

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

November 9, 2001

TO: K. Fortenberry, Technical Director

FROM: D. Grover and M. Sautman, Hanford Site Representatives

SUBJ: Activity Report for the Week Ending November 9, 2001

Mr. Sautman was out of the office this week. Messrs. Gwal and Graham were onsite conducting a review of electrical, instrumentation, and control systems.

Spent Nuclear Fuel Project (SNFP): While reviewing the SNFP response to a surface defect identified on the K-East basin wall during removal of an adjacent concrete pad to support construction of the fuel transfer system, Mr. Grover identified an area of the basin wall which appeared to have been damaged during the pad removal. A walk down of the basin excavation area confirmed some superficial damage caused to the concrete basin wall as a result of the concrete sawing of the pad. DOE issued a partial approval of a JCO for these activities including a control not allowing cuts within 6 inches of the wall for cuts perpendicular to the wall to prevent any damage to the wall. This project implemented this by cutting the pad 6 inches away from the basin wall to serve as a guideline. However, it appears that the taper at the top of the wall was not considered in laying out this cut. When the parallel cut was performed in an area where the pad was particularly thick, the saw ran into the basin wall at the base of the taper. It is not clear whether the inaccurate location of this cut resulted in cutting within 6 inches of the wall for perpendicular cuts. Subsequently, the contractor has initiated the event investigation and critique process to determine if the controls were adequately implemented and if there are any authorization basis implications. (III-A)

Plutonium Finishing Plant: During the DNFSB staff review on electrical, instrumentation, and control systems, a high-impedance ground fault was identified on the system associated with one of the power transformers. PFP engineering staff confirmed that this situation has existed for approximately one month. If left unattended this problem has the potential to become more serious, potentially resulting in an electrical fire. Other concerns identified at PFP include inadequate separation of general service and important to safety power loads and distributed control systems. Also PFP has not renewed the plant electrical calculations since major modifications to the system have been completed. (III-A)

Secretary of Energy Visit: Secretary of Energy Spencer Abraham visited the site on Wednesday. During the meeting with DOE employees Secretary Abraham briefly discussed the mission and priorities of the department.

cc: Board Members