

# DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

July 5, 2002

**MEMORANDUM FOR:** J. K. Fortenberry, Technical Director  
**FROM:** H. Waugh and W. White, Pantex Site Representatives  
**SUBJECT:** Pantex Plant Activity Report for Week Ending July 5, 2002

**DNFSB Activity Summary:** H. Waugh was out of the office for the week. W. White was out of the office on Thursday and Friday. The Pantex Plant was closed on Thursday and Friday for Independence Day.

**Pit Repackaging Milestone:** On Monday, BWXT repackaged the 5000<sup>th</sup> pit into an AL-R8 2030 sealed-insert container. These containers represent a significant improvement in the near-term storage conditions for the pits, and repackaging into these containers was the focus of Board Recommendation 99-1, *Safe Storage of Fissionable Material Called 'Pits.'* For the month of June, BWXT repackaged more than 200 pits, maintaining an average repackaging rate in excess of 200 pits per month for FY02.

BWXT also reached its FY02 goal for surveillance of sealed-insert containers this week. On Monday, BWXT conducted surveillance operations on the 134<sup>th</sup> sealed-insert container for this fiscal year. This meets the FY02 surveillance requirements in the sealed-insert container surveillance plan and addresses half the existing backlog from the past few years. BWXT will continue to work off the existing backlog during the remainder of the fiscal year. This action addresses one of four items the Board requested in a May 2002 letter that NNSA consider prior to proposing closure of Recommendation 99-1. [II.A]

**High Explosive Machining Operations:** BWXT submitted its startup notification report for resuming high explosive machining operations at Pantex following the recent occurrence involving the machining of an explosive component without appropriate safety controls. The incident occurred when the computer numerically controlled machine ran a program for one tool when a different tool was actually attached.

BWXT has resumed gauging operations for certain high priority components. Resumption of additional, mission-critical operations will occur only after notification to OASO and approval by the BWXT General Manager. One compensatory action identified for these limited operations is the establishment of a senior supervisory watch to monitor all operations.

Resumption of normal machining operations will occur only after completion of identified corrective actions and a successful contractor readiness assessment. Corrective actions include changes to operating procedures, changes to programmatic procedures, and training for operators. Following the contractor readiness assessment, the BWXT General Manager will act as the approval authority for restarting normal operations. However, BWXT has agreed to provide OASO with advance notification. OASO has also assigned personnel to closely monitor restart efforts. [II.A]