

## DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

October 31, 1997

**MEMORANDUM FOR:** G.W. Cunningham, Technical Director  
**FROM:** T. Dwyer and H. Waugh, Pantex Site Representatives  
**SUBJECT:** Pantex Plant Activity Report for Week Ending October 31, 1997

**DNFSB Activity Summary:** Timothy Dwyer and Harry Waugh were on site all week. Outside Expert Dave Boyd was on site all week observing the Dynamic Balancer IRT.

**Dynamic Balancer:** The Dynamic Balancer Independent Review Team (IRT) completed its efforts this week; their final report should be issued next week. Preliminary findings included one prestart: inadequate training of PTs. Eight post-starts were also identified, most involving inadequate conduct of operations, particularly conduct of maintenance. None of the IRT findings identified technical shortcomings with the Dynamic Balancer. However, one technical pre-start finding was identified by the Project Team prior to IRT initiation: the W87 POI fixture base weld was discovered to be incomplete. It is not clear how the Project Team intends to deal with this discovery. DP-3 (Stello), AAO, and Board staff met to review progress against the Path Forward outlined in the Board letter to DP-1 dated October 15, 1997. A consensus was reached that Project Team efforts to date (both completed and in progress) met the intent of the steps outlined.

**Pit Storage:** DP-3 (Stello) met with AAO, M&H, and DOE-AL personnel to begin preparing for an expected December Board visit regarding pit storage issues. One key point DP-3 raised was the need to differentiate between storage requirements for strategic reserve pits versus surplus pits. DOE personnel agreed to try to develop a cohesive pit storage story for presentation during the Board visit, including justification of continued use of ALR8 containers in Zone 4 until a path forward can be implemented. Meeting details have been provided to the Board staff.

**W69 Program:** W69 dismantlement restart was authorized last Friday; M&H efforts to resume operations were thwarted until Monday morning due to failure to properly update the Facility Pre-Operational Checklist and failure to properly update the Nuclear Material Control Center computer to recognize/track several "new" configurations of parts. Following Monday's restart, further difficulties were encountered -- misoperation of one tool and failure of another led to two additional shutdowns of the W69 dismantlement lines.

**Personnel Matters:** The AAO manager has appointed H. Chavez to a special detail (120 days) to drive the Pantex S/RID program. In addition, the AAO manager has appointed Lead Facility Representative S. Dolezal acting Branch Chief for Weapons Quality Division during Chavez's detail. Appointing a dedicated S/RID lead and promoting a Facility Representative to a high visibility leadership position are considered positive steps for both programs. However, due to this appointment and recent attrition, the Pantex Facility Representative program is down to six personnel (plus a Branch Chief and a contractor/mentor), two of whom are not yet qualified.

**W76/SS-21 Program:** The W76/SS-21 Program Plan (dated September 1996/Milestone 1) has slipped. A recovery plan to regain the original schedule has been drafted, mainly at the insistence of DOE-AL/WPD. (The Pantex program manager also favors this plan.) The biggest obstacle to recovery of the schedule is lack of resources at LANL to devote to the program. Tooling is also a potential problem -- as tooling falls behind, other dependent subtask schedules will also slip to the right. First Surveillance Unit (FSU) is now (still) projected for October, 1998.

**W79 Type 6B Program:** The W79 Project Team has issued a proposed revision to the W79 schedule reflecting the changes and additional Type 6B dissolution activity reported in last week's letter. This schedule shows NESS/SE activity taking place from January 22 through April 16, 1998. Resistance to this schedule from DOE-AL, especially WPD, is expected.

## **Attachment**

### **Upcoming Pantex Events:**

October 27-November 7 -- M&H Internal Training Audit [in progress]\*\*

November 6 -- Nuclear Weapons Council Standing and Safety Committee site visit

November 6 -- Pit Thermal Meeting\*\*

November 17-21 -- NESD Annual Appraisal

[unknown] -- Dynamic Balancer startup\*\*

December 2 -- General Zettler visit\*\*

December 10 -- Pit Thermal Meeting\*\*

[unknown] -- NES Electrical Tester Master Study completion\*\*

January 5-16 -- W56 SIRR

January 22 -- W79 NESS starts\*\*

NOTES:    \*\* highlights events which are new listings or for which schedule has changed