

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

October 13, 2000

TO: J. K. Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: D. F. Owen, RFETS Site Representative
SUBJECT: RFETS Activity Report for the Week Ending October 13, 2000

Plutonium Stabilization and Packaging System (PuSPS). The PuSPS project has experienced delays in completing testing of the PuSPS Data Management System, a system for recording stabilization times and temperatures and other system data. PuSPS startup is now currently scheduled for early January 2001. The PuSPS project has confirmed that the sintered metal filter in the inner can bung will not confine contamination as had been assumed and determined that corrective action is necessary. PuSPS project personnel have proposed retrofitting a new filter on the approximately 1,700 bungs manufactured to date. (3-A)

Inner Tent Chamber (ITC) Startup. Operations in the new ITC in Building 771, employing plasma-arc cutting of gloveboxes and related equipment, were started late this week. The site rep. observed these operations including staging of the first, uncontaminated, glovebox in the ITC and plasma-arc cutting of a portion of the glovebox prior to securing for the week. Operations to complete this glovebox and three other gloveboxes (including contaminated gloveboxes) will be under the controls and increased oversight required by the ITC Startup Plan. This is a significant milestone for RFETS in application of enhanced engineered safety controls for glovebox size reduction. (3-B)

Building 906 Startup. Following verification of closure of all DOE Operational Readiness Review pre-start findings, DOE-RFFO authorized unrestricted operations to store transuranic waste in Building 906. (3-A)

Work Control. As noted on August 25 and September 15, 2000, RFETS (and Building 771 in particular) has been experiencing a number of occurrences wherein work scope changes have been performed by operations personnel that have not been formally defined, evaluated for hazards, and properly authorized by facility management. An internal Kaiser-Hill independent assessment of work control in Building 771 has been completed and attention by top Kaiser-Hill management has been dedicated in Building 771.

The site rep. and staff inquired on actions being taken at RFETS to address the work control problems. Building 771 has established a team of technical personnel dedicated to mentor crews on emerging work control issues or questions. Training to improve work control decision making by workers and supervisors through scenario evaluation has been performed in Building 771 and similar training is planned for other nuclear facilities at RFETS. Additionally in Building 771, daily crew meetings, weekly all-hands meetings and Building management walk-arounds are to specifically address proper work control. Kaiser-Hill management indicated that other RFETS nuclear facilities will consider use of the actions taken in Building 771 over the course of the next few months. (1-C)