

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

October 27, 2000

TO: J. Kent Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: Paul F. Gubanc and David T. Moyle, Oak Ridge Site Representatives
SUBJ: Activity Report for Week Ending October 27, 2000

Staff members Dermot Winters and Russ Green were at Oak Ridge to attend a final design review for a transuranic waste treatment facility to be built on the Oak Ridge Reservation.

A. Y-12 Contractor Transition: On November 1, BWXT Y-12 (BWXT) will officially take control of the Y-12 Plant from Lockheed Martin Energy Systems (LMES). This week, we have concluded initial meetings with most of the BWXT technical managers. We also observed transition status meetings amongst BWXT, LMES, and the NNSA Y-12 Area Office (YAO). Key observations:

1. The new BWXT managers have gained a healthy appreciation for the magnitude of the issues each is inheriting and all seem to be aware of and focused on the same near-term themes communicated to the Board and YAO by BWXT top management.
2. A recurring and overarching observation from many of the BWXT managers is the need to infuse project management practices and principles in all aspects of their work at Y-12. We and YAO strongly concur and we anticipate that significant effort over the next several months will be made to assure that all involved personnel (both YAO and BWXT) are familiar with project management fundamentals (e.g., terminology, metrics, tools). Mr. Gubanc attended one such familiarization session conducted by YAO this week.
3. BWXT has embraced LMES' effort to reestablish the "Design Authority" function within Engineering by reissuing the existing Y-12 design authority policy. In doing so, BWXT added several expectations specifically targeted at assuring effective implementation. We and YAO cautioned BWXT to be alert that several Y-12 organizations who contribute significantly to the design basis (e.g., fire protection engineering, criticality safety) have not historically reported to Engineering and may not be well practiced in working through the design authority. This organizational separation continues under the BWXT structure.
4. BWXT does not intend to supplant the existing emergency response team with its own managers until they have had time to become more familiar with their facilities and spaces. BWXT has targeted March 2001 to complete their emergency management qualifications.
5. The BWXT "challenge team" review of the HEU Materials Facility is expected to issue its report next week. With this exception, however, rigorous assessments of other ongoing Y-12 projects were not conducted during transition. We and YAO both suggested to BWXT that they specifically evaluate these other projects.
6. BWXT has delivered all the prescribed safety-related contract deliverables to YAO for approval (e.g., ISM Program Description, S/RIDs, Authorization Agreements, QA and Radiation Protection Plans). The cognizant BWXT managers advise that most of the changes from the predecessor documents were largely administrative and not technical in nature. (1-C)

B. Y-12 Enriched Uranium Operations - Reduction: Mr. Moyle discussed with LMES and YAO the need for the reduction process data collection plan to clarify the purpose of data reviews after each run and to define roles and responsibilities in determining the safety to proceed. Specifically, since the input parameters will vary with each run (e.g., moisture content, batch size), the results from each run need to be evaluated against predicted values and not bounding temperature and pressure limits. A multi-disciplined team would seem most appropriate to perform this function.(2-A)

cc: Board Members