

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

August 25, 2006

TO: K. Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: R. Quirk and W. Linzau, Hanford Site Representatives
SUBJECT: Activity Report for the Week Ending August 25, 2006

Tank Farms: The Expert Review Panel for the Demonstration Bulk Vitrification System (DBVS) reported that there were no findings that warrant project termination. However, they identified 15 major technical issues that will result in a failure of the DBVS to meet established performance requirements unless they are addressed in the near-term.

The site reps attended the management review of the 242-A Evaporator hot run scheduled to commence next week. The contractor will complete the final punch-list items this weekend. The Vice-President of Waste Feed Operations instituted senior supervisory watches for the initial portions of the startup procedure and has stressed to his management the need to ensure interfaces with other contractors are well coordinated and the need to minimize nuisance alarms.

The contractor completed a special assessment of electrical safety this week. The assessment is in response to an August 2, 2006, DOE Memorandum for validating that contractors are using sound work practices when working on or near electrical systems or equipment. The memorandum contained lines of inquiry that were used to perform this assessment. One of the conclusions of the assessment was that the work planning qualification card does not specifically reference the company electrical safety procedure.

Plutonium Finishing Plant (PFP): The site rep accompanied the system engineer on a quarterly vital safety system walkdown of the HVAC system. Two minor discrepancies were noted during the walkdown involving calibration stickers on pressure gauges. Although the system appeared to adequately fulfill its safety function, there were indications of age-related degradation. One of the 232-5Z exhaust fans (EF-4) was inoperable and may require replacement. Many of the HEPA filters are approaching the end of their design life.

K Basins Closure (KBC): The project presented their plan for accelerating the turnover of the 100 K Area to the River Corridor Closure Contractor. The plan includes transporting the untreated sludge in vented containers to T Plant for storage instead of processing the waste in the Cold Vacuum Drying Facility. The proposed treatment method would use a process similar to the current baseline approach but at a lower temperature and pressure. The plan also promotes a more traditional demolition approach of the K East Basin. Additionally, the plan includes assumptions, such as T Plant will meet the performance category requirements and the startup will not require an operational readiness review (ORR), but no formal hazard analysis has been performed. The plan was presented with expectation that the Richland Field Office would make a decision prior to September 11, 2006, after which the cost quoted would no longer be valid.

The site rep attended the familiarization training provided for the contractor ORR team for the hose-in-hose transfer system. The training was effective and comprehensive.