News from Around the Complex

August 1 – August 31, 2008

August 27, 2008
Utah is poised to join suit over foreign N-waste, *Salt Lake Tribune*
The state has been asked to join the federal court fight over a Salt Lake City company's proposal to import foreign radioactive waste. Utah has agreed to become a defendant in a case brought by EnergySolutions Inc. against a regional organization that oversees low-level radioactive waste, according to papers filed this week in federal court. EnergySolutions filed suit in May to have a judge rule on whether the company must abide by the limits of the Northwest Interstate Compact on Low-level Radioactive Waste. That eight-state nuclear-oversight organization says the company is not permitted to dispose of waste from other nations. The nuclear-services company contends the compact has no authority over operations at its specialized landfill in Tooele County. It has an application pending before the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission to bury about 1,600 tons of contaminated waste from Italy's nuclear program in the mile-square landfill about 80 miles west of Salt Lake City.
http://www.sltrib.com/news/ci_10320790

August 27, 2008
Nuclear surge needs waste plan, *The Post and Courier (South Carolina)*
[Editorial] The bipartisan support of nuclear power expressed last week by Rep. James Clyburn and Sen. Lindsey Graham should be an indication of real movement toward a new national energy policy. In comments at a Charleston conference, both acknowledged the state's long background in nuclear power. The state also has a long background in nuclear waste disposal, and any advance for more nuclear power production will require even more progress on waste management. Federal efforts toward safe, secure waste disposal continue to face obstruction in Congress. S.C.'s Savannah River Site has long served as a "temporary" disposal site for high-level radioactive waste. More recently it has added tons of weapons-grade plutonium to be reprocessed for nuclear power generation. That will create additional waste by-products to be managed on site. The continued failure of the federal government to provide a permanent repository for nuclear waste will effectively make the SRS a permanent place for disposal. That can't be allowed to happen. The Energy Department recently concluded that waste storage needs for existing nuclear power generation will cost $96.2 billion more than anticipated, in part because of the inability to advance the Yucca Mountain (Nev.) disposal site in a timely manner. A waste solution won't come cheaply.
http://www.charleston.net/news/2008/aug/27/nuclear_surge_needs_waste_plan52063/

August 25, 2008
DOI Designates B Reactor at DOE's Hanford Site as a National Historic Landmark: DOE to offer regular public tours in 2009, *DOE Press Release*
WASHINGTON, DC – U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) Deputy Secretary Lynn Scarlett and U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Acting Deputy Secretary Jeffrey F. Kupfer today announced the designation of DOE's B Reactor as a National Historic Landmark and unveiled DOE's plan for a new public access program to enable American citizens to visit B Reactor during the 2009 tourist season. The B Reactor at DOE's Hanford Site in southeast Washington State was the world's first industrial-

scale nuclear reactor and produced plutonium for the atomic weapon that was dropped on Nagasaki, Japan to end World War II (WWII).
http://www.energy.gov/news/6489.htm

August 23, 2008
Parks nuke dump site to be cleaned in one-foot layers, *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*
Although the Army Corps of Engineers is still working out the details for removal of 50,000 tons of radioactive debris from a dump along Route 66, they will do so one foot at a time. The nuclear burial grounds, technically known as the Shallow Land Disposal Area (SLDA), were established in the late 1950s as a dump for radioactive and toxic chemical waste from the Nuclear Materials and Equipment Corp., or NUMEC, with facilities in Apollo and Parks. NUMEC worked with enriched uranium to produce fuel for nuclear submarines and power plants as well as nuclear materials, including plutonium, for classified government defense projects. Radioactive and chemical waste was buried in 10 shallow trenches throughout the site. Dumping ceased in 1970, according to government agencies. A proverbial hot potato, final plans to safely contain or dig up and remove the radioactive contaminants have been elusive for more than 15 years.
http://www.pittsburghlive.com/x/pittsburghtrib/news/s_584528.html

August 21, 2008
Vegetable oil in recipe for Hanford cleanup, *Tri-City Herald*
Researchers at Hanford are turning to kitchen cupboards for inspiration in cleaning up contaminated ground water at the nuclear reservation. Wednesday they injected 1,500 gallons of vegetable oil mixed with 55,000 gallons of water into ground water contaminated with toxic chromium that's moving toward the Columbia River. That followed a similar test last year with 5,500 gallons of molasses. "It's very elegant and very simple," said Mike Thompson, a Department of Energy hydrogeologist. The goal is to overfeed the bacteria already in the ground water. As they eat the extra oil or molasses, their population blooms. When the food is gone, they start eating each other. The sustained feeding reduces the limited amount of available oxygen in the water and then begins converting toxic chromium into a form that is less toxic. It also is less mobile, tending to stick to the soil rather than dissolving in the ground water and moving toward the river.
http://www.tri-cityherald.com/kennewick_pasco_richland/story/285322.html

August 20, 2008
Nuclear agency OKs new bids for KC weapons parts plant, *Kansas City Business Journal*
The National Nuclear Security Administration bolstered Kansas City's hopes of retaining 2,100 high-paying jobs by authorizing resolicitation of bids for a new $500 million nuclear weapons parts plant in south Kansas City. The General Services Administration, the federal government's landlord, had hoped to choose a developer for the 1 million- to 1.5 million-square-foot facility on Thursday and break ground for it at Missouri Highway 150 and Botts Road in October. But Brad Scott, the GSA's regional administrator, reported a "bid bust" last month after all four short-listed developers submitted bids in excess of a limit set by Congress. Congress has established a lease cap of $38 a square foot for the project, which GSA wants a private developer to build and lease to the National Nuclear Security Administration for 20 years.
http://www.bizjournals.com/kansascity/stories/2008/08/18/daily20.html?t=printable

August 19, 2008
State won't appeal ruling on Hanford initiative, *The Seattle Times*
KENNEWICK, Wash. — The state says it will live with a federal appeals court ruling that found Initiative 297 unconstitutional. Voters passed the initiative in 2004. It would have barred the federal government from shipping waste to the Hanford nuclear site until the waste that's already there is cleaned up. A judge struck down the law in 2006, saying the federal government has authority over nuclear waste, and in May, a three-judge panel of the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals agreed. The state Attorney General's Office had until Tuesday to ask the U.S. Supreme Court to review, but declined. Lawyers didn't believe the high court would take the case.
http://seattletimes.nwsource.com/html/localnews/2008124775_apwahanfordinitiative.html

August 17, 2008
Hanford crews make progress on 618-7 Burial Ground, *Tri-City Herald*
Hanford workers are finding huge stainless steel tanks, one with radioactive powder inside, and drums of potentially flammable zircaloy chips as they dig up the final trench at a burial ground just north of Richland. Contractor Washington Closure Hanford had delayed starting cleanup of the 618-7 Burial Ground until this year, fearing that its contents would be so hazardous that it needed to have a new safety plan required by the Department of Energy in place before work began. "It's gone better than we expected," said John Ludowise, project engineer for Washington Closure. "We prepared for the worst." The burial ground was used from about 1960-73 for waste from the Hanford nuclear reservation's 300 Area along the Columbia River, where fuel was made for Hanford's reactors and research was conducted.
http://www.tri-cityherald.com/kennewick_pasco_richland/story/279633.html

Nuclear fuel storage begins, *The Times Standard (Eureka, California)*
After decades of debate and more than a year of construction, Pacific Gas and Electric Co. workers placed and sealed the first cask of spent nuclear fuel from the Humboldt Bay nuclear power plant into an underground container Friday. Over the next few months, PG&E will be moving five more stainless steel casks into the high-density concrete container designed to be unbreakable by a tsunami or a 9.3-magnitude earthquake. The six 80-ton casks will be sealed with 22,000-pound lids and will contain 390 spent fuel rods total, along with other radioactive waste currently stored in a pool of water on site. Loren Sharp, director and plant manager, said the last cask should be in place and sealed by mid-November. The casks will go through leak tests before they are welded shut and moved to the underground unit.
http://www.times-standard.com/localnews/ci_10222702

August 16, 2008
Site of former Ohio uranium plant turns to nature, *Cincinnati Enquirer*
A site once home to a Cold War-era uranium processing plant and the focus of a contentious struggle to clean up toxic waste has re-emerged as a haven for wildlife and a memorial to those who worked to make the area safe. The Fernald Preserve and its visitors center make their public debut Wednesday at the former site of the government facility that processed uranium metal for nuclear weapons from 1952 to 1989. Shrouded in secrecy for years, the site gained national notoriety in the 1980s with media reports on site emissions and residents' concerns over radioactive contamination of air, soil and groundwater. A corrugated metal warehouse was transformed into an environmentally friendly visitors' center that traces the site's history from its years as a Native American habitat to the present. Some exhibits

highlight the plant's workers, known as "Cold War warriors" for their contribution to the nation's defense.
http://news.cincinnati.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080818/NEWS01/808180381/1168/NEWS

August 14, 2008
Y-12 finishes first set of refurbished parts for warhead, *Knoxville News-Sentinel*
OAK RIDGE - Workers at the Y-12 nuclear weapons plant have completed the first set of refurbished parts for the W76 warhead, federal officials confirmed Wednesday. The milestone is an indication that the life-extension project is back on track after unspecified technical problems delayed Y-12's work on the warheads for more than a year. The Oak Ridge plant specializes in manufacturing so-called secondaries - the second stage of thermonuclear warheads. W76 warheads are deployed on Trident submarine missiles, and they are considered an essential part of the U.S. nuclear defense strategy in the post-Cold War era.
http://www.knoxnews.com/news/2008/aug/14/y-12-finishes-first-set-of-refurbished-parts-for/

August 13, 2008
Radioactive waste site nearing OK, *The Dallas Morning News*
A proposed permanent disposal site in far West Texas for low-level radioactive waste drew closer to approval on Tuesday when the director of Texas' environmental agency completed a draft license that would authorize the facility. Dallas-based Waste Control Specialists already has a license for permanent disposal of uranium mining waste and for storage of low-level waste from medical radiology labs, nuclear power plants and other operations. The company, part of Dallas billionaire Harold Simmons' company, Valhi Inc., is seeking a license for permanent disposal of low-level waste at its plant in Andrews County. Environmentalists are fighting the project. Mark R. Vickery, executive director of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, forwarded the draft license to the agency's chief clerk on Tuesday, agency spokeswoman Andrea Morrow said.
http://www.dallasnews.com/sharedcontent/dws/news/healthscience/stories/DN-disposal_13met.ART.State.Edition1.4d5affa.html

August 12, 2008
NRC review finds DOE program to regulate vit plant OK, *Tri-City Herald*
The Department of Energy should look for ways to better separate its dual roles as manager and regulator of Hanford's vitrification plant, according to a new report by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. However, DOE's overall program to safely regulate the $12.2 billion vit plant is adequate to ensure protection of public health and safety if properly implemented, the review concluded. The plant, which would convert radioactive waste into a stable glass form for disposal, is not scheduled to open until 2019.
http://www.tri-cityherald.com/kennewick_pasco_richland/story/272597.html

August 8, 2008
Utilities win rulings on nuclear waste storage: Feds to compensate power companies for breach of contract, *Deseret News*
PG&E Co. and other utilities won appeals court decisions that may result in greater compensation for the U.S. government's failure to take ownership of radioactive waste from nuclear power plants. In three rulings, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit Thursday outlined a new standard for compensating utilities that were

forced to store the waste because the government hasn't begun building a promised disposal facility at Yucca Mountain, about 100 miles northwest of Las Vegas. The government and the utilities had each appealed aspects of rulings by the U.S. Court of Federal Claims. The lower court had awarded $42.8 million to PG&E, $142.8 million to the owners of three decommissioned plants in New England and $39.8 million to California's Sacramento Municipal Utility District. Thursday's decisions may streamline the process to resolve 66 cases over the repayment to utilities for storing the waste.
http://deseretnews.com/article/content/mobile/1,5620,700249102,00.html?printView=true

August 5, 2008
DOE to Transport Moab Mill Tailings by Rail: Department Approves Project Baseline and Obtains Nuclear Regulatory Commission Nod, *DOE Press Release*
WASHINGTON, DC – The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) today reaffirmed its prior decision to relocate mill tailings predominantly by rail from the former uranium-ore processing site near Moab, Utah, 30 miles north to Crescent Junction, Utah. As determined previously, oversized material that is not practical to be sized to fit into the containers will be transported by truck.
http://energy.gov/news/6450.htm

August 5, 2008
U.S. Department of Energy Releases Revised Total System Life Cycle Cost Estimate and Fee Adequacy Report for Yucca Mountain Project, *DOE Press Release*
WASHINGTON, DC –The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) today released a revised estimate of the total system life cycle cost for a repository at Yucca Mountain, Nevada. The 2007 total system life cycle cost estimate includes the cost to research, construct and operate Yucca Mountain during a period of 150 years, from the beginning of the program in 1983 through closure and decommissioning in 2133. The new cost estimate of $79.3 billion, when updated to 2007 dollars comes to $96.2 billion, a 38 percent increase from the last published estimate in 2001 of $57.5 billion. This updated estimate takes into account a substantial increase in the amount of waste to be shipped and stored at the repository and more than $16 billion for inflation. The Department is not proposing a change in the fee paid by nuclear utilities for the disposal of commercial spent nuclear fuel at this time.
http://energy.gov/news/6451.htm

August 3, 2008
Area should celebrate death of GNEP, *Chillicothe Gazette*
Remember Global Nuclear Energy Partnership, the Bush nuclear wonder-program supposed to bring us "6,000 local jobs?" A jobs bonanza was promised at Piketon, so worthwhile as to warrant the postponement of public oversight and major site cleanup. Now the GNEP dinosaur is dead. In October, the National Academy of Sciences slammed the program as a hugely expensive exercise in sci-fi fantasy. In June, the House Appropriations Subcommittee provided "no funding for the Administration's counterproductive, poorly designed, and poorly executed Global Nuclear Energy Partnership (GNEP)" in its markup of the 2009 budget. In July, the Department of Energy canceled the siting process for GNEP "facilities," and tossed away the "candidate list" on which Piketon was included. Look for those 6,000 jobs to materialize just as soon as the "Mission to Mars" succeeds.
http://www.chillicothegazette.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080803/OPINION02/808030314

August 2, 2008
Areva agrees to produce Taiwan fuel in Richland, *Tri-City Herald*
Areva has signed a $200 million contract with Taiwan Power Co. to produce fuel for its nuclear reactors through at least 2021. The work is planned to be done at Areva's Richland plant. The Richland plant also is making other long-term plans. It has applied to the Nuclear Regulatory Agency for a 40-year-license renewal, a first for a fuel fabrication plant in the United States, according to Areva. Typically license renewals are for five to 10 years, said Chuck Perkins, the Areva Richland site manager. The new Taiwan contract is an extension of work that has been done at the Richland plant for about 30 of the almost 40 years it has been producing fuel for nuclear power reactors and will require no additional staff.
http://www.tri-cityherald.com/901/story/261138.html

August 1, 2008
Department of Energy Awards $15 Million for Nuclear Fuel Cycle Technology Research and Development, *DOE Press Release*
WASHINGTON, DC – The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) today announced it will award up to $15 million to 34 research organizations as part of the Department's Advanced Fuel Cycle Initiative (AFCI). AFCI is the Department's nuclear energy research and development program supporting the long-term goals and objectives of the United States' nuclear energy policy. These projects will provide necessary data and analyses to further U.S. nuclear fuel cycle technology development, meet the need for advanced nuclear energy production and help to close the nuclear fuel cycle in the United States.
http://www.energy.gov/news/6446.htm