

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

February 3, 2017

TO: Steven A. Stokes, Technical Director
FROM: Douglas J. Brown, Cognizant Engineer
SUBJECT: Sandia National Laboratories Report for January 2017

Staff Activity at Sandia National Laboratories (SNL). There were no onsite Defense Nuclear Facility Safety Board (Board) staff reviews or oversight visits in January. On January 10, 2017, three Board staff members attended the W76 Nuclear Explosive Safety (NES) Study Kickoff to evaluate the ongoing W76 operations against NES rules and requirements in Department of Energy (DOE) and National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) directives. On January 30, 2017, five Board staff members started the week-long WR708 course, Survey of Weapons Development and Technology, as part of staff member professional development.

Annular Core Research Reactor Facility (ACRRF) Calibration Issue. While performing an annual calibration on a Wide Range (WR) instrument on January 18, 2017, a Reactor Operator (RO) adjusted the wrong potentiometer resulting in placing both WR instruments in an out-of-calibration condition. A formal fact finding was held. Contributing factors included lack of familiarity with new equipment and procedure changes when the new system was accepted, which removed the requirement for two ROs when performing the calibration procedure. The path forward includes additional training, directive change specifying performance of calibration by two ROs, recalibration of instrumentation invoking general limiting condition for operations. Although the event has been determined to be non-reportable, the cognizant engineer plans to review this issue.

SNL Contract Transition Update. On January 18, 2017, NNSA issued the Notice to Proceed to begin transition activities for the management and operation of SNL by National Technology & Engineering Solutions of Sandia, LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Honeywell International. There were no reported protests to the contract selection. Dr. Stephen Younger will serve as SNL Director, and Mr. David Douglass will be the Deputy Director.

Sandia Field Office (SFO) Hiring Initiative. SFO is advertising to fill two Federal staff assignments. The first advertised position is for a Management Analyst to serve as a Program Manager for the technical capability and qualifications program for federal technical staffs. Additional duties include evaluate, develop, and/or maintain integrated systems and processes for monitoring, controlling, and reporting on a variety of programs, activities and initiatives; provide subject expertise in the area of performance assurance; and lead the development, integration, and maintenance of the fiscal year Engineering group Oversight Assessment Plan and Schedule, program direction for budget, and supporting service contracts. The second advertised position is for a General Engineer/Physical Scientist to serve as a Senior Facility Representative (FR) with responsibilities for program management, technical monitoring, providing advice, and conducting evaluations of all aspects of operations of the Technical Area (TA)-V nuclear facilities. This will be in addition to the one existing FR for TA-V. These efforts may, however, be affected by the current Federal hiring freeze.