

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

July 7, 2000

TO: J. Kent Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: Paul F. Gubanc and David T. Moyle, Oak Ridge Site Representatives
SUBJ: Activity Report for Week Ending July 7, 2000

The office was closed Tuesday for the federal holiday.

A. Y-12 Building 9212 Reduction Process: LMES intends to restart the metal reduction process in late August. The Pressure Safety Task Team (PSTT) has signed an exemption package which will allow limited use of the current reduction vessels until test data can be obtained to design a code compliant vessel. The PSTT now has concluded that removal of personnel from the room during reactor firing provides adequate protection and is no longer requiring an additional missile barrier. LMES intends to start its management self assessment (MSA) of process readiness on July 27. The test plan for initial reduction runs and data collection is not complete, and LMES had not planned to demonstrate test procedures for the MSA. We have suggested to the test manager that given its safety implications, the adequacy of the test program and associated procedures and controls should be practiced and demonstrated prior to declaring readiness. (2-A)

B. New Technologies for Enriched Uranium Operations (EUO): On June 22, LMES presented to DOE a proposal to implement new technologies at EUO to provide purified metal and meet mission requirements. On Thursday this week, we visited ORNL to observe the type of equipment which LMES intends to procure for metal purification. It appears that an extensive amount of development work will be required to implement this technology in a production environment. Next Monday we will observe the state of three additional technologies at Y-12 Development. Mr. Moyle will provide more details to the Board in a briefing scheduled for next Thursday.

On July 13, LMES is expected to formally submit to DOE a "mission assurance plan" which outlines the new plans for EUO restart including the deployment of these new technologies. A DOE-led, design labs supported, independent team will review this plan on July 13 and 14. (2-A)

C. DOE Y-12 Staffing: On July 6, DOE posted three GS-13/14 Y-12 Facility Rep vacancy announcements to backfill recent transfers and promotions although it is limited only to current employees of the Oak Ridge Operations Office. We've suggested that DOE reconsider this limitation especially recognizing the success of its Fac Reps recruited from outside DOE. On a separate matter, the DOE Executive Resources Board has disapproved DOE-ORO's long-awaited selection for an excepted service authorization basis expert at Y-12. The path forward on filling this position is unclear. (1-B)

D. Y-12 Management Field Presence: After months of repeatedly urging DOE and LMES management to improve their field presence, we are finally seeing some indications that certain managers are responding. Unfortunately, too many others continue their trend of not entering areas where enriched uranium is handled. In particular, the managers of DOE ES&H, LMES ES&H and LMES Engineering have achieved *over one year* without entering a single material access area. (1-B)

cc: Board Members