

News from Around the Complex

July 1 – July 31, 2010

Available on-line at www.fftfcleanup.org

July 30, 2010

NRC Seeks Comments On Draft Environmental Report For AREVA's Idaho Uranium Enrichment Plant, *Nuclear Street*

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission seeks public comment on a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for AREVA Enrichment Service's proposed gas centrifuge uranium enrichment plant to be built in Eagle Rock, Idaho. NRC staff will also hold public meetings Aug. 9 in Boise and Aug. 12 in Idaho Falls to describe the draft EIS and its preliminary conclusions and to take comments from members of the public. ***The draft EIS analyzes potential impacts of construction, operation and decommissioning of the proposed facility. It includes the NRC staff's preliminary conclusion that the plant, to be called the Eagle Rock Enrichment Facility, would have mostly small impacts on the local environment, primarily during construction. The staff's preliminary recommendation is that, unless safety issues mandate otherwise, AREVA should be issued a license to construct and operate the facility.

http://nuclearstreet.com/blogs/nuclear_power_news/archive/2010/07/30/nrc-seeks-comments-on-draft-environmental-report-for-areva-s-idaho-uranium-enrichment-plant-07305.aspx

Draft EIS Available at: <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/nuregs/staff/sr1945/>

July 29, 2010

Recovery Act: Most DOE Cleanup Projects Appear to Be Meeting Cost and Schedule Targets, but Assessing Impact of Spending Remains a Challenge, *GAO Report*

[Excerpt from Conclusions section] DOE expected that Recovery Act funding would help it achieve several goals, including accelerating the cleanup effort and reducing the footprint of facilities and contamination at 17 of its sites, creating jobs, and reducing total remaining cleanup costs. As the halfway mark in DOE's Recovery Act work approaches, the department has made progress toward completing cleanup projects and the majority, although not all, of these projects appear to be meeting cost and schedule targets. In carrying out its Recovery Act work, DOE has implemented additional steps to address familiar contract and project management challenges, by providing stricter controls over how and when funds are disbursed to cleanup sites, increasing reporting requirements, and paying greater attention to project oversight. ***The department has been less successful in implementing steps to better assess the results of its Recovery Act work. Specifically, DOE faces challenges in accurately assessing the effects of Recovery Act spending on job creation, environmental risk, footprint reduction, and long-term cleanup costs. Regarding jobs created, OMB requires that job creation figures be calculated and reported using a standard methodology. DOE, however, has chosen to also use two additional methodologies to calculate and publicly report job creation figures, which potentially provides a misleading picture of actual jobs created.

Report Highlights Available at: <http://www.gao.gov/highlights/d10784high.pdf>

Full Report Available at: <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d10784.pdf>

See Related NFAC Article Below (July 19 Knoxville News-Sentinel Blog)

July 28, 2010

Ex-vit plant official raises safety concerns, alleges retaliation at Hanford, *Tri-City Herald*

Safety and design concerns are being suppressed at Hanford's \$12.3 billion vitrification plant, charges the engineering manager who oversaw research and technology for the contracting team until he was dismissed earlier this month. Walter Tamosaitis, who was research and technology manager for the project, has asked the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board to investigate, saying he believes he was removed from the project for raising concerns about future safe operations at the plant. The retaliation has had an "immediate chilling effect on the project safety quality," leaving other employees questioning whether they should raise issues, he told the board chairman in a letter. Congress created the board within the executive branch of the federal government to provide independent oversight of the nation's nuclear weapons complex.

<http://www.tri-cityherald.com/2010/07/28/1109231/ex-vit-plant-official-raises-safety.html#ixzz0v5VRWeef>

July 27, 2010

Judge's ruling may boost nuke storage in Utah, *Salt Lake Tribune*

A federal judge's ruling Monday looks likely to breathe new life into plans to use a patch of the Skull Valley Goshute Indian Reservation in Utah as a long-term parking lot for used nuclear reactor fuel. In a ruling riddled with the term "arbitrary and capricious," Judge David M. Ebel tossed out a pair of decisions by the U.S. Interior Department four years ago that appeared to kill the nuclear storage project. He told the Interior decision-makers they need to reconsider two key requests by project proponents, the tiny Goshute band and a consortium of nuclear power companies called Private Fuel Storage LLC (PFS). Ebel, who noted that upper-level Interior officials had taken an unusual step by injecting themselves into the controversial and highly politicized issue, also said Interior should do a better job this time addressing the "unanswered questions" that they complained about in their September 2006 rulings.

<http://sltrib.com/sltrib/home/49997613-76/interior-project-ebel-nuclear.html.csp>

July 24, 2010

DOE considers WIPP for surplus plutonium: State Environment Department wary of pushing capacity limits of nuke waste facility, *Santa Fe New Mexican*

The Department of Energy has its eye on the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant in Southern New Mexico to help store an extra load of the nation's surplus plutonium. On Monday, the department reopened the question of how best to dispose of 13 metric tons of weapons-grade plutonium, announcing its intention to consider WIPP as a new storage area for nearly half of that. But the plutonium must meet WIPP's disposal criteria, and the issue will not be decided without an environmental evaluation. Included in the 13 tons are seven metric tons of plutonium extracted from dismantled nuclear warheads and approximately six tons of legacy wastes in the form of plutonium oxides left over at the end of the Cold War. Various ideas have been proposed for getting rid of these nuclear materials since the 1990s, when former President Bill Clinton and the Russians each agreed to pull about 50 metric tons out of storage and put them into a form that couldn't be used for weapons.

<http://www.santafenewmexican.com/Local%20News/DOE-considers-WIPP-for-surplus-plutonium>

July 23, 2010

DOE amends decision on dismantling reactor, *Tri-City Herald*

The Department of Energy has amended its record of decision on Hanford's K East Reactor to allow it to be either torn down or cocooned as most other reactors have been. No decision on disposition of the reactor has been made, said Geoff Tyree, DOE spokesman. But the amendment to the 1993 decision -- which called for the reactor to be cocooned -- is one more step toward allowing the reactor to be torn down in the next few years if DOE and its regulators decide that would be best. The public will be allowed input on the decision, which DOE expects to make in September, Tyree said. DOE also plans an engineering evaluation and cost analysis. DOE has cocooned five of the nine reactors along the Columbia River at Hanford that produced plutonium for the nation's nuclear weapons program.

<http://www.hanfordnews.com/2010/07/23/15578/doe-amends-decision-on-dismantling.html>

July 23, 2010

Nuke dump shutdown lacks master plan, report says, *The Seattle Times*

An inspector general says the federal Energy Department is moving quickly with no master plan to shut down a project to bury the nation's nuclear waste in Nevada. A report by Energy Department Inspector General Gregory Friedman says officials have used focus groups and set a Sept. 30 deadline to end the 28-year-long Yucca Mountain project, 90 miles northwest of Las Vegas. Friedman's findings were reported Friday by Stephens Media's Washington bureau and the Las Vegas Review-Journal.

http://seattletimes.nwsources.com/html/localnews/2012434169_apnvnuclearwastesite.html

Full Report Available at: <http://www.ig.energy.gov/documents/OAS-SR-10-01.pdf>

New National Nuclear Security Administration site work could start in August, *Kansas City Business Journal*

Money is starting to flow to the National Nuclear Security Administration's new 1.5 million-square-foot manufacturing campus, meaning the bulldozers, cranes and construction crews aren't far behind. The first \$10.5 million of construction financing for the NNSA project at Missouri Highway 150 and Botts Road in south Kansas City was scheduled to be transferred to an infrastructure account on Thursday afternoon. Al Figuly, director of Kansas City's Planned Industrial Expansion Authority, said the money would allow work to begin in August on a new overpass and other improvements included in the \$40 million worth of infrastructure work developers have committed to complete in conjunction with the NNSA project.

<http://kansascity.bizjournals.com/kansascity/stories/2010/07/19/daily42.html#ixzz0vBON2OTX>

July 20, 2010

EnergySolutions: Oak Ridge a 'reference site', *Knoxville News-Sentinel Blog*

In its recent announcement, EnergySolutions said it was revising its international business strategy and would focus more on developing waste capabilities in other countries, rather than bringing the waste to U.S. (Clive, Utah) for disposal. At that time, the company also indicated it would make its existing facilities, such as the Bear Creek waste processing operation in Oak Ridge, "reference sites," Asked more about that, EnergySolutions spokesman Mark Walker said: "Our facilities in Tennessee and Clive will be examples of how to manage and establish for the work that needs to be done to manage these waste streams." That means folks from other countries will be coming to these sites to take a look and see how things are done, he said.

http://blogs.knoxnews.com/munger/2010/07/energysolutions_oak_ridge_a_re.html

July 20, 2010

HANFORD: Murray adds \$50 million to 2011 proposed budget, *Tri-City Herald*

RICHLAND — A Senate appropriations subcommittee approved a proposed Department of Energy budget today that includes \$50 million more for Hanford next year than the Obama administration's proposed budget. That would bring the Hanford budget next year to \$56 million more than the current annual budget for Hanford or almost \$2.2 billion. In addition, the nuclear reservation will continue to spend \$1.96 billion in federal economic stimulus money. Earlier this year Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., convinced the Obama administration to increase money for the vitrification plant in fiscal 2011 by \$50 million and money for the Hanford tank farms by \$10 million.

<http://www.tri-cityherald.com/2010/07/20/1099334/hanford-murray-adds-50-million.html#none#ixzz0v5XuXPIw>

July 19, 2010

Munger: Midway on stimulus program, *Knoxville News-Sentinel Blog*

There's no question that the flood of money from the Recovery Act has had an impact on Oak Ridge and the Department of Energy's operations there. It's not easy, however, to gauge that impact, despite the numbers that abound. According to DOE stats through the end of May, DOE's Oak Ridge office had received \$1.845 billion in stimulus funding. Mind you, not all of that stayed in Oak Ridge. For example, about \$670 million was distributed to cities and counties around the United States through energy-efficiency block grants that were administered by DOE's Oak Ridge office. But a bunch of money has stayed in Oak Ridge, including about \$755 million in environmental management funds, \$111 million for activities tied to DOE's Office of Science (including construction of a new chemistry lab), and a significant amount - somewhere in excess of \$130 million - for energy efficiency and renewable projects not associated with the block grants program.

<http://www.knoxnews.com/news/2010/jul/19/midway-on-stimulus-program---good-bad-and-unsure/>

July 16, 2010

Leaders voice frustration over Hanford waste disposal to Blue Ribbon Commission, *Tri-City Herald*

KENNEWICK — Expectations have been dashed that Hanford will be relieved anytime soon of some of its burden of nuclear waste, said a parade of frustrated elected officials who spoke Thursday to the Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future. The commission, appointed to recommend a path forward for the nation's high-level radioactive defense waste and used commercial nuclear power fuel, visited the Tri-Cities for two days to learn how a large nuclear facility affects a community. "The intensity of feeling was a surprise," said Lee Hamilton, co-chairman of the commission, and former vice chairman of the 9/11 Commission. But "it's understandable that the people of this community would have deep concerns about a permanent repository," he said. "They've had a long and difficult experience at Hanford."

<http://www.tri-cityherald.com/2010/07/16/1094323/leaders-voice-frustration-over.html#ixzz0u9Y6O5HY>

July 15, 2010

DOE Announces Modification of Supplemental Environmental Study on Plutonium Disposition, *DOE Press Release (Savannah River Operations Office)*

WASHINGTON, DC -- The U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) National Nuclear Security Administration is announcing its intent to modify the scope of the ongoing Surplus Plutonium Disposition Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SPD SEIS) and to conduct additional public scoping. The Notice of

Intent is expected to appear in the Federal Register as early as July 19, 2010. DOE intends to revise the scope of the SPD SEIS to include disposition alternatives for plutonium declared surplus to the Nation's defense needs in 2008, and additional alternatives for disposition of certain non pit plutonium materials currently in safe storage at the Savannah River Site (SRS) in South Carolina. Full text of press release and SEIS are attached

July 14, 2010

EnergySolutions dumps Italian waste bid for Utah, *Salt Lake Tribune*

EnergySolutions this morning announced it is dropping its proposal to import radioactive waste from Italy and bury 1,600 tons of it at its disposal site in Utah's west desert. EnergySolutions' plan to import the low-level radioactive waste has been a battle for several years, with state officials opposed and fighting the effort in court. EnergySolutions said it will not drop that lawsuit. Rep. Jim Matheson, D-Utah, has pushed for a congressional ban of such waste importation — a bill that passed the House but has been stuck in the Senate after Sen. Bob Bennett, R-Utah, raised concerns. The company's chief executive officer, Val Christensen, called Matheson earlier Wednesday to alert him that EnergySolutions would seek another method for disposing of the radioactive waste. In a twitter message this morning, Matheson called it: "A win for Utahns," and said Utah "shouldn't be the world's dump."

<http://www.sltrib.com/sltrib/home/49927570-76/utah-waste-energysolutions-matheson.html.csp>

See Previous NFAC Article (January 14 Deseret News):

<http://www.deseretnews.com/article/705358570/Utah-appeals-decision-on-radioactive-waste-from-Italy.html>

July 14, 2010

Yakamas sue over Hanford waste landfill, *Tri-City Herald*

YAKIMA — The Yakama Nation has filed a lawsuit challenging the state of Washington's actions to start construction of a cover over closed portions of private company US Ecology's waste disposal trenches at Hanford. Heart of America Northwest Research Center has joined the Yakamas in the lawsuit filed in Yakima County Superior Court. The state believes it has acted properly and that the Yakama Nation does not have a valid case, according to the Washington State Office of the Attorney General. The state has a lease from the federal government for 100 acres on the Hanford nuclear reservation subleased to US Ecology for the disposal of low-level radioactive waste from organizations such as universities, hospitals, biotech firms and electric utilities in western states.

<http://www.tri-cityherald.com/2010/07/14/1091658/yakamas-sue-over-hanford-waste.html#ixzz0tg32jn6c>

July 14, 2010

DOE beats deadline for some cleanup, *Tri-City Herald*

The Department of Energy has met a legal deadline three months early for cleaning up five waste sites and a burial ground at Hanford just north of Richland. It's part of work at Hanford's 300 Area, where Washington Closure Hanford has torn down 71 buildings in addition to some buildings torn down by previous contractors. Washington Closure is working to complete cleanup of the area, which once was used for research and to fabricate fuel for Hanford's plutonium production reactors, by the end of 2015. The Tri-Party Agreement has set a series of legal deadlines to keep the cleanup on track, including the latest deadline to be met. "We're making tremendous strides in cleaning up the river corridor," Mark French, DOE project director, said in a statement. "Cleaning up these contamination sources helps protect the Columbia River and reduce our footprint of active cleanup."

<http://www.tri-cityherald.com/2010/07/14/1091666/doe-beats-deadline-for-some-cleanup.html#ixzz0tg2ncVS8>

July 14, 2010

EnergySolutions says blended waste uniform, like sugar cookie, *Salt Lake Tribune*

SALT LAKE CITY — Is it akin to a chocolate chip cookie, a pot of Earl Grey tea or a sugar cookie? On the issue of radioactive "waste blending," members of the Utah Radiation Control Board were presented Tuesday with a smorgasbord of food analogies to help them as they grapple with the question of imposing stricter disposal guidelines on the material. EnergySolutions senior vice president Tom Magette told the board that so-called blended waste represents the uniformity of a sugar cookie, not a chocolate chip cookie peppered with higher radioactive waste resins. The chocolate chip analogy, he said, has been put forth by competitor Studsvick and other critics such as HEAL Utah, which have come forward to assert

disposing of the blended waste at the EnergySolutions' Clive facility unacceptably increases the levels of radioactivity the company is licensed to accept.

<http://www.deseretnews.com/article/700048006/EnergySolutions-says-blended-waste-uniform-like-sugar-cookie.html>

See Previous NFAC Article (June 28 Deseret News):

<http://www.deseretnews.com/article/700043868/Federal-nuclear-chief-addresses-Utah-issues.html>

July 12, 2010

A Watchdog's Warning on Nuclear Waste, *New York Times Green Blog*

When President Obama said he wanted to discontinue work to develop a nuclear waste repository at Yucca Mountain in Nevada, one of the entities that filed suit to protect the project was Washington State, where vast amounts of nuclear waste accumulated at the Hanford nuclear reservation, a weapons site. As I reported on Sunday, a new report suggests that Hanford has a lot more plutonium waste that the Energy Department had acknowledged. This week, a blue-ribbon commission on nuclear waste established to seek alternatives to Yucca will hold two days of hearings near Hanford. And one of the experts giving testimony will be Gerry Pollet, executive director of Heart of America Northwest, which describes itself as a watchdog group focused on Hanford.

<http://green.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/07/12/watchdog-warns-nuclear-waste-panel/>

July 10, 2010

Analysis Triples U.S. Plutonium Waste Figures, *New York Times*

WASHINGTON — The amount of plutonium buried at the Hanford Nuclear Reservation in Washington State is nearly three times what the federal government previously reported, a new analysis indicates, suggesting that a cleanup to protect future generations will be far more challenging than planners had assumed. Plutonium waste is much more prevalent around nuclear weapons sites nationwide than the Energy Department's official accounting indicates, said Robert Alvarez, a former department official who in recent months reanalyzed studies conducted by the department in the last 15 years for Hanford; the Idaho National Engineering Laboratory; the Savannah River Site, near Aiken, S.C.; and elsewhere. But the problem is most severe at Hanford, a 560-square-mile tract in south-central Washington that was taken over by the federal government as part of the Manhattan Project. By the time production stopped in the 1980s, Hanford had made most of the nation's plutonium.

http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/11/science/earth/11plutonium.html?_r=1&hpw

July 8, 2010

Feds seek a temp home for depleted uranium, *Salt Lake Tribune*

The U.S. Department of Energy has started looking beyond Utah for temporary storage of nearly 10,000 drums of depleted uranium for up to seven years. The cleanup waste from the Savannah River Site in South Carolina was originally headed to Utah to be buried for good at the EnergySolutions Inc. disposal site. In fact, the first of three shipments had already arrived in Utah when Utah Gov. Gary Herbert and the DOE agreed to put the disposal and the remaining two shipments on hold. The Salt Lake City nuclear services company has estimated it will be the end of the year before it can update a report on the site's ability to contain large quantities of the unusual waste, which grows more hazardous over time. And it will probably take at least another year for state regulators to review that site assessment.

<http://sltrib.com/sltrib/home/49885304-76/waste-site-storage-depleted.html.csp>

See Previous NFAC Article (May 7 Salt Lake Tribune): http://www.sltrib.com/news/ci_1504165

July 5, 2010

More DOE work in store, *Knoxville News Sentinel Blog*

OAK RIDGE - Many of the Oak Ridge cleanup projects funded by the Recovery Act are reportedly coming in under budget, and the U.S. Department of Energy said it plans to apply those savings - estimated to be at least \$100 million and maybe as much as \$150 million - to a new round of projects on the waiting list. About 10 new projects could begin over the next few months, DOE spokesman John Shewairy said. The additional work will address some of the worst contamination, help DOE comply with its agreements with environmental regulators and reduce the "footprint" of old facilities that take up valuable space and cost money to maintain. DOE's Oak Ridge Office has received more than \$1.8 billion in Recovery Act funding since early 2009, although not all of it stayed in Oak Ridge. For instance, one of the biggest projects was to administer a \$670 million block grants program, awarding energy-efficiency grants to U.S. cities and counties. A lot of the money, however, has been put to work on environmental programs in Oak Ridge.

<http://www.knoxnews.com/news/2010/jul/05/more-doe-work-in-store-by-frank-munger/>

See Previous NFAC Article (June 21 Knoxville News-Sentinel Blog):
http://blogs.knoxnews.com/munger/2010/06/does_recovery_act_wish_list.html

July 4, 2010

Is a Lewiston radioactive storage site leaking?, *The Buffalo News*

LEWISTON — Signs of leakage have turned up at a nuclear waste storage cell since shortly after it was built two dozen years ago, an engineer and chemist has told regulators. And some of the federal regulators responsible for the site — almost from the beginning — seem to have been looking the other way, she said. Ann Roberts, a former Town of Porter resident, has recently questioned the Army Corps of Engineers on its monitoring of the radiological waste buried in a 10-acre cell in Lewiston. She believes the cell is leaking, and wants to know why officials deny it's happening, even though nuclear waste materials have been found outside of it. "If you find contamination," Roberts said last month at a public meeting on the environmental investigation, "you don't stop measuring." But federal regulators, in some sections of the site, did just that, Roberts said.

<http://www.buffalonews.com/2010/07/04/1103267/is-a-radioactive-storage-site.html>

See Previous NFAC Article (May 23 Buffalo News):

<http://www.buffalonews.com/2010/05/23/1059194/protesters-call-for-cleanup-at.html>

July 1, 2010

Sandia in Livermore says disposal deal saved taxpayers \$4 million, *Oakland Tribune*

The agency overseeing Sandia/California National Laboratories in Livermore saved \$4 million by hiring a recycling firm to haul away and process 100,000 pounds of machine tools contaminated with depleted uranium. The tools were used for two decades for research and development at Sandia/California, which develops and tests the non-nuclear components of nuclear weapons. The now-obsolete machine tools, however, required special disposal strategies because they were radiologically contaminated. They could have been buried at the Nevada Test Site, but at a cost of \$4 million, according to a statement from the National Nuclear Security Administration, the agency overseeing Sandia/California. So the NNSA, which oversees the lab, sought lower-cost options that would also give some of the equipment a new lease on life.

http://www.insidebayarea.com/news/ci_15421455

July 1, 2010

Recovery Act milestone: Excavation begins at Manhattan Project landfill, *DOE-EM Press Release*

LOS ALAMOS, New Mexico, July 1, 2010—Los Alamos National Laboratory today began excavating a World War II-era landfill that could contain an entire truck used at the Trinity atomic bomb test—the world's first test of an atomic weapon. Crews will scoop out 22,000 cubic yards of trash and dirt—enough to cover a football field to a depth of about 11 feet—and fill the excavated areas with clean soil that meets residential standards. The project's funding of about \$90 million is provided by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, which is helping accelerate environmental cleanup across the Department of Energy's weapons complex. "This project marks major environmental cleanup progress for the Lab," said Everett Trollinger, Recovery Act project manager for NNSA's Los Alamos Site Office. "We look forward to the day we are able to transfer this land for other uses." The landfill is known as Material Disposal Area B. The six-acre site contains a series of trenches used from 1944 to 1948 to dispose of hazardous and non-hazardous trash from Manhattan Project labs and buildings.

<http://www.em.doe.gov/pdfs/10-044FD.pdf>