

## News from Around the Complex

May2007

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May 31, 2007

### **Officials renegotiating cleanup, *Tri-City Herald***

Hanford regulators want a realistic but aggressive schedule for Hanford cleanup, they said Wednesday during a break in talks to renegotiate legally binding cleanup deadlines. "This is a defining moment for the future success of the cleanup of Hanford," said Elin Miller, regional administrator for the Environmental Protection Agency. The Tri-Party Agreement, which sets legal deadlines, could undergo some of its most significant revisions since it was signed 18 years ago to regulate the cleanup of contamination from the production of plutonium for the nation's nuclear weapons program at the Hanford nuclear reservation. Key leaders of the Department of Energy and its regulators, the state of Washington and the Environmental Protection Agency, spent all day behind closed doors in Richland in a negotiating session prompted by missed deadlines.

<http://www.tri-cityherald.com/tch/local/story/8933860p-8833917c.html>

May 28, 2007

### **New Los Alamos plutonium lab on hold, *Santa Fe New Mexican***

LOS ALAMOS, N.M. (AP) The federal government has put the brakes on a proposed billion-dollar Los Alamos plutonium lab due to concerns over rising cost estimates and congressional skepticism. In the last year, preliminary cost estimates on the project have jumped from \$837 million to as much as \$1.5 billion, National Nuclear Security Administration chief Thomas D'Agostino told members of Congress in a recent hearing. There also is skepticism about how the project fits into the NNSA's longer range plans for maintaining the U.S. nuclear stockpile - plans that could render the project obsolete a decade after it is completed.

<http://www.freewmexican.com/news/62058.html>

May 28, 2007

### **ORNL processing spent fuel: Work part of controversial Bush strategy to promote worldwide nuclear revival, *Knoxville News-Sentinel***

OAK RIDGE - A pilot project at Oak Ridge National Laboratory will process highly radioactive spent fuel from nuclear reactors, fabricate pellets of recycled fuel, and test the technologies considered essential to the Bush administration's plan to expand the use of nuclear energy. Work is under way on a small scale, using old fuel already in storage at ORNL. The workload is supposed to grow substantially in coming months as the lab receives fuel rods from other sources. Overall, the tech demonstration is supposed to last three years, cost about \$60 million and involve about 50 kilograms of spent nuclear fuel.

[http://www.knoxnews.com/kns/local\\_news/article/0,1406,KNS\\_347\\_5558850.00.html](http://www.knoxnews.com/kns/local_news/article/0,1406,KNS_347_5558850.00.html)

May 26, 2007

### **Bulk vit test under way to resolve issues, *Tri-City Herald***

The bulk vitrification test plant started up this week in the first of two final runs planned to resolve issues before a pilot plant treating radioactive waste might be built. Two issues remain that the Department of Energy believes could be resolved this summer: DOE needs to show that the components of a pilot plant would work together after testing them separately. It also needs to show it has solved the

problem of molten ionic salts carrying radioactive technetium 99, and allowing it to leak out of what's supposed to be a solid block of glass incorporating the radioactive waste after it hardens.

<http://www.tri-cityherald.com/tch/local/story/8919847p-8819839c.html>

May 25, 2007

**Yucca financing taking shape: Congressional committees begin process of setting 2008 budget levels, *Las Vegas Review-Journal***

WASHINGTON -- House and Senate committees this week took the first steps toward setting Yucca Mountain spending for 2008, a year in which the Department of Energy plans to meet a key licensing milestone if Congress supplies the funds. The Senate Armed Services Committee on Thursday chopped \$50 million from the military's contribution to the Yucca project, which would store Defense Department nuclear waste along with commercial used fuel within the planned repository 100 miles northwest of Las Vegas. On Wednesday, the House Appropriations energy and water subcommittee formed a spending bill that would fully fund the repository plan at the \$494.5 million amount that DOE requested. Both actions took place early in the Capitol Hill budget process. Final spending for nuclear waste disposal won't be set until the fall. Sen. John Ensign, R-Nev., engineered the Senate cut. Though the Pentagon asked for \$292 million as its share of the program next year, the Armed Services Committee reduced that to \$242 million.

<http://www.lvrj.com/news/7683942.html>

May 23, 2007

**GOP senators reintroduce bill to speed waste to Yucca Mountain, *Las Vegas Sun***

WASHINGTON (AP) - Republican senators led by Pete Domenici of New Mexico introduced legislation Wednesday to speed nuclear waste to Nevada and stow it above ground until the underground dump at Yucca Mountain is completed. Domenici, top Republican on the Energy Committee, introduced similar legislation last September. It did not advance even though Republicans then controlled Congress and has less chance now with Democratic Sen. Harry Reid as Nevada serving as majority leader. "I recognize that this bill faces long odds given the current makeup of the Senate. Nevertheless, Yucca Mountain remains an essential option to deal with nuclear waste," Domenici said.

<http://www.lasvegassun.com/sunbin/stories/text/2007/may/23/052310101.html>

May 22, 2007

**Buildings come down at West Valley, *Olean Times Herald***

WEST VALLEY - West Valley Demonstration Project officials said Monday progress is being made on cleanup at the contaminated former nuclear fuel reprocessing center. West Valley Nuclear Services Company President Al Konetzni told reporters at the U.S. Department of Energy's cleanup site in the town of Ashford that buildings are being removed and waste is being shipped. Mr. Konetzni and Craig Rieman, deputy site director for the Department of Energy, spoke in front of a warehouse that was being demolished for removal to a licensed landfill near Rochester. It had been decontaminated prior to the demolition. Mr. Konetzni, a former vice admiral in the Navy, said federal and state officials are embracing what he called "the way ahead," which he said will result removing "most, if not all, of the contamination from the site."

[http://www.zwire.com/site/news.cfm?newsid=18373122&BRD=2725&PAG=461&dept\\_id=562746&rfi=6](http://www.zwire.com/site/news.cfm?newsid=18373122&BRD=2725&PAG=461&dept_id=562746&rfi=6)

May 22, 2005

**Regulators, DOE dispute OR cleanup deadlines, *Knoxville News-Sentinel***

OAK RIDGE - The U.S. Department of Energy is now in a "formal dispute" with environmental regulators, ratcheting up their ongoing disagreement over cleanup deadlines in Oak Ridge. DOE has said there isn't enough money in this year's and next year's budgets to meet some previously agreed-upon milestones, and the three parties - DOE, the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency - met earlier this month in Chattanooga to discuss the situation. No agreement was reached, but a DOE spokesman said Monday that a resolution to their differences could be close.

[http://www.knoxnews.com/kns/local\\_news/article/0,1406,KNS\\_347\\_5548512,00.html](http://www.knoxnews.com/kns/local_news/article/0,1406,KNS_347_5548512,00.html)

Monday, May 21, 2007

**Strickland, House members push for Piketon nuclear-waste project, *The Canton Repository***

PIKETON, Ohio (AP) — Gov. Ted Strickland and U.S. House members are voicing support for a nuclear-waste recycling project that could bring much-needed jobs to a county that suffers from a 9.6 percent unemployment rate. But Sen. George Voinovich remains unsure of the multibillion-dollar project's safety. The Republican is worried it won't be cost-effective and will turn the Portsmouth Gaseous Diffusion Plant near Piketon into a waste dump, spokesman Chris Paulitz said. The U.S. Department of Energy won't decide where to put the project until next year. But Ohio officials are already lobbying for the project, since ten other potential locations submitted site-study reports this month.

<http://www.cantonrep.com/index.php?ID=355580&Category=13&subCategoryID=>

May 21, 2007

**Senior International Energy Officials Issue Joint Statement in Support of the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership, *DOE Press Release***

WASHINGTON, DC - U.S. Secretary of Energy Samuel W. Bodman today announced that the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and senior energy officials from some of the world's leading economies issued a joint statement in support of the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership (GNEP) and nuclear energy cooperation. The People's Republic of China, France, Japan, Russia and the United States issued the Joint Statement, which addresses the prospects for international cooperation in peaceful uses of nuclear energy, including technical aspects, especially in the framework of GNEP.

<http://www.energy.gov/news/5075.htm>

May 21, 2007

**Full construction on Hanford vit plant to resume in 4 months, *Seattle Post-Intelligencer***

RICHLAND, Wash. (AP) More than 300 workers will be added as Bechtel National prepares to resume full construction of a huge nuclear waste processing plant in about four months, officials said. Many if not most of the additional employees may work in other states on design of the long-awaited \$12.2 billion vitrification plant, which is supposed to convert highly toxic radioactive waste sludge at the Hanford nuclear reservation to glasslike logs for long-term storage, company officials told the Tri-City Herald. Work on the pretreatment and high-level waste buildings has been stalled for more than a year because of concern about whether the overall project was adequately designed to withstand a severe earthquake.

[http://seattlepi.nwsourc.com/local/6420AP\\_WA\\_Vit\\_Plant.html](http://seattlepi.nwsourc.com/local/6420AP_WA_Vit_Plant.html)

May 20, 2007

**DOE sees another missed deadline in dealing with sludge, *Tri-City Herald***

Problems in controlling radioactive sludge at Hanford's K Basins likely will mean another missed deadline for the Department of Energy, but the agency believes it can minimize delays by making changes now to the sludge treatment system design. A recent report from Hanford representatives for the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board said that continuing problems with the sludge likely would lead to a "significant delay" in meeting a November 2009 deadline to have the sludge treated and ready for disposal. But DOE may be able to hold the delay to a year or two by making changes to the design of the treatment system before it begins operating, said Dave Brockman, DOE project director for closure of the K Basins.

<http://www.tri-cityherald.com/tch/local/story/8902966p-8802882c.html>

May 19, 2007

**Mouse House may get cheesed: Demolition of vacant facility part of DOE cleanup proposal, *Knoxville News-Sentinel***

OAK RIDGE - The mice have long since departed, but their old house - a mansion, actually, with three floors, 152 rooms and 42,472 square feet of floor space - is left behind. That's a problem. The U.S. Department of Energy doesn't have the money to demolish the Mouse House, a onetime fixture of Oak Ridge's genetics research, or take down dozens of other buildings no longer needed for federal missions here. The surplus facilities are included in a giant cleanup proposal known as the Integrated Facilities Disposition Plan, which would cost at least \$1.5 billion and take several years to complete. It has yet to be approved or funded by Congress, although Oak Ridge officials remain hopeful.

[http://www.knoxnews.com/kns/local\\_news/article/0,1406,KNS\\_347\\_5544835.00.html](http://www.knoxnews.com/kns/local_news/article/0,1406,KNS_347_5544835.00.html)

May 17, 2007

**Company joins Navajo fight for uranium cleanup, *Los Angeles Times***

WASHINGTON — El Paso Natural Gas Co. is lending support to a new Navajo effort to force federal cleanup of one of the Cold War's last major toxic legacies. El Paso filed a lawsuit Tuesday in U.S. District Court against the Department of Energy and other federal agencies, seeking cleanup of debris from an old uranium processing mill that the company operated. "We view them as the appropriate party," El Paso spokesman Bruce Connery said. The company also has offered to press Congress for funding and to take protective steps at two old dump sites where radioactive material has surfaced. The moves come in response to a recent ultimatum from the tribe, which is

pursuing a cleanup across the Navajo Nation of contamination left by the uranium industry in its quest for atomic-bomb fuel.

[http://www.latimes.com/news/printedition/asection/la-na-navajo17may17,1,1449032.story?coll=la-news-a\\_section&ctrack=3&cset=true](http://www.latimes.com/news/printedition/asection/la-na-navajo17may17,1,1449032.story?coll=la-news-a_section&ctrack=3&cset=true)

May 16, 2007

**Plan would extend life of gaseous diffusion plant, *KFVS Television (Kentucky)***

PADUCAH, Ky. (AP) There's an effort to extend the life of the eleven-hundred employee Paducah Gaseous Diffusion Plant. Congressional leaders are being asked to require the U.S. Department of Energy to transfer control of spent uranium to the global energy company United States Enrichment Corporation. Paducah Mayor Bill Paxton says spent uranium in tens of thousands of cylinders at the plant and at a closed sister plant in Piketon, Ohio, is worth about three billion dollars. He says that's based on the soaring price of the low-level radioactive metal. Paxton adds that transferring some of the material to USEC to be re-enriched for use in nuclear power plants could extend the life of the Paducah factory by two to ten years. Paxton says the cylinders belong to Paducah. He says they've been sitting in the community for the past 50 years and nobody wanted them. Paxton says now that uranium prices have shot up, they're a hot item and DOE officials want to do something else with them.

[http://www.kfvs12.com/Global/story.asp?S=6525101&nav=menu51\\_2](http://www.kfvs12.com/Global/story.asp?S=6525101&nav=menu51_2)

May 14, 2007

**U.S. Allows Radioactive Materials in Ordinary Landfills, *Environmental News Service***

TAKOMA PARK, Maryland (ENS) - Radioactive materials from nuclear weapons facilities are being released to regular landfills and could get into commercial recycling streams, finds a report issued today by the nonprofit Nuclear Information and Resource Service, NIRS. Radioactive scrap, concrete, equipment, asphalt, plastic, wood, chemicals, and soil are placed in ordinary landfills, researchers learned. Contaminated by nuclear bomb production at Department of Energy, DOE, facilities, some of the radioactive waste is processed by state-licensed companies. In some cases it is "redefined" as "special" and then disposed of in regular landfills. "People around regular trash landfills will be shocked to learn that radioactive contamination from nuclear weapons production is ending up there, either directly released by DOE or via brokers and processors," says lead author Diane D'Arrigo, NIRS' Radioactive Waste Project director

<http://www.ens-newswire.com/ens/may2007/2007-05-14-08.asp>

Report available at: <http://www.nirs.org/radwaste/outofcontrol/outofcontrol.htm>

May 12, 2007

**Bill bans dumping waste at Piketon: Area reps don't want GNEP funds used for storage, *Chillicothe Gazette***

WASHINGTON, D.C. -Friday, Congresswoman Jean Schmidt with original cosponsors Congressmen Zack Space and Charlie Wilson, introduced H.R. 2282, the Nuclear Waste Storage Prohibition Act. The Nuclear Waste Storage Prohibition Act states no funds from the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership (GNEP) may be used for the creation of a permanent storage facility for spent nuclear fuel or high-level radioactive waste. It further states no such waste may be retained for long-term storage at a site where the facilities are intended for reprocessing of fuel or waste.

<http://www.chillicothegazette.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20070512/NEWS01/705120305/1002>

May 9, 2007

**Department Of Energy Offers \$60 Million to Spur Industry Engagement in Global Nuclear Energy Partnership, DOE Press Release**

**WASHINGTON, DC** - The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Deputy Secretary Clay Sell today announced that DOE will provide up to \$60 million, over two years (FY'07-'08), to engage industry experts in the conceptual design of the initial nuclear fuel recycling center and advanced recycling reactor as part of President Bush's Global Nuclear Energy Partnership (GNEP). Studies from this Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) will include scope, schedule and cost information of the proposed facilities and will also identify technological needs that will be used to inform, and effectively and efficiently implement GNEP's Research & Development (R&D) activities.

<http://energy.gov/news/5043.htm>

May 7, 2007

**U.S. Government May Sell 'Very Small' Amount of Uranium in 2007  
DOE Considering Strategic Uranium Reserves to Safeguard U.S. Utilities.**

*StockInterview.com*

The extra-tight nuclear fuel supply picture, which has sent the price of spot uranium higher by 1775 percent over the past six years, could suddenly make uranium oxide, also known by uranium miners as yellowcake, harder to come by. Many industry experts and U.S. utilities were counting on the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) to release up to five million pounds of U3O8 from federal stockpiles this summer. Not so says one DOE official. In an interview we conducted this past week, Ed Rutkowski of the U.S. Department of Energy's Nuclear Fuel Supply Security group told StockInterview.com the government may have a uranium sale in 2007. Rutkowski said it would be for a 'very small' amount of U3O8 equivalent. According to Rutkowski, should the uranium sale occur it would be well under the quantity in DOE's proposed long-term uranium sales strategy. He said it would probably take place this summer. The proposed sales strategy suggested an annual sale of no more than 10 percent of the U.S. uranium requirements...Rutkowski said that should the sale take place, selling a 'very small' amount of uranium is needed to generate revenues 'to keep the DOE's Portsmouth (Ohio) facility running through 2008.' He explained this facility is removing the technetium from the uranium.

<http://www.stockinterview.com/News/05072007/DOE-uranium-sales-this-year.html>

May 7, 2007

**Faux Renaissance: Global Warming, Radioactive Waste Disposal, and the Nuclear Future, Arms Control Today**

Over the past 20 years, there has been little or no net growth in installed nuclear capacity in much of the world with the exception of Asia, where there has been some limited new nuclear construction. Many energy analysts now expect, however, a dramatic nuclear renaissance, provoked in part by anxieties over global warming and claims that nuclear power can play a substantial role in easing these concerns. Yet, nuclear power will have to expand fivefold or more worldwide to make even a modest contribution to greenhouse gas reductions. Such an expansion does not appear feasible in the next quarter-century or longer, and in the interim, there are alternative paths to low-carbon-emitting electricity that appear equally or more promising than nuclear power. \* \* \* A report from the International Panel on Fissile Materials advances several reasons to question the practicality and wisdom of the GNEP scheme, including its cost, proliferation risks, and waste disposal rationale. On the latter, it is striking that, in order to save space at the repository, the separated fission products first would have to be stored above ground for hundreds of years

after reprocessing before their emplacement in Yucca Mountain. Moreover, it is not even clear that the GNEP scheme is the simplest or most direct way to increase the capacity of Yucca Mountain. A recent EPRI study suggested that the capacity could be 260,000-570,000 tons, far greater than the 63,000-ton legal limit currently stipulated or the 105,000-120,000-ton technical limit often suggested.

[http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2007\\_05/feiveson.asp](http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2007_05/feiveson.asp)

May 7, 2007

**GNEP Siting Studies Received, DOE Press Release**

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) today announced that the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership (GNEP) Site Characterization Reports have been completed and received. These reports conducted by eleven commercial and public consortia are the product of the \$10,458,242 million in grant awards made on January 30, 2007. Recipients had 90-days to complete these studies and submitted the reports to DOE on May 1, 2007. Information generated from these Site Characterization Reports, coupled with existing site information, provide a variety of data relating to both DOE and non-DOE sites, including site and nearby land uses; demographics; ecological and habitat assessment; threatened or endangered species; historical, archaeological and cultural resources; geology and seismology; weather and climate; and regulatory and permitting requirements.

<http://www.gnep.energy.gov/gnepSitingStudies.html>

May 2, 2007

**TRIDEC Releases GNEP Citing Study, KNDO/KNDU Tri-Cities**

KENNEWICK, Wash.- TRIDEC submits its study on a controversial plan that could guide the area's economic future. They just finished a million dollar citing study on their proposal to bring the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership to the area. They propose a nuclear fuel recycling facility, research reactor and a research facility. The just finished study concludes Hanford's pre-existing facilities, like FFTF and Energy Northwest's two incomplete nuclear plants, and the fact that they're already licensed, give it a distinct advantage over the other sites. "A lot of the stuff that you look for infrastructure wise, permitting wise and licensing wise is already in Hanford. Plus, we've got some of the best highly technical and highly educated nuclear engineers, scientists and staff," said Deanna Smith with TRIDEC.

[http://www.kndo.com/Global/story.asp?S=6455863&nav=menu484\\_2](http://www.kndo.com/Global/story.asp?S=6455863&nav=menu484_2)

May 1, 2007

**EPA offer attractive to DOE, Tri-City Herald**

The Department of Energy is interested in working off a \$1.14 million fine for problems at a landfill for radioactive waste in central Hanford, it has told the Environmental Protection Agency. EPA gave DOE the option of proposing an environmental project in addition to work already being done to clean up the Hanford nuclear reservation in lieu of paying all or part of the fine. DOE would like to do a supplemental project but still needs to work out the details and make sure it would not take management attention or any resources away from Hanford cleanup, said Colleen French, DOE spokeswoman. DOE expects the contractor for the landfill, Washington Closure Hanford, not the government, to pick up the costs of a supplemental project.

<http://www.tri-cityherald.com/tch/local/story/8843337p-8744038c.html>

May 1, 2007

**DOE offers no alternatives for SREL funding, Aiken Standard**

Despite repeated warnings from concerned citizens, scientists, and a United States congressman that the Savannah River Ecology Laboratory will be forced to close due to a lack of funding, Savannah River Site officials have yet to offer any possible alternatives to replace the environmental stewardship that would be lost by the independent facility's closure. "I can't speak to issues related to closure — that is not the Department of Energy's decision," said DOE Spokesperson Julie Peterson when reached for comment Monday afternoon. She said that she was unaware of any discussions in the Department regarding what would be done in the event that SREL does close. "If closure of SREL is being discussed ... it is not a decision that will be made by DOE and the Department has not been informed of such a decision otherwise," Peterson wrote later in the day in an e-mail responding to a request to speak with SRS Manager Jeffrey Allison, who was unavailable for comment. The e-mail continued: "The Department won't speculate or comment on something that 'may occur'; we can speak to what we do know as it pertains to the existing signed agreement."

<http://www.aikenstandard.com/news/312006630875203.php>