil beneath it removed. The project has a history of missed Tri-Party Agreement deadlines. The Environmental Protection Agency figures it has agreed to adjust deadlines 10 times for the K Basins cleanup, most recently at the beginning of 2006. "We're disappointed, plain and simple," said Colleen French, spokeswoman for DOE at Hanford. "Fluor proposed this schedule, and we're going to hold them accountable."

<http://www.tri-cityherald.com/tch/local/story/8675137p-8569523c.html>

February 27, 2007

New Tritium Source On Line at DOE's Savannah River Site, *DOE Press Release*

AIKEN, SC - U.S. Deputy Secretary of Energy Clay Sell today toured the new Tritium Extraction Facility (TEF) at the Savannah River Site (SRS) and spoke at a celebration to mark the restoration of tritium production. The tritium facility gives the U.S. the

ability to replenish tritium supplies in nuclear weapons after 18 years of recycling it. The extraction facility makes a key contribution to the safe inventory needed to maintain America's nuclear weapon stockpile.

<http://energy.gov/news/4826.htm>

February 27, 2007

GNEP meeting attracts large audience, *Carlsbad Current-Argus*

The proven record of the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant and the area's overall nuclear expertise were two of the primary reasons given Tuesday morning by Carlsbad residents for locating a spent nuclear reprocessing center and advanced burner reactor in southeastern New Mexico. More than 200 people attended the Department of Energy scoping meeting at the Pecos River Village Conference Center in Carlsbad. More than 50 individuals spoke, and all but one expressed support for bringing the proposed Global Nuclear Energy Partnership facilities to the region. The meeting was one of a series of public comment sessions that will be considered by the Energy Department in determining the scope of a planned environmental impact statement.

http://www.currentargus.com/ci_5318903

February 27, 2007

Y-12 plant taking apart W55 warheads: Project exemplifies dismantlement work's growing importance, *Knoxville News Sentinel*

OAK RIDGE - The Y-12 nuclear weapons plant has launched a new dismantlement project - taking apart components from old W55 warheads. Steven Wyatt, a federal spokesman at the Oak Ridge plant, confirmed the project, which apparently began in earnest within the past couple of months. He referred to the W55 as "a Navy system." Historically, Y-12 has built parts for every nuclear weapon in the U.S. arsenal, specializing in work with highly enriched uranium and production of so-called secondaries - the second stage of thermonuclear warheads. The plant is responsible for dismantling those same parts - and recycling the materials - after weapons are retired, and there reportedly is a huge backlog of Cold War systems in storage.

http://www.knoxnews.com/kns/local_news/article/0,1406,KNS_347_5380564,00.html

February 27, 2007

UC cited for safety violations at Los Alamos, *Los Angeles Times*

The Department of Energy on Monday cited the University of California for 15 violations of safety rules in 2005 involving nuclear weapons research at Los Alamos National Laboratory, including a case of mishandled materials where low levels of radiation were spread across several states. The violations would have carried a \$1.1-million fine, but federal law waves such penalties for certain nonprofit contractors. UC's contract to run Los Alamos expired last year, but it is the lead contractor in a consortium that operates the lab. It is the largest number of violations in UC's history of running Los Alamos. The fine, even though it won't have to be paid, ranks as the largest civil penalty in the history of the Department of Energy's nuclear safety program, the agency said.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/printedition/asection/la-na-fine27feb27,1,7704783.story?ctrack=1&csset=true>

February 26, 2007

Nuclear waste could be routed through Georgia, *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*

North Augusta, S.C. — Two South Carolina sites are in the running for a federal initiative that could send thousands of truckloads of nuclear waste through metro

Atlanta. Proponents of the plan say it's safe and that nuclear materials have been transported through the state before without incident. But transport is the least of the concerns of environmentalists and anti-nuclear activists who oppose President Bush's Global Nuclear Energy Partnership. They are more concerned about what will happen if Savannah River Site, a federal facility near Augusta that made nuclear weapons materials during the Cold War, or a landfill for low-level radioactive waste next door in Barnwell, S.C., are chosen for the nuclear initiative. If the U.S. Department of Energy selects one or both, opponents fear they will become the de facto Yucca Mountain.

<http://www.ajc.com/metro/content/metro/stories/2007/02/25/0226srs.html>

February 22, 2007

Sen. Reid: Yucca a no go, *United Press International*

CARSON CITY, Nev. - Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., told his state legislature a federal plan to store nuclear waste near Las Vegas will not move forward. Reid, like the rest of the state's Congressional delegation, has only increased his anti-Yucca Mountain rhetoric since becoming the top U.S. Senator last month. "After 25 years, folks, it's history," Reid on Tuesday told a joint session of the Nevada Senate and Assembly. "They can keep spending money there. Nothing's going to happen."

http://www.upi.com/Energy/Sen_Reid_Yucca_a_no_go/20070222-034705-5476r/

February 21, 2007

Ill. lab may begin recycling nuclear fuel, *United Press International*

ARGONNE, Ill. - The U.S. Department of Energy is set to hold a meeting this week to discuss whether Illinois' Argonne National Laboratory should begin recycling nuclear fuel. The Arlington Heights (Ill.) Daily Herald said Thursday's meeting in Joliet would be used not only to explain the process, but also to gauge the community's reaction to its presence at the lab in Argonne, Ill. The proposed site is part of the government's Global Nuclear Energy Partnership program, which is aiming to expand nuclear energy production without adding to the dangers typically associated with the process.

http://www.upi.com/NewsTrack/Ill_lab_may_begin_recycling_nuclear_fuel/Top_News/20070221-064019-5755r/

February 21, 2007

Facility's delay is criticized, *Augusta Chronicle*

AIKEN - Savannah River Site's citizen watchdog group blasted federal officials Tuesday night for endangering the public because of potential construction delays on a key nuclear waste facility. The Department of Energy is redesigning the Salt Waste Processing Facility so that it can withstand powerful earthquakes, but SRS Citizens Advisory Board members say there are more important things that could go wrong in the meantime.

http://chronicle.augusta.com/stories/022107/met_117408.shtml

February 20, 2007

Lack of discipline blamed for spread of radioactivity at Hanford, *Associated Press*

Lack of discipline and failure to follow established procedures has been blamed for the spread of radioactive material outside a work area at the Hanford nuclear reservation. The findings were announced last week following an Environmental Protection Agency and Energy Department review of problems that developed Jan. 12 as workers were checking the last of four canisters of tritium, a radioactive

isotope of hydrogen, that were found in a burial area associated with two defunct reactors.

<http://www.kgw.com/sharedcontent/APStories/stories/D8NDEEHG0.html>

February 20, 2007

Cuts Could Help SRS Operations, *Augusta Chronicle*

AIKEN - A White House resolution that would cut out millions in congressional pet projects might be good news for Savannah River Site. "They're always having trouble coming up with the money because it's been earmarked," U.S. Sen. Jim DeMint, R-S.C., said Monday in Aiken. "There shouldn't be any excuses now for not funding these projects at a proper level." On Thursday, President Bush signed a resolution that nullified more than 10,000 earmarks for special interests that could have eaten up federal money in the current fiscal year budget.

http://chronicle.augusta.com/stories/022007/met_117236.shtml

February 18, 2007

Yakamas Want Damage Assessment from Hanford Operations, *Yakima Herald-Republic*

Since Hanford transformed operations in 1989 to full-scale cleanup, the Yakamas have taken an active role in monitoring and identifying sacred sites throughout the area on the nuclear reservation. Concerned about possible harm that plutonium production may have had on the area, the tribe has been involved during the past five years in a lawsuit against the federal government seeking an assessment of natural resources and unspecified damage that Hanford operations may have had on the area. Last year, the states of Washington and Oregon and three other Columbia River tribes -- Umatilla, Nez Perce and Warm Springs -- joined the lawsuit. The states merely want the federal government to cover the cost of assessing any damage.

<http://www.yakima-herald.com/page/dis/288231302512307>

February 16, 2007

Legislator Wants to Take More Nuke Waste, *The Sun News*

COLUMBIA - State Rep. Billy Witherspoon on Thursday stepped to the front of a nationwide issue involving how much nuclear waste South Carolina should accept. Witherspoon, R-Conway, filed a bill that would smash a 2000 pact that forced all states except South Carolina and its two partners in a waste agreement to stop sending radioactive leftovers to Barnwell in July 2008. He is chairman of the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee, and the bill would start in his panel. The facility in Barnwell is about 50 miles west of Charleston.

<http://www.myrtlebeachonline.com/mld/myrtlebeachonline/news/local/16711702.htm>

February 16, 2007

Nuclear waste site might not be closed; Legislation would keep landfill open to all states beyond scheduled closing in 2008, *The State*

South Carolina's ongoing dispute over nuclear waste disposal in Barnwell County resurfaced Thursday with a bill to keep the landfill open to the nation beyond next year's scheduled closure. The measure, introduced by Rep. Billy Witherspoon, would allow utilities and other companies to continue sending low-level atomic waste to the landfill near Snelling. County officials, utilities and an out-of-state nuclear services company are pushing to keep the landfill open to the nation, rather than limit access to just South Carolina, Connecticut and New Jersey after July 1, 2008.

<http://www.thestate.com/mld/thestate/news/politics/16708943.htm>

February 16, 2007

OMB chief tells agencies to ignore earmarks not written into law,
GovExec.com

The White House is instructing federal agencies to ignore earmarks that are not written into law, in keeping with a prohibition on pet projects Democrats included in a sweeping spending measure Congress approved Wednesday. In a memo sent to all agency heads Thursday, Office of Management and Budget Director Rob Portman wrote they should only honor earmarks contained in statute or otherwise subjected to rigorous review. The memo also makes clear agencies should not fund earmarks based solely on lobbying from lawmakers or other interested parties. In the \$463.5 billion fiscal 2007 full-year funding bill President Bush signed into law Thursday, Democrats removed about 9,300 earmarks that had been slated for approval under the regular fiscal 2007 spending bills, many simply listed in reports accompanying the bills. The measure contains no new earmarks, as well as a provision stipulating that earmarks contained in fiscal 2006 reports "shall have no legal effect."

<http://www.govexec.com/dailyfed/0207/021607cdam2.htm>

February 15, 2007

Senate sets Hanford's fiscal budget, *Tri-City Herald*

The U.S. Senate approved legislation Wednesday setting the fiscal 2007 budget for Hanford. The bill, approved by the U.S. House last month, gives the Department of Energy broad authority on how it spends money in the fiscal year that began Oct. 1. DOE has 30 days from enactment of the bill to submit a report to Congress on how it plans to spend the money.

<http://www.hanfordnews.com/news/2007/story/8643418p-8535323c.html>

February 15, 2007

**New Symbol Launched to Warn Public About Radiation Dangers;
Supplementary Symbol Aims to Help Reduce Needless Deaths and Injuries,**
IAEA Press Release

With radiating waves, a skull and crossbones and a running person, a new ionizing radiation warning symbol is being introduced to supplement the traditional international symbol for radiation, the three cornered trefoil. The new symbol is being launched today by the IAEA and the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) to help reduce needless deaths and serious injuries from accidental exposure to large radioactive sources. It will serve as a supplementary warning to the trefoil, which has no intuitive meaning and little recognition beyond those educated in its significance.

<http://www.iaea.org/NewsCenter/PressReleases/2007/prn200703.html>

New symbol: <http://www.iaea.org/NewsCenter/News/PDF/newradsymbol.pdf>

February 14, 2007

**Mound Plant records buried in New Mexico: Exhumation would cost millions,
but they are key to workers' health claims,** *Dayton Daily News*

At least a dozen pallets of shrink-wrapped cardboard boxes, six 55-gallon drums and 11 safes containing classified records from the Miamisburg Mound Plant are buried in underground shafts in Area G of a radioactive waste landfill at Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico. Nobody knows the condition of the records, and the Energy Department says it would take up to 18 months and cost as much as \$9 million to unearth and decontaminate them. But a leading federal health official said Tuesday it may be necessary to dig up the more than 400 boxes of records from the 1980s and 1990s in order to get a clear picture of the hazards workers faced at Mound. The records could help to determine if hundreds of cancer-stricken Mound workers qualify for federal compensation.

<http://www.daytondailynews.com/n/content/oh/story/news/local/2007/02/13/ddn021407mound.html?cxtype=rss&cxsvc=7&cxcacat=16>

February 14th, 2007

**Lawmaker worries about nuke facility in Tennessee; Hanford also being
studied for president's Global Nuclear Energy Partnership,** *Tri-City Herald*

OAK RIDGE, Tenn. - U.S. Rep. Zach Wamp, R-Tenn., has strong concerns about locating a nuclear waste processing facility at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory. The Department of Energy installation is one of 11 sites, including Hanford, being studied as part of the Bush administration's Global Nuclear Energy Partnership. The strategy would reverse the country's long-held policy banning the reuse of spent nuclear fuel, which is now stored at nuclear power plants around the country awaiting the long-stalled opening of a permanent storage facility at Yucca Mountain in Nevada. The plan also envisions U.S. companies selling reactors and fuel to developing countries, with the fuel returning to the United States for reprocessing. "We're really not aggressively going after it," Wamp, of Chattanooga, and who represents Oak Ridge, told The Chattanooga Times Free Press.

<http://www.hanfordnews.com/news/2007/story/8640665p-8532819c.html>

February 13, 2007

October-December 2006 Office of Legacy Management Quarterly Program Update, DOE-LM

The U.S. Department of Energy Office of Legacy Management has prepared the October-December 2006 Program Update. You may access the Program Update by clicking on this link:

http://www.lm.doe.gov/documents/updates/qtr4_2006.pdf

February 12, 2007

Lawmakers want out of radioactive waste oversight, Daily Herald, UT

CLIVE, Utah -- State lawmakers say EnergySolutions is such a good company, they don't need to regulate every little thing about its radioactive-waste dump. So lawmakers are moving to cut themselves and the governor out of politically sensitive approvals needed for a near doubling of EnergySolutions' landfill in the Utah desert about 72 miles west of Salt Lake City. Legislators want to leave the decision to state regulators, who already agreed to let the company merge two waste cells into one supercell. EnergySolutions wants to fill in the middle and pile waste 83 feet high, up from the 47 feet currently allowed. Legislation that would rescind the political approvals needed for EnergySolutions' expansion already has the Senate's backing and seems assured of passage in the House. The bill goes to a House committee this week. Republican Gov. Jon Huntsman says he hasn't taken a position on it yet.

<http://www.heraldextra.com/content/view/209963/3/>

February 12, 2007

Blasts from the past: Cleanup team reports progress on original radiological disposal area, Los Alamos Monitor

Material Disposal Area B (MDA-B) is a long sliver of land on the south side of the western end of DP Rd. It is one of the environmental debts left to twenty-first century Los Alamos National Laboratory by the Manhattan Project. In 1944, the atomic weaponeers moved their plutonium processing plant out of the middle of town, the first of many changes on one of the most convenient mesas, both near and away from the growing population center. They also began to use that sliver of land between the road and Los Alamos Canyon, which must have seemed like a big empty space at the time, as a convenient place to dump their trash and whatnot. It's not so much the trash as the whatnot that is tricky. Whatnot in this case includes a variety of possibly hazardous chemicals and perhaps only small amounts of plutonium, polonium, uranium, americium, curium, lanthanum and actinium, an assortment of radiological elements.

http://www.lamonitor.com/articles/2007/02/09/headline_news/news01.txt

February 10, 2007

DOE official disputes report: Podonsky says watchdog group is wrong, facilities in Oak Ridge are secure, Knoxville News Sentinel

OAK RIDGE - The U.S. Department of Energy's chief safety and security officer says the strategic nuclear materials stored in Oak Ridge are not at risk - strongly disputing reports that facilities here are vulnerable to terrorism. In a telephone interview from DOE headquarters in Washington, Glenn Podonsky responded to criticisms raised in an October 2006 report by the Project On Government Oversight. He said POGO was "blatantly wrong" when it called ORNL

the most vulnerable site in the government's nuclear complex. "I would move and live next door to Oak Ridge National Laboratory and put my family there and not be concerned," Podonsky said.

http://www.knoxnews.com/kns/local_news/article/0,1406,KNS_347_5342166,00.html

February 9, 2007

Uranium cleanup faces delay: Moab decontamination could take 20 years, *Deseret Morning News*

WASHINGTON — The Energy Department's new 2028 completion date to clean up uranium-mill tailings in Moab shocked Rep. Jim Matheson at an Energy and Commerce Committee hearing Thursday. Matheson asked Energy Secretary Samuel Bodman about the project's status and why the department has a pending request for a contractor to move only 2.5 million tons of waste over five years. The project, as approved by Congress, is to move the 16 million tons of uranium mill tailings from a pile near the Colorado River, north of Moab, to a location near Grand Junction, Colo. Bodman told Matheson that the department has made the decision to move the tailings pile, but the project is expected to take 20 years, with completion in 2028. "This is news to me," Matheson said. "DOE (the Department of Energy) has been telling us that the pile would be cleaned up within a decade, and the secretary now seems to think that 20 years is an acceptable time frame." Matheson said the department had said before that the project would be done in seven to 10 years.

<http://deseretnews.com/dn/view/0,1249,660193965,00.html>

February 8, 2007

Kuhl vows to fight West Valley funding cuts, *The Buffalo News*

WASHINGTON - Job cuts and a cleanup slowdown would be likely at the West Valley Demonstration Project starting in October if President Bush gets his way and funding for the nuclear site is cut by \$22 million. The contractor that operates the site said Wednesday that the proposed funding cut could have a major impact on the facility. Meanwhile, Rep. John R. "Randy" Kuhl Jr., R-Hammondsport, said he would fight to restore the funding Bush wants to cut. "I'm extremely disappointed at the president's proposed cut to the West Valley budget," Kuhl said. "This project needs more money to accelerate cleanup, not less." Under the federal budget proposal Bush released Monday, West Valley would receive \$54.4 million from the Department of Energy in the fiscal year beginning Oct. 1, down from \$76.33 million in 2006.

<http://www.buffalonews.com/editorial/20070208/1049085.asp>

February 7, 2007

Legacy of Radiation Illness Stirs Objection to Nevada Bomb Test

Blast Won't Be Nuclear, but Many Fear Contaminated Dust, *Washington Post*

ST. GEORGE, Utah -- When the baby boomers of St. George were children, radioactive ash from nuclear test explosions in Nevada regularly drifted toward the red bluffs of their town and fell like snow. They played in it and wrote their names in it on car windows. The federal government reassured the townspeople they were in no danger as it detonated 952 bombs in Nevada over four decades. But thousands of people who lived downwind of the test site got radiation-related cancer, and the town of 50,000 has its own cancer-treatment center today. So when word got out recently that the government wants to test a huge conventional bomb in Nevada, sending a mushroom cloud thousands of feet in the air, people in St. George felt an unwelcome blast from the past. At a series of emotional meetings last month in Las Vegas, St. George, Salt Lake City and the Idaho capital of Boise, people who live downwind of the Nevada Test Site expressed fear that if the government goes ahead with its code-named Divine Strake test, radioactive dust from previous tests will blow their way.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/02/06/AR2007020601606.html>

February 7, 2007

Taiwan may vote next year on site for nuclear waste, *The China Post*

Taiwan may ask residents near four sites of a proposed nuclear waste dump to vote on the plan next year after failed bids to move the radioactive material to Russia, China and North Korea, the island's biggest power producer said. The waste includes protective clothing used

at Taiwan Power Co.'s three nuclear power stations, said Tu Yueh-yuan, chief engineer at Taipower, as the state-owned utility is known. The selected site will get NT\$5 billion in compensation, she said, declining to name the four options. Taipower's nuclear plants supply more than a fifth of the electricity on an island where the 200 earthquakes that strike in an average year have heightened public opposition toward the use of reactors. The utility stores spent fuel rods at its plants and less radioactive waste on Orchid Island off the southeastern coast, where residents' protests have forced a search for a new dump site. "No township in Taiwan is going to accept a nuclear waste dump," Jeffrey Bor, a research fellow at Chung-hua Institution for Economic Research, said by telephone from Taipei yesterday. "Public votes won't work."

<http://www.chinapost.com.tw/news/archives/business/200727/101989.htm>

February 3, 2007

SRS may get work from Congress plan, Aiken Standard

A plan submitted to Congress Friday calls for the nation's nuclear weapons complex to shrink, which could benefit Aiken County. Complex 2030, as the National Nuclear Security Administration report is called, would see different security missions consolidated at specific sites, which would allow for concentrated security efforts to protect the materials. The Savannah River Site is identified in the report as the location for tritium operation through the newly opened Tritium Extraction Facility. Also mentioned in the report is the consolidated plutonium mission, for which SRS is a contender. If selected as the plutonium center of excellence, SRS would create 2,500 jobs, according to figures provided by the U.S. Department of Energy. While Complex 2030 calls for the reduction of the nation's nuclear stockpile, the concept calls for a smaller, more flexible organization that consolidates materials in one place for security purposes. Materials currently distributed at a number of sites would be brought to one place for disposition.

<http://www.aikenstandard.com/news/309212491826997.php>

February 2, 2007

NNSA Releases Report on Plans for Future of the Nuclear Weapons Complex, NNSA Press Release

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- The Department of Energy's National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) released a report today that further outlines its plans to modernize the nation's aging, Cold War-era nuclear weapons complex. With its "Complex 2030" plan for the future, NNSA is seeking to transform today's complex into one that is smaller, more efficient, more secure and better able to respond to technical problems in the stockpile and emerging national security needs. "NNSA's Complex 2030 is built around a comprehensive strategy to transform the nuclear weapons stockpile, reduce the size of and modernize the physical infrastructure of the complex, make the operations of NNSA more efficient, advance science for our mission, and better secure materials and property through consolidation," said Thomas P. D'Agostino, NNSA's acting administrator. The report was directed by the 2007 National Defense Authorization Act and it was developed in consultation with the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Nuclear Weapons Council. A key finding of the report says that the complex's total square footage and the number of employees funded by NNSA's nuclear weapons accounts could each be reduced by as much as one-third in the future. The report also notes that it is NNSA's goal to carry out Complex 2030 within existing funding levels and program structures.

http://www.nnsa.doe.gov/docs/newsreleases/2007/PR_2007-2-2_NA-07-03.htm