DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

October 12, 2007

TO: K. Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: R. Quirk and W. Linzau, Hanford Site Representatives
SUBJECT: Activity Report for the Week Ending October 12, 2007

Waste Treatment Plant (WTP): The site rep attended a design safety meeting for problems associated with the gypsum walls in the High Level Waste facility. Some of these walls provide the required two-hour fire barrier and are the boundary between ventilation zones. The project is working through problems due to high differential pressures (DPs) between the ventilation zones that can occur during abnormal conditions. These high DPs could damage the gypsum wall or prevent doors from opening. The problems are compounded by the lack of air locks in the design.

The project completed their review of preparations to restart construction of the Pretreatment Facility. A significant number of pre-start items are open and many are directly related to completing or verifying the design of structure, embeds, and vessels to the revised ground motion. The project has changed the target restart date from January 2008 to November 1, 2007. The target date to complete all the pre-start is October 18, 2007, and the site rep expressed a concern to project management that it appeared that pressure is being exerted on engineering to complete design work to meet a construction target.

Two significant changes in contractor management have been announced. Craig Albert, WTP Project Manager, is leaving the project and is being replaced by Larry Simmons, currently the Deputy Manager of Capital Project Execution. Mike Lewis, Construction Manager, is also leaving the project and he is being replaced by David Leeth, who was most recently the Manager of Construction at the Los Alamos National Laboratory.

Plutonium Finishing Plant (PFP): The site rep conducted a walkdown of the areas of the facility that will be used to move loaded 9975s containers. To facilitate de-inventory of the facility, the project will utilize alternative locations for lag storage. The paths of travel from the current storage location to the new locations were observed and were clear of any significant hazards, but a few locations required housekeeping to reduce fire loading and trip hazards. These observations were pointed out to the PFP responsible manager, who was present during the walkdown and committed to address the housekeeping items.

River Corridor Closure Project: The site rep observed a workshop for planning the upcoming decontamination and demolition (D&D) of Building 107N. The 107N building held the equipment to clean water from the fuel storage basins at N Reactor and is located about 20 feet from the site fence, which is right along the river. Characterization done by the previous contractor indicates the building had 118 curies, but some was removed when ion exchange resin was removed from the building (see Hanford Activity Report 2/9/07). The building still houses sand filters and a settling tank, which has sludge at the bottom with significant curie content. The recommendation from the workshop members is to grout the content of the settling tank along with the sand filters, remove them whole, and transport them to the disposal facility. The site rep questioned the ability to adequately stabilize the sludge in the bottom of the settling tank using grout. The D&D work is tentatively scheduled to begin in March 2008.