

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

November 19, 2004

TO: J. Kent Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: R. Todd Davis/Donald Owen, Oak Ridge Site Representatives
SUBJ: Activity Report for Week Ending November 19, 2004

A. Recommendation 93-6. The Board's October 27th letter noted concern with apparent lack of DOE support of commitments made in response to Recommendation 93-6, *Maintaining Access to Nuclear Weapons Expertise in the Defense Nuclear Facilities Complex*, including not continuing a program of interviews and archiving activities at Y-12. This week, BWXT reinitiated their Knowledge Preservation Program, originally developed in response to Recommendation 93-6, to identify key personnel, interview the individuals and archive that information as well as other relevant information for future use. The first individual, having more than 30 years of assembly/disassembly experience and nearing retirement, was interviewed by technical experts. BWXT personnel noted to the site reps. that important anecdotal information for a future weapon disassembly activity was identified during the interview and will be archived.

B. Oxide Conversion Facility. As reported on November 5th, YSO had raised an issue regarding differences between "test procedures" intended for initial system operation with hazardous materials (i.e., enriched uranium, hydrogen fluoride and hydrogen) and the normal operating procedures that have been used for training and practice. It was not clear what expectations would apply for training/practice for the test procedures prior to resuming the BWXT Operational Readiness Review (ORR). The site reps. had inquired with YSO management on the matter. This week, YSO and BWXT management informed the site reps. that the test procedures are not planned to be demonstrated for the BWXT ORR. However, training and practice on the test procedures will be completed and these procedures will be demonstrated for the YSO ORR. BWXT management indicated the intention to complete final practice of the test procedures using the management/engineering oversight protocols employed for the integrated runs of the normal operating procedures.

As reported last week, resumption of the BWXT ORR was delayed to the week of November 29th. Recent equipment problems appeared to be resolved in the integrated run conducted this week. Another integrated run (using the normal operating procedures) is planned for the week of November 29th and the ORR is expected to resume on December 6th.

C. Wet Chemistry Restart. After numerous attempts at startup for the Secondary Extraction process (see November 5th, August 13th and July 23rd reports), a full run of the system was completed this week that yielded satisfactory product solution. This leaves Primary Extraction as the remaining wet chemistry process to complete startup.

D. Purification Facility. Last week, the site reps. toured the new Purification Facility. This is a chemically hazardous facility that will be used to purify a special material. BWXT is nearing the end of construction activities and integrated system testing should begin soon. Facility management and operators are currently training and developing facility procedures. Readiness reviews and facility startup are planned for Spring '05.

cc
Board Members