

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

December 3, 1998

TO: G.W. Cunningham, Technical Director

FROM: Paul F. Gubanc, Oak Ridge Site Representative

SUBJ: Activity Report for Week Ending December 4, 1998

I was on annual leave Friday.

A. DOE-EH Review of Y-12: This week the DOE-EH review team returned to Y-12 to conduct factual accuracy reviews with the site and prepare their final report. Most of the review's findings validate previously recognized problems except in one area; the review team identified several major deficiencies which suggest that emergency preparedness is in need of significant improvement. A formal exit meeting with DOE-Oak Ridge and LMES management is planned for December 7. The final report should be issued by February 1999 and is expected to formally request a corrective action plan. Per an EH representative, the extent of EH followup is still being actively discussed internally as the DOE formulates their response to Board Recommendation 98-1.

B. Y-12 Depleted Uranium (DU) Operations: On December 1, I toured DU casting, rolling and forming operations with the cognizant DOE Facility Representative. Observations include:

1. The DOE Fac. Rep. was very knowledgeable of these facilities, their metallurgical processes, and the assigned operating staff (on par, if not surpassing, the cognizant contractor management). He identified numerous examples where the contractor had improved its performance in response to DOE oversight and criticism.
2. Both rolling and forming operations were observed. The equipment operators demonstrated high levels of proficiency, cooperation and coordination. Very few procedures were observed to be in use.
3. Building 9204-4 (DU forming) houses large amounts of equipment of all sizes which are either inactive or awaiting repair (e.g., furnaces, presses, lathes, forklifts). Efforts are currently underway to relocate operations housed in Building 9204-4 to other locations on site and transfer the building and its contents over to deactivation and decommissioning.

C. Visit by Secretary of Energy: On Monday, November 30, Energy Secretary Bill Richardson visited Oak Ridge accompanied by both US senators and several congressmen from Tennessee. The major themes of Mr. Richardson's comments to the local press and Oak Ridge employees included:

1. Oak Ridge has many successes (e.g., Y-12 restart) and its future includes several major, ongoing missions which he expects to keep here.
2. Major decisions on Oak Ridge contracting and tritium production will be made soon. Mr. Richardson is striving to gather input from all stakeholders to assure informed decisions.
3. DOE wants to provide stability to its major sites. Additional large cuts are not envisioned.
4. The DOE complex's aging workforce and national cutbacks in science education (i.e., the future workforce) are major concerns which must be addressed by DOE.

cc: Board members