

News from Around the Complex

August 1 – August 31, 2010

Available on-line at www.fftfcleanup.org

August 30, 2010

CT Paying Price In Fight Over Nuclear Waste Storage, *Hartford Business Journal*

Fed up with 12 years of delays in removing nuclear waste from Connecticut's power plants, a coalition of business and utilities is demanding the Obama administration reverse its decision undoing three decades of planning for disposing of waste from the country's nuclear power programs. These businesses, led by the New England Council, see the administration's move to abandon a Nevada storage site as compounding a long-standing federal delay costing Connecticut millions in fees and inflicted untold damage on nuclear power's reputation in the state and region. Connecticut ratepayers contribute more than \$8 million per year to store more than 1,920 metric tons of spent nuclear fuel at its temporary sites in the state — including a 588-acre site in Haddam that seems prime for redevelopment. That annual fee comes on top of the \$383 million state ratepayers have contributed since 1982 to develop a permanent disposal site for this waste.

<http://www.hartfordbusiness.com/news14567.html>

See Related NFAC Article Below (August 30 Brattleboro Reformer)

August 30, 2010

DOE, New York Reach Cost Agreement for Nuclear Cleanup, *Environmental Protection*

The Department of Energy (DOE) and the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) have reached agreement on the allocation of costs for cleanup of the West Valley Demonstration Project (WVDP) and the Western New York Nuclear Service Center. On Aug. 17, the U.S. District Court, Western District of New York, signed a consent decree that formalized the agreement. "The Department of Energy is committed to partnering with our stakeholders as we fulfill our cleanup requirements," said Ines Triay, Ph.D., assistant secretary for the Office of Environmental Management.

http://eponline.com/articles/2010/08/30/doe-new-york-reach-cost-agreement-for-nuclear-cleanup_0.aspx

August 30, 2010

NRC considers long-term on-site storage of waste, *Brattleboro Reformer*

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission voted earlier this month to explore the option of storing nuclear waste at decommissioned sites past the current 30-year standard. NRC Chairman Gregory Jaczko wrote in his vote, "The Commission has made a generic determination that, if necessary, spent fuel generated in any reactor can be stored safely and without significant environmental impacts for at least 60 years beyond the licensed life for operation." He also recommended that the staff prepare an update to the Waste Confidence Findings and Proposed Rule, "to account for storage on site storage facilities, off-site storage facilities, or both, for more than 100 years, but no longer than 300 years, from the end of licensed operations of any nuclear power plant, which may include the term of a revised or renewed license." Now that all the chairmen have voted, the Secretary of the Commission will condense the information and provide guidance for the staff, NRC spokesman Neil Sheehan said.

http://www.reformer.com/localnews/ci_15934549

August 27, 2010

Radioactive waste agreement reached in Texas, *Bloomberg Business Week*

State officials and a West Texas waste processing, storage and disposal facility have reached an agreement that allows hot low-level radioactive material to be stored at the company's site for up to three years. The agreement Friday resolves a dispute over how long the material could be stored. State officials initially wanted a one-year limit.

<http://www.businessweek.com/ap/financialnews/D9HS290G0.htm>

See Related NFAC Article (August 11 PR Newswire):

<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/federal-investigation-of-texas-radioactive-waste-dump-urged-100445079.html>

August 27, 2010

Hanford workers digging up hazardous wastes, *Tri-City Herald*

TRI-CITIES, Wash. Work is nearly complete to help identify the type and amount of radioactive and hazardous materials at the 618-10 Burial Ground, one of the most hazardous sites on the Hanford nuclear reservation. Washington Closure Hanford workers have dug test pits in burial trenches containing laboratory waste, drums - including one with depleted uranium shavings - and other material at the site about six miles north of Richland and just off Hanford's main highway. The discoveries will help determine exactly what was discarded in the trenches when the six-acre burial site was used between 1954-63. That information will help guide a plan for cleanup that's expected to start in spring 2011, Washington Closure and Department of Energy officials said Thursday. The cleanup project is one of the most challenging to date at Hanford because records of what was dumped in the 12 trenches at the site are incomplete, said John Darby, Washington Closure project manager. <http://www.tricityherald.com/2010/08/27/1145301/hanford-workers-ready-to-clean.html#ixzz0y6jkDNcy>

August 26, 2010

US MOX plant clears licensing hurdle, *World Nuclear News*

A mixed oxide (MOX) fuel fabrication facility being built in the USA to turn ex-military plutonium into fuel for nuclear power reactors has taken a step forward in the licensing process with the publication of a draft Safety Evaluation Report (SER) by the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). The report documents the NRC's technical safety review of Shaw Areva MOX Services' application for an operating licence for the facility, under construction at the Department of Energy's (DoE) Savannah River site in South Carolina. In it, the NRC has concluded that the descriptions, specifications, commitments and analyses provided by MOX Services provide an adequate basis for safety and safeguards operations, and that operation of the facility "would not pose an undue risk to worker and public health and safety."

http://www.world-nuclear-news.org/RS-US_MOX_plant_clears_licensing_hurdle-2608107.html

August 24, 2010

WIPP site being considered for DOE plutonium disposal, *Carlsbad Current-Argus*

CARLSBAD — The Waste Isolation Pilot Plant near Carlsbad is being eyed as a potential site for the disposal of surplus plutonium by the Department of Energy. The material represents approximately 13 metric tons (MT) of surplus plutonium, including about 7 MT from retired nuclear weapons and 6 MT of non-pit plutonium. A "pit" is the plutonium core of a nuclear weapon, while "non-pit" plutonium comprises plutonium oxides or metals that existed when the Cold War ended. The material under consideration for potential disposal at the WIPP facility is 6 MT of surplus non-pit plutonium to be moved from the Savannah River Site (SRS) in South Carolina. It could be disposed of as transuranic (TRU) waste at WIPP in the same way other TRU waste is disposed of currently. A public scoping meeting was held Tuesday at the Best Western Stevens Inn as part of the process to determine subjects to be considered and evaluated in a supplemental environmental impact statement (EIS) required by the project.

http://www.currentargus.com/ci_15884714

August 24, 2010

Little Hope, Help for DOE's Displaced Yucca Mountain Contract Workers, *New York Times*

Steve Hommel has had a difficult year by almost any standard: He lost his job on the Yucca Mountain project, uprooted his family to South Carolina and sold his Las Vegas-area house for a third of the price he paid for it. But Hommel still considers himself "one of the lucky ones." Unlike many of his former Yucca co-workers, he found a new job and was able to settle his home mortgage with the bank. At 30, he is relatively young; he can start over and learn new skills. "It was scary. It was not an easy decision," Hommel said in a recent interview about his move. "Just the thought of not being able to support my family made me start looking everywhere."

<http://www.nytimes.com/gwire/2010/08/24/24greenwire-little-hope-help-for-does-displaced-yucca-moun-27266.html>

August 24, 2010

It's official: Test site gets new name, *Las Vegas Review-Journal*

Known for six decades as the Nevada Test Site, the Rhode Island-size tract of high desert where government scientists detonated nuclear bombs during the Cold War got a new name Monday: the Nevada National Security Site. The scientists who work there will probably call it "N-squared, S-squared," or N2S2, short for NNSS, said Troy Wade, chairman of the Nevada Test Site Historical Foundation. The name change was brought about by legislation from Sen. Harry Reid, D-Nev., and the state's congressional delegation. The branch of the Department of Energy that runs the site -- the National Nuclear Security

Administration -- selected a name to reflect the site's expanded missions on counterterrorism, homeland security and treaty verification.

<http://www.lvrj.com/news/it-s-official--test-site-gets-new-name-101363079.html>

August 23, 2010

NRC PUBLISHES VOLUME 1 OF YUCCA MOUNTAIN SAFETY EVALUATION REPORT, *NRC Press Release*

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has published the first volume of the agency staff's safety evaluation report on the Department of Energy's license application seeking authorization to construct a high-level radioactive waste repository at Yucca Mountain, Nev. This first volume contains the staff's evaluation of the "General Information" section of the DOE license application, which contains introductory and overview information about the proposed facility and its operation. Publication of Volume 1 does not represent a licensing decision or indicate what an eventual licensing decision might be. No decision to grant or deny a construction authorization can be made until after completion of the NRC staff's independent technical review of the application, the adjudicatory hearing and subsequent Commission review.

http://adamswebsearch2.nrc.gov/idmws/doccontent.dll?library=PU_ADAMS^PBNTAD01&ID=102360091

Report Available at:

http://adamswebsearch2.nrc.gov/idmws/doccontent.dll?library=PU_ADAMS^PBNTAD01&ID=102360091

August 18, 2010

PART ONE OF A SERIES: What Lies Buried Not Far from Morehead, Ky.?

4.8 Million Curies of Mixed Fission Products, *Huntington News Network (West Virginia)*

Near Morehead, KY (HNN) - A classic television series hyped the beauty of rural areas and the stereotypical low education levels of those residing there. Before, during and after the Manhattan Project which developed the atomic weapon that ended the Second World War, the ideal venue for nuclear fuel processing and development plans were away from populated areas. Maxey Flats Nuclear Disposal is located nine miles from Morehead, Ky. Occupying 45-acreas, the area is designated as "restricted." About 4.8 million cubic feet of low level radioactive waste is buried there. About 27 areas of the Restricted Area have been used for 52 disposal trenches. The area contains storage and warehouse buildings, liquid storage tank buildings, gravel driveways and parking. There is a polyvinylchloride (PVC) cover over the trench area.***As the Cold War ended, the need for waste disposal continued. Guess where scientists and government officials chose to discard "hot" reactor waste? In rural areas where it could be buried and forgotten. Cutting away all the inter-agency and extinct agency acronyms, the Atomic Energy Commission in 1962 retained authority to license the burial of waste from the reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel.

<http://www.huntingtonnews.net/local/100818-rutherford-localmaxeyflats.html>

August 17, 2010

Hundreds of jobs for Ohio cleanup, *Dayton Daily News*

PORTSMOUTH, Ohio — Federal energy officials say hundreds of jobs will come to southern Ohio for the next phase of the cleanup of a former uranium plant built during the Cold War. Energy Department officials expect the contractor to begin hiring by the end of this year, with 350 to 500 new jobs over the next three years.

They announced Monday a contract valued at \$2.1 billion over 10 years for work at the Portsmouth Gaseous Diffusion Plant in Piketon, 65 miles south of Columbus. It produced enriched uranium until 2001.

<http://www.daytondailynews.com/news/ohio-news/doe-hundreds-of-jobs-for-ohio-cleanup-865662.html>

August 17, 2010

Transport, storage main concerns for plutonium, *Decatur Daily News*

What three-letter word ending in X excites passion throughout the Valley? No, not that one. The word is MOX — short for mixed oxide — and refers to a mixture of plutonium and uranium that the U.S.

Department of Energy wants to use as fuel at Browns Ferry Nuclear Plant. The purpose of the plan is to dispose of at least 34 tons of plutonium made surplus by nuclear disarmament treaties with Russia. Sixty people attended a public hearing on the topic at Calhoun Community College recently, and with few exceptions those who spoke opposed the idea. Many also complained they knew little more about MOX after the hearing. The plutonium in MOX raises many fears, most involving security from terrorists during shipping from South Carolina to Browns Ferry, and storage at Browns Ferry.

http://www.decatordaily.com/detail/66660.html?content_source=&category_id=&search_filter=&event_mode=&event_ts_from=&list_type=&order_by=&order_sort=&content_class=&sub_type=stories&town_id=

August 17, 2010

The cost of closing Yucca, *The Post and Courier (Charleston)*

[Editorial] South Carolina has a major interest in the opening of a nuclear waste repository at Yucca Mountain, Nevada, and should pursue every avenue to reverse the administration's ill-considered decision to terminate the project. The state's lawsuit against the Energy Department recognizes that the federal government must live up to its responsibility to safely dispose of the vast quantities of highly radioactive waste from its Savannah River Site. Attorney General Henry McMaster also is acting on behalf of the state's ratepayers, who collectively have contributed \$1.6 billion in surcharges on their electrical bills to develop the disposal site, which also will provide for storage of commercial radioactive waste.

<http://www.postandcourier.com/news/2010/aug/17/the-cost-of-closing-yucca/>

August 17, 2010

Mechanical design for vit plant lab finished, *Tri-City Herald*

Richland Hanford vitrification plant engineers have finished the mechanical systems design for the Analytical Laboratory, one of five major nuclear facilities at the plant. It's the first building to have the mechanical design system completed after nine years of work. When complete, the lab will contain 35,000 feet of piping. The vitrification plant, or Waste Treatment Plant, will be used to turn Hanford's radioactive waste held in underground tanks into a stable glass form for disposal. The lab will analyze about 10,000 samples each year collected from throughout the vitrification process to ensure high-quality glass and strong process controls.

<http://www.tri-cityherald.com/2010/08/17/1133851/hanford-mechanical-design-for.html#ixzz0xZ2N9TDO>

August 13, 2010

More stimulus money for Y-12 cleanup, *Knoxville News-Sentinel*

Y-12's Recovery Act war chest for cleanup projects has grown to \$245 million. That's about \$29 million more than the plant's initial funding level of \$216 million, according to contractor spokesman David Keim. While there's additional money available for cleanup activities, the only new work scope that's been finalized -- in addition to the seven projects already underway -- is the soil characterization of the Old Salvage Yard, Keim said. "Based on the results of that characterization, we anticipate remediating those soils to the extent required by regulators," Keim said by e-mail. "Once that is done, we will reevaluate whether funding is available to add further work scope at Y-12." Keim said B&W Y-12, the government's contractor, wants to do more work with the original stimulus funds allotted to Y-12 if there are savings from those projects already underway.

http://blogs.knoxnews.com/munger/2010/08/more_timulus_money_for_y-12_cl.html

August 13, 2010

Asphalt being laid over underground Hanford tanks, *Tri-City Herald*

Hanford crews are laying 1.8 acres of modified asphalt this week over a tank farm where five underground tanks are suspected of leaking radioactive and hazardous chemical waste. It may look like a parking lot -- one larger than a football field and dotted by monitoring stations and risers from underground tanks. But its goal is to keep contaminated soil in the tank farm dry. We don't want the situation to get worse," said Dan Parker, project manager of the work for Washington River Protection Solutions. "The barrier will keep rain water and snow melt from entering the soil and carrying contamination towards ground water." The barrier, being paid for with economic stimulus money, will be the second one built at the Hanford tank farms, where 53 million gallons of waste are stored in groups of underground tanks called "farms." The waste is left from the past production of plutonium for the nation's nuclear weapons program.

Read more: <http://www.tri-cityherald.com/2010/08/13/1128911/asphalt-being-laid-over-underground.html#ixzz0wmzgONLc>

August 12, 2010

Report: Waste plan must address 'mistrust', *United Press International*

WASHINGTON, Aug. 12 (UPI) -- The U.S. effort to create a nuclear waste program is so focused on technological issues it is failing to address public mistrust of the efforts, experts say. Researchers from Washington State University and others around the country say that for the effort to fix the country's stalled nuclear waste program to succeed, a special White House panel on high-level radioactive waste needs to focus more on the social and political acceptability of its solutions, a university release said Thursday.

http://www.upi.com/Science_News/2010/08/12/Report-Waste-plan-must-address-mistrust/UPI-23611281656121/

Article Available (via subscription only) at: <http://www.sciencemag.org/>

August 11, 2010

Fate of spent nuke waste fuels debate, *Times-Record (Maine)*

WISCASSET — Locals who have long waited for the federal government to make good on its promise to remove nuclear waste from Wiscasset by 1998 met face to face Tuesday with President Barack Obama's task force on the subject. Obama and Energy Secretary Steven Chu assembled the Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future in January of this year, after the president announced Yucca Mountain in Nevada would no longer be considered as the country's atomic waste dump site. On Tuesday, the commission's transportation and storage subcommittee held a hearing at the Chewonki Foundation's Wiscasset campus, where it heard a range of opinions about the nation's atomic energy future. While those in attendance did not offer the subcommittee a consensus view on how to move forward, nearly everyone agreed the seemingly glacial pace of the process is unacceptable.

<http://www.timesrecord.com/articles/2010/08/11/news/doc4c62dce557a57570981962.txt>

August 11, 2010

Study Results Support Nuclear Waste Disposal at Western New York Site, *Newswise*

Engineering and scientific experts associated with U.S. and New York state energy agencies announced they have developed an improved method of predicting scenarios where people might be exposed to radiation from nuclear waste disposal sites. The study was funded by the New York State Energy Research and Development Agency and focuses on a buried nuclear waste disposal facility at West Valley, New York. The scientific analysis supports a decision to continue management of waste at the site for another decade. Researchers say their approach represents a first-of-its-kind method of analysis that considers the full scope of possible scenarios, likelihoods, and consequences that might be a threat to the disposal site. Using this approach, the authors concluded, "that a release resulting in a dose of 100 millirems in one year, or more, is extremely unlikely during the next 30 years of operation of the New York State managed disposal area at the Western New York Nuclear Service Center."

<http://www.newswise.com/articles/study-results-support-nuclear-waste-disposal-at-western-new-york-site>

Article Available (via subscription only) at: <http://www.birenheide.com/sra/journal/>

August 11, 2010

Moab cleanup reaches 2 million ton milestone, *Deseret News*

MOAB — Enough uranium mill tailings to fill a 60-story building have been removed so far from a pile near the banks of the Colorado River, according to a press release issued Wednesday by the U.S. Department of Energy. So far, 2 million tons of the 16 million tons of contaminated tailings at the old Atlas mill have been removed from the 439-acre site. "DOE could not be happier with the progress we are making in moving the mill tailings away from the Colorado River," said federal project director Donald Metzler. The tailings are the byproduct of mined ore from which the radioactive components — uranium and vanadium — have been removed. Although most of the radioactive elements are gone, the tailings contain low levels of radioactivity and hazardous heavy metals such as lead and arsenic.

<http://www.deseretnews.com/article/700055826/Moab-cleanup-reaches-2-million-ton-milestone.html>

See Related NFAC Item (June 4, Deseret News): <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/700037722/Moab-tailings-removal-continues.html>

August 10, 2010

Progress made on removing K Basins sludge, *Tri-City Herald*

HANFORD — Workers have removed the radioactive sludge from the settler tubes in Hanford's K West Basin. It's another step that will allow the radioactive sludge stored underwater at the K West Basin eventually to be moved farther from the Columbia River and treated for disposal. Earlier Hanford workers consolidated all of the radioactive sludge in the K East and K West reactor basins in the K West Basin, which is sturdier. Most of the approximately 37 cubic yards of sludge is held in five underwater containers. They hold sludge that was vacuumed from the floors of the K East Basin, which has since been drained and demolished, and the K West Basin, where all the sludge has been consolidated.

<http://www.tri-cityherald.com/2010/08/10/1124825/progress-made-on-removing-k-basins.html#ixzz0wPZPzxRE>

August 11, 2010

Federal Investigation of Texas' Radioactive Waste Dump Urged, *PR Newswire*

AUSTIN, Texas, Aug. 11 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Environmental groups today asked the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to investigate the radioactive waste storage and disposal programs administered by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) for the West Texas radioactive waste site owned by Waste Control Specialists (WCS). The groups say the TCEQ has failed to protect public health, safety and the environment by repeatedly and brazenly abusing its legal authority and disregarding warnings of its technical staff about the site's hazards. Further, citizens have not had adequate opportunities to participate in the licensing processes.

<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/federal-investigation-of-texas-radioactive-waste-dump-urged-100445079.html>

August 6, 2010

McKinley: Private testing shows Rocky Flats has plutonium, *The Colorado Statesman*

Rep. Wes McKinley, D-Walsh, announced this week that new testing of surface soils at the former Rocky Flats nuclear weapons plant has yielded plutonium in breathable particles, its most dangerous form. McKinley announced the test results at a Wednesday press conference, somewhat overshadowed by an announcement an hour earlier that Colorado will host a professional cycling stage race next year. McKinley and other concerned citizens want the surface soil tested for breathable dust that could contain plutonium, requests that he said have been rejected by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. So McKinley encouraged private citizens to set up the testing themselves. The tests were organized by environmentalist LeRoy Moore, and based on the results Moore said the site would forever be a local hazard. <http://www.coloradostatesman.com/content/992034-mckinley-private-testing-shows-rocky-flats-has-plutonium>

August 4, 2010

Special Report: Review of the Department of Energy's Plan for Obligating Remaining Recovery Act Contract and Grant Funding, *DOE-IG*

[Excerpt from transmittal memorandum] The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Recovery Act), enacted in February 2009, provided over \$36 billion to the Department of Energy (Department) for various science, energy and environmental programs and initiatives. The majority of the funds (\$32.7 billion) were provided in the form of contract and grant authority that went to the Department's Offices of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE), Environmental Management (Environmental Management), Electricity Delivery and Energy Reliability (OE), Fossil Energy (Fossil Energy), Science (Science), and Advanced Research Projects Agency - Energy (ARPAE). Under the terms of the Recovery Act, these funds must be obligated by September 30, 2010.***Our review disclosed that as of July 9, 2010, the Department had obligated \$29.3 billion, or 90 percent, of the \$32.7 billion that was required to be obligated by the September 30, 2010, Recovery Act deadline. While such progress is laudable, \$3.4 billion remains to be obligated in less than three months, mostly in the form of financial assistance grants, cooperative agreements, and contracts. The Department believes its plan is sufficient to accomplish this task. However, a number of issues remain to be addressed – many of which could impede its ability to meet the deadline.

Report Available at: <http://www.ig.energy.gov/documents/OAS-RA-10-15.pdf>

August 4, 2010

Rethink on Utah used fuel storage project, *World Nuclear News*

A project proposed by a consortium of US utilities to store used nuclear fuel at an Indian reservation in Utah, shelved after Department of the Interior (DoI) officials denied necessary approvals, could be revived after a court overturned the DoI's rejection. Following delays by the Department of Energy (DoE) to fulfill its obligation to start accepting used nuclear fuel in the late 1990s for disposal in a national repository at Yucca Mountain, eight large US electric utility companies formed the Private Fuel Storage (PFS) consortium for the purpose of developing and managing a temporary storage facility for used nuclear fuel. PFS members are: Xcel Energy, Genoa Fuel Tech, American Electric Power, Southern California Edison, Southern Nuclear Co, First Energy, Entergy and Florida Power and Light.

http://www.world-nuclear-news.org/WR-Rethink_on_Utah_used_fuel_storage_project-0408104.html

August 2, 2010

DOE suggests tougher safety measures for tank farm, *Tri-City Herald*

The Department of Energy could help prevent future problems at Hanford's radioactive waste tank farm by increasing oversight of safety system improvements, according to a report by the Department of Energy's Office of Inspector General. No formal recommendations were made, but the brief report covered suggestions for making sure DOE follows through to correct problems and that trends are analyzed to predict problems before they occur. Some of the problems related to making full use of formal safety systems date back to 2004. All Hanford contractors develop an Integrated Safety Management System to systematically integrate safety into management and work practices at all levels. But the report mostly focused on safety related weaknesses under current contractor Washington River Protection Solutions. Major reviews in 2009 and 2010 by DOE and other organizations have revealed deficiencies with the new tank farm contractor's implementation of its Integrated Safety Management System, the report said.

<http://www.tri-cityherald.com/2010/08/02/1115111/doe-suggests-tougher-safety-measures.html#ixzz0vkuWCbED>