

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

February 25, 1999

TO: G.W. Cunningham, Technical Director

FROM: Paul F. Gubanc, Oak Ridge Site Representative

SUBJ: Activity Report for Week Ending February 26, 1999

I will be out of the office Friday, February 26, on annual leave.

A. Lockheed-Martin (L-M) Integrated Safety Management (ISM): On Thursday and Friday, Y-12 hosted another L-M ISM workshop, specifically focused on some of the generic issues facing L-M companies conducting DOE work. The topics discussed included Issues Management and Management Self-Assessment. At my suggestion, LMES invited the Director of Savannah River's Tritium operations to address the group on their self-assessment program. I also provided LMES a paper on corrective action programs which they used to frame some of their discussions. (I-A.)

B. Y-12 Calutrons: This week, DOE Oak Ridge publically announced its intent to place into "cold standby" the last remaining operational calutrons at Oak Ridge citing their advanced age, high overhead costs and lack of sufficient customers to keep the calutrons economically viable. I toured the calutron facility (Y-12 Building 9204-3) on Thursday and collected the following details:

1. The mission of the calutrons has been to separate gram quantities of stable isotopes for research and radioisotope production (i.e., feed stock) purposes. The 9204-3 calutrons have previously separated transuranics but last did so in the late 1970's.
2. The calutrons were last operated for a production run in mid-1998. A sizeable inventory of stable isotopes currently exists although some specific isotopes are in very limited supply.
3. While research calutrons exist elsewhere in the U.S., their production levels are measured in micrograms. These production level calutrons are the last known to be operational with the exception of those in Sverdlovsk, Russia.
4. The machine shop, wet chemistry and material handling labs needed to support stable isotope production are all housed in 9204-3. Operating costs (NE-70 funded) are \$5 million/year.
5. While not currently supporting any defense nuclear-related mission, the calutrons have previously, and could again, be utilized to support such missions. Once placed into "cold standby", however, the key remaining operating staff will be reassigned and the equipment preventive maintenance allowed to lapse. Resumption will become significantly harder. (II)

C. Organizational Changes:

1. On February 23, ORNL appointed Mr. Jim Rushton as the Project Manager for the U-233 Inspection and Repackaging Project at ORNL Building 3019. While a positive step for the U-233 project, Mr. Rushton was previously assigned to the U-233 remediation project at the Molten Salt Reactor Experiment (MSRE) which currently has its own operational difficulties (i.e., unexpected equipment and material form differences). The Board staff will need to closely monitor MSRE's progress to ensure Mr. Rushton's absence there is not deleterious.
2. On February 26, Mr. Joe Parks, the ORO Assistant Manager for Enrichment Facilities retired. The enrichment facilities office will now report into the Assistant Manager for Project and Technical Services, Mr. George Benedict. (I-B.2.)

cc: Board Members