



United States Department of Energy

Office of Public Affairs

Washington, D.C. 20585

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Wednesday, May 16, 2007

Former DOE Employee Dr. Stephen Hanauer Receives Prestigious Secretary's Gold Award for Distinguished 55-year Career in Public Service

WASHINGTON, DC – The U.S. Department of Energy today awarded the prestigious Secretary's Gold Award to former DOE employee Dr. Stephen Hanauer, who served 55 years in public service in the field of nuclear energy.

“Stephen's technical expertise in the areas of nuclear safety and facility design has helped further the Department's mission to safely and responsibly dispose of high-level radioactive waste and spent nuclear fuel,” DOE Director of the Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management Ward Sproat said. “Stephen's dedication and long-term commitment to solving this major environmental issue and the ease with which he explains the most complex technical subjects will serve the Department well for years to come.”

The award, the highest award given by the Secretary, states: “In recognition of your distinguished 55-year career in public service the Nation has gained from invaluable and wise counsel to the Department of Energy, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the Oak Ridge National Laboratory, the Yucca Mountain Project; and to professionals in the fields of nuclear engineering, safety and waste management. You have brought credit to yourself and you have immeasurably benefited the United States of America.”

Most recently, Dr. Hanauer served as Senior Technical Advisor to the Project Manager of the Yucca Mountain Project in Las Vegas. He moved to Las Vegas in 2002 after serving eight years as Senior Technical Advisor to the Director of the Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management (OCRWM) in Washington, DC.

Dr. Hanauer began his career at DOE's Oak Ridge National Laboratory after receiving his bachelor and master's degree in electrical engineering at Purdue University. In 1960, Dr. Hanauer completed his PhD in physics at the University of Tennessee. In 1965, he accepted a position at the University of Tennessee, where he taught nuclear engineering courses. From 1965-1970, he was appointed to serve on the Advisory Committee on Research Safety to the Atomic Energy Commission (precursor agency to the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). In 1970, Dr. Hanauer became Technical Advisory for the Executive Director for Operations for NRC. He continued to pursue teaching at Catholic University in Washington, DC.

Throughout his career, Dr. Hanauer has held particular interest in nuclear facility safety. He was named as the head of the special NRC review group investigating the 1975 Brown's Ferry Reactor Fire at the Tennessee Valley Authority's facility.

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He was also asked to work at the Emergency Operations Center immediately after the Three-Mile Island reactor incident, before being asked to supervise the new Generic Safety Issues Program at NRC Headquarters in Washington, DC. At the NRC, Dr. Hanauer served as manager of the Human Factors Safety Division and later as Director of the Division of Safety Technology in the Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation. In addition, he taught a summer course at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Center for Advanced Nuclear Systems for nearly 30 years.

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