

## DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

February 3, 2017

**TO:** Steven Stokes, Technical Director  
**FROM:** Bradford Sharpless, Idaho Cleanup Project Cognizant Engineer  
**SUBJECT:** Idaho National Laboratory (INL) Report for January 2017

**DNFSB Staff Activity:** Board's staff members D. Shrestha and B. Weathers were on site at INL during January 23–27, to observe the Generator Site Technical Review (GSTR). Personnel from Nuclear Waste Partnership, the management and operating contractor for the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP), and the Department of Energy's (DOE) Carlsbad Field Office conducted the review. GSTRs are a corrective action in response to the February 2014 radiological release event at WIPP. The reviews are intended to ensure that waste generator sites are performing waste treatment and packaging operations in accordance with their approved program plans and operating procedures, and to verify that DOE field offices are performing appropriate oversight of transuranic waste operations. The GSTR team expects to issue its INL report in March 2017.

The Board's staff provided an average of 2 man-weeks per month of on-site oversight for the first four months of fiscal year 2017.

**Advanced Mixed Waste Treatment Project (AMWTP).** On January 30, a fire alarm activated at AMWTP's building WMF-636, the Retrieval Containment Enclosure (RCE). AMWTP's Nuclear Facility Manager subsequently notified DOE's Facility Representative of the situation.

At approximately 1630 on January 30, operators were starting up an air handling unit (AHU) for the RCE. While this activity was in progress, an air duct smoke detector alarm signal was received in the RCE's control room. The Retrieval Shift Supervisor directed all personnel to evacuate the facility and verified that the INL Fire Department was responding. While evacuating the RCE, operators noted a puff of smoke coming from an air supply vent.

Operators who had been in the RCE at the time of the alarm were directed to exit the facility via the nearest safe exit, located on the west side of the RCE. Upon reaching the exit, the Radiological Control Shift Supervisor directed the operators to remove their outer shoe covers before proceeding through the door to the building's exterior, then to standby for Radiological Control Technicians to assist in conducting contamination surveys and potential decontamination activities.

At approximately 1640, the Retrieval Shift Supervisor verified that all personnel had exited the building. He then contacted the Advanced Mixed Waste Treatment Facility and directed the shutdown of AHU #3. When firefighters arrived and investigated the scene, they determined that there was no active fire or current emergency and that it was safe for AMWTP personnel to reenter the facility.

During a fact finding session on January 31, it was noted that the three AHUs supplying air to the RCE have had a history of operational problems during periods of cold weather. A work order was generated after the fact finding session to investigate the supply fans and to determine the source of the smoke observed by the operators.