

News from Around the Complex

February 16 – February 29, 2008

Available on-line at <http://www.ftfcleanupnews.org/news.htm>

February 28, 2008

Will U.S. become world's nuclear-waste dump?, *Christian Science Monitor*

The federal government is weighing a Utah company's request to import large amounts of low-level radioactive waste from Italy – a step critics say could lead the United States to become a nuclear garbage dump for the world. If approved, the company would ship up to 20,000 tons of metal piping, sludge, wood, contaminated clothing, and other mildly radioactive material from Italian nuclear-power plants to Tennessee, process most of it, then dispose of the remainder in Utah. It would be by far America's largest import of nuclear waste. The proposal, which entered a 30-day public-comment period on Feb. 11, is gathering opposition from environmentalists, regulators, and congressmen. It would not only pave the way for more such imports, critics say, but also give nations less incentive to take care of their own nuclear waste.

<http://www.csmonitor.com/2008/0228/p03s03-uspo.html>

February 28, 2008

Lawmakers call for more Hanford cleanup money, *Tri-City Herald*

The Department of Energy budget request for Hanford and other nuclear waste sites is \$1.1 billion short, said senators in an appeal Wednesday to the Senate Budget Committee. Under that proposal, about 500 jobs would be cut at the Hanford reservation. Absent an adequate DOE budget request that lives up to promises of accelerated cleanup, the committee needs to include additional money in the fiscal year 2009 Budget Resolution, said the letter signed by Sen. Maria Cantwell, D-Wash., and six other senators. Rep. Doc Hastings, R-Wash., and other representatives are writing a similar letter to address the House version of the DOE budget, according to Hastings' staff. The administration budget proposal for 2009 calls for \$5.5 billion to be spent on cleanup of nuclear waste sites, down from peak funding of \$7.3 billion in 2005.

<http://www.tri-cityherald.com/915/story/103320.html>

February 27, 2008

US Senate committee now divided over nuclear waste policy, *Platts Energy Services*

Washington - Reflecting uncertainty over the US Department of Energy's proposed nuclear waste repository in Nevada, the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee on Wednesday said there is "no longer a consensus" among its members over government policy for disposing of spent fuel from nuclear power plants. A statement on the Bush administration's fiscal 2009 budget request signed by the committee's chairman, Democrat Jeff Bingaman, and ranking Republican, Pete Domenici, said most of the panel's members look forward to the construction of new nuclear power plants in the US, but differ over options for disposing of the reactors' waste. "Most of our members support the administration's goal of promoting the licensing of new nuclear power plants, and its Nuclear Power 2010 and Generation IV programs supporting that goal," the statement, called "views and estimates," said. "There is, however, no longer a consensus among our members on nuclear waste policy."

<http://www.platts.com/Nuclear/News/6790061.xml?src=Nuclearrssheadlines1>

February 27, 2008

NEI courts volunteers for interim storage, *Pahrump Valley Times (Nevada)*

WASHINGTON -- With uncertainties swirling around the proposed Nevada radioactive waste site, the nuclear industry has mounted a campaign to court communities that might be willing to host interim storage of its used fuel. Officials with the Nuclear Energy Institute are meeting with governors, state legislators and other elected leaders, including those in states where nuclear waste has sat for years at decommissioned power plants, NEI executive Marshall Cohen said Friday. Talks are moving forward with two or three communities, and more sites are expected to show interest, said Cohen, NEI senior director for state and local government affairs. Cohen did not identify the communities during a presentation, but said some were among the 11 sites that at one time volunteered to host a nuclear waste reprocessing plant for the government. Those were in New Mexico, Washington, Idaho, Illinois, Tennessee, Kentucky, Ohio and South Carolina.

<http://www.pahrumpvalleytimes.com/2008/Feb-27-Wed-2008/news/19960495.html>

February 27, 2008

State to restart debates on Hanford cleanup, *Tri-City Herald*

WASHINGTON -- After a meeting with Energy Secretary Samuel Bodman, Washington Gov. Chris Gregoire said Tuesday that the state was going to resume negotiations with the Department of Energy over cleaning up the Hanford nuclear reservation. "We agreed to go back to the table," Gregoire said. "But admittedly (Bodman) has his hands tied because of the budget." Gregoire set no timetable for resuming the talks and no deadline for finishing them. The governor did not rule out the possibility of a lawsuit to force the department to comply with the cleanup deadlines in the Tri-Party Agreement and provide the necessary funding. But she gave no indication such a lawsuit was imminent.

<http://www.tri-cityherald.com/901/story/102051.html>

February 26, 2008

U.S. Department of Energy Welcomes the United Kingdom as 21st Member of the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership, *DOE Press Release*

WASHINGTON, DC --The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) today welcomed the United Kingdom (UK) as the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership's (GNEP) twenty-first partner. GNEP, a voluntary international partnership, aims to safely and securely expand nuclear power worldwide while responsibly managing nuclear waste and reducing proliferation risks. U.S. Energy Secretary Samuel Bodman met with UK Secretary of State for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform, Rt. Hon. John Hutton prior to the UK signing the GNEP Statement of Principles in Washington, DC.

<http://energy.gov/news/6012.htm>

February 26, 2008

Plan to accelerate Hanford cleanup abandoned, Hastings reports, *Tri-City Herald*

The Bush administration has abandoned its promise to accelerate cleanup at Hanford and other large nuclear weapons sites, said Rep. Doc Hastings, R-Wash., in a speech Monday in Arizona. He compared the administration's treatment of the budget to a soap opera: "Tonight, watch the tragic story of a jilted bride lured by promises of accelerated cleanup funding, only to be left at the altar, forgotten and neglected," according to a copy of his remarks. He made the speech at the 34th annual Waste Management Conference, organized by the Waste Management Symposia, a nonprofit group for nuclear waste management education. The Bush administration

has followed a plan of cleaning up and closing smaller sites, saying dollars then would be shifted to large sites like Hanford. Under that plan, the Rocky Flats, Colo., and Fernald, Ohio, sites were closed, but the budget dollars were not rolled over to larger sites as promised, Hastings said. The administration's proposed budget for nationwide cleanup in fiscal 2009, which begins in October, is \$5.5 billion. That's down from a budget of \$6.1 billion in 2001 at the start of the Bush administration and a peak of \$7.3 billion in 2005.

<http://www.tri-cityherald.com/901/story/100956.html>

February 22, 2008

Plan would change SRS: Agency looks to consolidate U.S. nuclear assets,
Augusta Chronicle

NORTH AUGUSTA - A federal agency unveiled a proposal Thursday that could transform the nation's nuclear weapons infrastructure and lead to the consolidation of tritium research at Savannah River Site. During a town hall meeting at North Augusta Community Center, officials with the U.S. Department of Energy's National Nuclear Security Administration said the Complex Transformation plan would consolidate nuclear assets, and make the nation's nuclear weapons stockpile smaller, "safer, more secure and more responsive" to future national security needs. Ted Wyka, an NNSA official leading the project, said the current weapons complex is too old and costly to maintain. The NNSA is the agency responsible for the security and upkeep of the nation's nuclear arsenal. The plan contains several contingencies, from a complete overhaul of the government's nuclear infrastructure -- including producing new warheads to replace aging weapons systems, to leaving the nation's nuclear platform as is. Under the plan, improvements in the arsenal would eventually lead to a net loss of warheads when aging weapons are dismantled.

http://chronicle.augusta.com/stories/022208/met_188268.shtml

February 20, 2008

West Jefferson site Nuclear cleanup done? No, says state,
The Columbus Dispatch

Federal officials plan to sign off on an eight-year, \$110 million cleanup of Battelle's former nuclear facility in West Jefferson, but state environmental officials say that some radiation concerns remain. The Ohio Environmental Protection Agency sent the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission a letter yesterday requesting that more work be performed at Battelle's 1,200-acre research site near West Jefferson. Workers demolished six buildings there and carted away nearly 1.4 million cubic feet of radioactive waste and materials. EPA officials said NRC tests still detected levels of strontium 90 in a small bog on the property that exceed state health limits for drinking water.

http://www.columbusdispatch.com/live/content/local_news/stories/2008/02/20/Battellecleanup.ART_ART_02-20-08_A1_519DG9P.html?sid=101

February 18, 2008

Site of impact: Cleaning house and charting a future at INL,
Post-Register (Idaho Falls)

For decades, Idaho National Laboratory was a place where nuclear materials were tested and pushed to extremes to make reactors run longer and more efficiently. Its contributions to the U.S. Navy's submarine and surface fleets were invaluable, as was the work it did for the commercial nuclear industry. Today, with the Cold War over and the nuclear industry in the U.S. fully matured, the lab is undergoing two critical tests of its own. No. 1: Can it clean up the remnants of the past safely and on schedule? No. 2: Can it define a future for itself that helps the United States meet its

energy and security needs? For almost 25 years, many in eastern Idaho have wondered what the future holds. From the '50s to '70s, the mission was straightforward -- build reactors, test nuclear materials and process nuclear fuel. Today, many of the site's old missions are memories. Places like the "Hot Shop" -- originally built for the purpose of developing an atomic aircraft engine -- have been torn down. People who worked for decades at the Idaho Chemical Processing Plant or Argonne National Laboratory-West -- some of the best engineering expertise this nation has produced -- are retired or near the end of their careers.

<http://www.postregister.com/special/siteofimpact/story.php?accession=1001-01272008>

February 18, 2008

It's a big job ...INL's Idaho Cleanup Project is not for the meek, *Post-Register (Idaho Falls)*

Since 1988, the U.S. Department of Energy has been using milestones to keep track of the cleanup at Idaho National Laboratory. The date is significant. It was only in 1989 that the DOE agreed it was subject to state and federal oversight. After that, there was a lot of catching up to do, with many facilities from the '50s and '60s way out of compliance with two laws -- the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act and the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (better known as the Superfund law). There were limited options, said Kliss McNeel, director of environmental and regulatory services for the Idaho Cleanup Project. "We had to look at retrofitting, and where we couldn't do that, we started talking about closure," she said. The maze of regulations, voluntary consent orders work plans can get convoluted very quickly. Still, in nearly 20 years, the DOE has missed only four of the 708 milestones it has been obligated to meet at INL. Today, it is fair to say that after years of fits and starts, cleanup is well under way at INL. Since May 2005, when the seven-year, \$2.9-billion Idaho Cleanup Project contract went into effect, 140 milestones have been met.

<http://www.postregister.com/special/siteofimpact/story.php?accession=1001-02032008>

February 17, 2008

As Nuclear Waste Languishes, Expense to U.S. Rises, *New York Times*

WASHINGTON — Forgotten but not gone, the waste from more than 100 nuclear reactors that the federal government was supposed to start accepting for burial 10 years ago is still at the reactor sites, at least 20 years behind schedule. But it is making itself felt in the federal budget. With court orders and settlements, the federal government has already paid the utilities \$342 million, but is virtually certain to pay a total of at least \$7 billion in the next few years and probably over \$11 billion, government officials said. The industry said the total could reach \$35 billion. The payments come from an obscure and poorly understood government account that requires no new Congressional appropriations, and will balloon in size, experts said. The payments are due because the reactor owners were all required to sign contracts with the Energy Department in the early 1980s, with the government promising to dispose of the waste for a fee of a 10th of a cent per kilowatt-hour. It was supposed to begin taking away the fuel in the then far-off year of 1998.

http://www.nytimes.com/2008/02/17/us/17nuke.html?_r=2&adxnnl=1&oref=slogin&adxnnlx=1203360361-usQTyMga/G1pgWe9dEXWzg&pagewanted=print

February 11, 2008

NRC seeks comment on Italian nuke waste, *Business Week*

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is seeking public comment on a company's request to import about 20,000 tons of nuclear waste from Italy for processing in Tennessee and disposal in Utah. The regulatory agency said in the Federal Register on Monday that it is allowing 30 days for petitioners to seek a hearing or request to become an intervener in the request by Utah-based EnergySolutions Inc. Under the proposal, which has opposition in Congress and among environmental groups, EnergySolutions would import the waste through the ports of Charleston, S.C., or New Orleans. The material -- some 1 million cubic feet of paper, plastic, wood, metal and ion-exchange resins from shuttered nuclear plants -- would be processed, burned and recycled at an EnergySolutions' plant in Oak Ridge, about 25 miles west of Knoxville.

<http://www.businessweek.com/ap/financialnews/D8UOE63O0.htm>

February 11, 2008

Talks on Tri-Party Agreement still on hold, *Tri-City Herald*

High-level negotiations on the Tri-Party Agreement remain temporarily suspended, Hanford regulators told the Hanford Advisory Board in discussions last week in Pasco. Top Washington state officials are considering what to do and no decision will be made before the end of the legislative session, said Jane Hedges, nuclear waste program manager for the Washington state Department of Ecology. The state, which regulates the Hanford nuclear reservation with the Environmental Protection Agency, proposed high-level negotiations on the agreement in April 2007 as it became clear that the Department of Energy could not meet key legal deadlines. The negotiations were seen as an alternative to taking legal action. Of most concern were delays in emptying leak-prone single shell tanks of radioactive waste and a projected eight-year delay in the start of operations at the vitrification plant to treat the waste. Although talks at the highest level on the Tri-Party Agreement are on hold, EPA continues to enforce the deadlines in the agreement, said Nick Ceto, EPA Hanford project manager.

<http://www.tri-cityherald.com/901/story/87407.html>

February 9, 2008

Hanford's K Basin delays result in DOE fine, *Tri-City Herald*

The Environmental Protection Agency fined the Department of Energy \$75,000 over delays in cleaning up Hanford's leak-prone K East Basin. It is DOE's third fine in five years for missing deadlines for cleaning up the K Basins in violation of the legally binding Tri-Party Agreement. While work began this week to drain water from the radioactively contaminated K East Basin, DOE had a March 31, 2007, deadline to have the basin emptied and removed from the ground and an April 30, 2007, deadline to start digging up the contaminated soil beneath the basin. The fine reflects not only those two missed deadlines, but also EPA's concern that the remainder of the schedule for the cleanup project is in jeopardy, said Nick Ceto, EPA Hanford program manager. As work falls behind schedule to remove the K East Basin and treat the radioactive sludge now consolidated and stored in the nearby K West Basin, the EPA is concerned that the completion of cleanup of the Hanford corridor along the Columbia River will be delayed.

<http://www.tri-cityherald.com/901/story/85985.html>

February 8, 2008

Feds say money lacking for planned removal of Moab-area radioactive tailings, *Salt Lake Tribune*

WASHINGTON - The radioactive waste pile on the banks of the Colorado River will just have to wait. Despite a congressional mandate to remove the mountain of

uranium tailings and contaminated soil by 2019, Energy Secretary Samuel Bodman told House members Thursday that his department won't finish the project until 2025 or later. That infuriated Rep. Jim Matheson, D-Utah, who has repeatedly pressed the department to quickly remove the pile outside of Moab, which threatens the drinking water of 30 million downstream users. "It just seems like this thing is going on forever," Matheson said after the House Energy and Commerce hearing. "More disturbing is that they would ignore an act of Congress." Matheson added a provision in the latest defense bill requiring the Energy Department to remove the Moab tailings by 2019. This was only the latest deadline in a plan that has remained in flux.

http://www.sltrib.com/News/ci_8204329

February 5, 2008

Budget proposal could cut millions from WIPP, Carlsbad Current-Argus

CARLSBAD — The proposed FY2009 federal budget would see cuts of about \$23 million to the budget of the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant near Carlsbad, according to a press release issued by Sen. Pete Domenici, R-N.M. President Bush's \$3 trillion federal budget plan will serve as a starting point for Congress to develop the FY2009 budget resolution and subsequent appropriations measures. Overall, the budget would call for spending increases for defense and homeland security activities and a spending freeze for the rest of the federal government. Bush's budget proposed \$211.5 million for the 2009 WIPP budget; Congress provided \$236.7 million in the FY2008 omnibus appropriations bill.

http://www.currentargus.com/ci_8180030

February 5, 2008

Proposed Budget "Very Good" for OR, Knoxville News-Sentinel

OAK RIDGE - The proposed federal budget for 2009 would funnel about \$3 billion to Oak Ridge, with most of the major programs here in solid shape. "This is a very good budget for Oak Ridge," Gerald Boyd, the U.S. Department of Energy's Oak Ridge manager, said Monday. Boyd oversees science research at Oak Ridge National Laboratory and the Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education, as well as a number of other programs - such as the environmental cleanup effort. The proposed spending for those areas would be more than \$2 billion in 2009, and Boyd said employment should be stable. The Y-12 nuclear weapons plant, which comes under the direction of the National Nuclear Security Administration, would receive more than \$900 million, based on the budget plans released Monday.

<http://www.knoxnews.com/news/2008/feb/05/proposed-budget-very-good-for-or/>

February 4, 2008

President Bush Requests \$25 Billion for U.S. Department of Energy's FY 2009 Budget, DOE Press Release

WASHINGTON, DC – U.S. Secretary of Energy Samuel W. Bodman today announced President Bush's \$25 billion Fiscal Year (FY) 2009 budget request for the Department of Energy (DOE), an increase of \$1.073 billion over the FY 2008 appropriation. This request will continue investments to meet growing energy demand with clean, safe, affordable, reliable and diverse supplies of energy; support the development of climate change technologies; advance environmental cleanup; and ensure the reliability of our nuclear weapons stockpile.

<http://www.energy.gov/news/5920.htm>

February 3, 2008

Uranium Industry in S. Utah is Booming Again, Deseret Morning News

Southern Utah's long-dormant uranium industry is booming again. Old mines are reopening, exploratory drilling is going on, one mill is operating and another is on stand-by status. This is the third uranium boom to hit the Beehive State. But unlike the first two, when American prospectors scoured the desert working for the Atomic Energy Commission or U.S. power plants, today's boom is largely a Canadian operation. It's a boom with an odd link to China. It's also one that could fizzle any day if the price of uranium falls, since Utah's reserves are relatively marginal. Only the first flurry of activity can be considered a true boom, so far at least. That happened in the 1940s and '50s, when America started building its nuclear arsenal. A short-lived boomlet took off in the middle 1970s as more nuclear power plants went online, according to the Utah History Encyclopedia. Then after the Three-Mile Island nuclear accident of 1979, investment in nuclear power plummeted, prices slumped and mines closed. Now, a turnaround is occurring.

<http://deseretnews.com/article/content/mobile/0,5223,695249863,00.html>

February 3, 2008

French Firm Talks to Idaho about Uranium Enrichment Plant, *Argus Observer (Oregon)*

BOISE (AP) — Areva Inc., a French government-controlled nuclear energy company, is in talks with officials in Idaho and other states over a planned \$2 billion uranium enrichment facility that by 2014 could supply fuel to commercial nuclear power plants. Areva recently hired Erika Malmen, wife of Gov. C.L. "Butch" Otter's former chief of staff, Jeff Malmen, to lobby Otter and state legislators, according to documents obtained from the Idaho secretary of state. Lawmakers said they've been drafting legislation to provide hundreds of millions in tax incentives to help persuade the company to build a plant near the Idaho National Laboratory nuclear reservation near Idaho Falls. Areva, whose U.S. operations are based in Bethesda, Md., has narrowed its list of places to build the plant to five states, spokeswoman Laurence Pernot told The Associated Press on Wednesday.

<http://www.argusobserver.com/articles/2008/02/03/news/doc47a5b8b84bb8c949272969.txt>

February 1, 2008

United States, France and Japan Increase Cooperation on Sodium-Cooled Fast Reactor Prototypes, *DOE Press Release*

WASHINGTON, DC —The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), the French Atomic Energy Commission (CEA) and Japan Atomic Energy Agency (JAEA) today expanded cooperation to coordinate Sodium-Cooled Fast Reactor Prototype development through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed by DOE Assistant Secretary for Nuclear Energy Dennis R. Spurgeon, CEA Chairman Alain Bugat and JAEA President Toshio Okazaki. The MOU establishes a collaborative framework with the ultimate goal of deploying sodium-cooled fast reactor prototypes. A sodium-cooled fast reactor uses liquid sodium to transfer heat, burning the plutonium and other transuranic elements in the process producing clean, safe nuclear power, less waste and increasing non-proliferation goals. The U.S., France and Japan currently cooperate within the framework of the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership (GNEP) which seeks to expand the use of clean and affordable nuclear energy, as well as in the Generation IV International Forum (GIF) which furthers the research and development of future nuclear energy systems.

<http://energy.gov/news/5916.htm>