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## Office of Public Affairs

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### **DOE Awards \$3 Million Contract to Oak Ridge Associated Universities for Expert Review of Yucca Mountain Work**

*Funding is for remainder of 2006, with at least another \$3 million in 2007*

**WASHINGTON, DC** – The Department of Energy’s Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management (OCRWM) today announced the selection of Oak Ridge Associated Universities/Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education (ORAU/ORISE) to provide independent expert reviews of scientific and technical work on the Yucca Mountain Project.

“The Yucca Mountain Project will be based on sound science. By bringing in Oak Ridge for independent reviews to assess our technical work, we ensure the highest level of expertise and credibility as we move the project forward,” OCRWM’s Acting Director Paul Golan said. “This award gives us access to ORAU/ORISE’s established brain trust of academic and research institutions to help us meet our mission and our legal obligation to license, construct, and open Yucca Mountain as the nation’s repository for spent nuclear fuel.”

ORAU is a not-for-profit consortium that includes 96 doctoral degree-granting institutions and 11 associate member universities. Together, these institutions produce one-third of the nation’s science and engineering PhD’s. ORAU operates ORISE, a Department of Energy institute dedicated to furthering scientific initiatives and education in the United States.

“We are excited about this opportunity, which is a further extension of the capabilities we’ve demonstrated in peer reviews for many state and federal agencies, including the Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Homeland Security, and DOE’s Office of Science,” Dr. Ronald Townsend, President of ORAU and Director of ORISE, said. “We also perform independent verifications for the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, and we have extensive experience in designing and implementing processes that ensure independence and support credibility through rigorous review.”

OCRWM is providing \$3 million in funding to ORAU/ORISE for the remainder of Fiscal Year 2006. In addition, at least \$3 million will be available next year for ORAU/ORISE. OCRWM will identify specific products or activities for review and provide a scope of work, based on which ORAU/ORISE will identify experts in appropriate disciplines and coordinate the activities of review teams.

**U.S. Department of Energy, Office of Public Affairs, Washington, D.C.**