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TRIDEC concerned about DOE land-transfer rules

Annette Cary, Tri-City Herald

December 3, 2013

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The Department of Energy is throwing up roadblocks to the efficient transfer of excess land at Hanford and other nuclear weapons sites with new regulations, according to the Energy Communities Alliance and the Tri-City Development Council.

"DOE is releasing regulations that negatively impact communities," said the Energy Communities Alliance in a letter this week to Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz. The alliance includes the Hanford Communities, a coalition of Hanford-area local governments.

DOE disagrees, saying the changes are meant to clarify existing

regulations.

TRIDEC is concerned because it is waiting for a decision on a request for about 1,600 acres of Hanford land, most of it proposed for green manufacturing or energy production just north of Richland. The land, like much of the 586-square-mile nuclear reservation, was not used directly for Hanford's mission of weapons plutonium production.

As portions of environmental cleanup at Hanford are finished and the work force reduced, the industrial use of the land could create a couple of thousand jobs, preferably high-tech jobs, to help replace those lost at Hanford.

TRIDEC, designated by the federal government as a community reuse organization for Hanford, made the request in cooperation with local governments two and a half years ago and anticipates a final decision could take another year, said Gary Petersen, TRIDEC vice president of Hanford programs.

The new regulations, issued as a final rule to modify and replace an interim rule from 2000, take effect Dec. 13.

The changes were limited to revisions to clarify regulations, and DOE and the Office of Management and Budget believe that no additional public notice or opportunity for public comment was required, said Steven Thai, a DOE spokesman in Washington, D.C. Public comment was accepted after the interim rule was proposed 13 years ago.

The changes will apply only to proposals for land transfers made after the final rule takes effect later this month, he said.

However, TRIDEC is skeptical. It's not clear that earlier proposals would be grandfathered in under the interim rule requirements, Petersen said, and TRIDEC also has concerns about how the changes would affect possible additional requests for land in future years.

The Hanford Comprehensive Land Use Plan proposes saving about 90 percent of Hanford land for conservation and preservation as environmental cleanup is completed. That leaves tens of thousands of acres designated for industrial development, some of which TRIDEC could propose uses for in future years.

It's imperative that DOE act on land transfer requests from local communities more quickly so they can create new opportunities, according to the Energy Communities Alliance letter. But the changed regulations will diminish DOE's ability to make land transfers in a timely manner, it said.

Eliminating a 90-day deadline for DOE to make an initial response to land transfer requests from local government and community reuse organizations and removing indemnification protections from communities are among the alliance's concerns. The new rules also attempt to clarify which land could be transferred, a change that does not appear to affect Hanford.

But TRIDEC is concerned that it may have to provide information to DOE about the specific use of transferred property, even though DOE has not yet said exactly what land would be available. It also has concerns about keeping a specific company interested in using the land without a definite time frame from DOE about when land would be available.

TRIDEC has given DOE general parameters for how it would use 1,341 acres of land near Richland, which it proposed dividing into a large site for one or two enterprises providing 2,000 to 3,000 jobs combined and three smaller sites that would support another 400 to 500 jobs. That land would not be used for agricultural or to operate a small modular nuclear reactor, Petersen said.

A 300-acre parcel requested near Energy Northwest would be used for a clean energy park.

Petersen also is concerned that some DOE officials appear determined to obtain the maximum appraised value for DOE land, which was not Congress's intent in allowing the land to be transferred for the economic development of communities affected by the downsizing of DOE projects, he said.

TRIDEC and the Energy Communities Alliance said local communities should have been given a chance to comment on changes to the regulations.

"There is no impact to DOE to delay the effective date of the regulation and seek public comment," said the alliance letter.

Our Voice: DOE's land transfer rules suffer from lack of input

The Bellingham Herald
December 8, 2013

[LINK](#)

The Department of Energy needs to restart its efforts to revise rules for making excess land at nuclear weapons sites available for economic development.

And this time, DOE should seek input from the people who must live with the rules.

The department has forged ahead with rule changes without engaging members of the public most affected by land-transfer policies. As a result, DOE has made it more difficult for communities near the nation's nuclear sites to recover from cuts in federal spending.

That's the opposite of what DOE should be doing.

Energy officials contend that the changes were limited to revisions to clarify regulations, and DOE and the Office of Management and Budget

believe that no additional public notice or opportunity for public comment was required.

But the goal is not simply to meet the minimum requirements for public participation. It's to create jobs to replace the ones lost when the government shrunk the nuclear weapons program.

Admittedly, DOE isn't in the job-creation business, nor should it be. But it ought to effectively administer the programs Congress created to help communities dependent on weapons sites, such as the Tri-Cities, transition to a new economy.

The transfer of surplus lands for industrial use is designed to do just that. The Tri-City Development Council has plans to reuse 1,341 acres of land near Richland, which it proposed dividing into a large site for one or two enterprises providing 2,000 to 3,000 jobs combined and three smaller sites that would support another 400 to 500 jobs.

As the federal government's designated community reuse organization for Hanford, TRIDEC wouldn't own the land but facilitate transferring ownership to companies willing to create new jobs here.

But according to TRIDEC and the Energy Communities Alliance, DOE's new regulations are creating roadblocks to the efficient transfer of excess land at Hanford and other nuclear weapons sites.

"DOE is releasing regulations that negatively impact communities," the Energy Communities Alliance recently said in a letter to Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz.

It's ludicrous that these issues are raised toward the end of the process. The revised rules are set to go into effect Friday. The situation could have been avoided by consulting the agencies affected by the proposed changes and learning about potential problems beforehand.

Handing policies down from on high without the input of the people who will implement the rules is asking for needless and easily avoided complications. Common sense should tell DOE as much.

The good news is it's not too late. "There is no impact to DOE to delay the effective date of the regulation and seek public comment," according to the alliance letter.

The alliance is right. But a negative impact is virtually guaranteed by not seeking public comment. DOE should change course now, while it's still easy.

Congress to unveil Defense bill deal

The Hill

December 9, 2013

[LINK](#)

House and Senate members will present details of a final Defense authorization bill on Monday that they hope to whip through both chambers this week.

Facing a Friday deadline, the Senate and House Armed Services Committees are abandoning regular order so the measure can be signed into law for a 52nd straight year.

The House is scheduled to complete its work for the year on Friday, giving members precious little time to finish.

The bill to be presented to both chambers will basically be offered as a take-it-or-leave-it bill.

It represents a compromise between the two committees, which worked on the measure in an informal conference.

The Senate will not have time to consider the hundreds of amendments that were filed to the initial Senate defense bill.

Instead, leaders hope they can "ping-pong" the bill between the chambers in order to get it to President Obama's desk. That would allow only minor changes to the legislation.

"We're assuming that this is a one volley game," House Armed Services ranking member Adam Smith (D-Wash.) said of the "ping-pong."

Senate Armed Services Chairman Carl Levin (D-Mich.), ranking member James Inhofe (R-Okla.) and House Armed Services Chairman Buck McKeon (R-Calif.) will hold a press conference at 4:30 p.m. Monday afternoon to announce the "comprehensive" National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) agreement and "propose a way forward to passage," according to a committee aide.

"Contrary to some press reports, the legislation will not be a 'slimmed down' bill, but a full NDAA," the aide said.

Smith is not expected to make it back to Washington in time for the press conference, according to another aide.

Senators can still opt to filibuster the measure, meaning the Defense leaders have no guarantee of success.

Lawmakers are rushing to pass the bill this week because it's been signed into law for 51 straight years and authorizes many key provisions like military pay raises, as well as roughly \$600 billion in Defense spending.

Smith warned there were a number of negative consequences if the measure doesn't pass this year, including disruptions to military pay, death benefits and military construction projects.

"I'd prefer the Senate to have done it in a regular order, conference

committee way," he said. "But we're down to the deadline, and if they don't do it in this way now, that bad stuff is going to happen."

The final details of several contentious issues on the bill have not yet been announced, but Smith told reporters that the "big four" leaders of the Armed Services panels weren't shying away from controversial issues on the legislation, such as what to do with the detainees at Guantanamo.

But provisions not already in one of the bills, like Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand's (D-N.Y.) push to take sexual assault cases outside the chain of command or a tougher Iran sanctions measure, are not likely to get into the final bill.

Senate may consider WIPP extension

Zack Ponce, Current-Argus

December 5, 2013

[LINK](#)

CARLSBAD >> Congressman Steve Pearce's proposal to expand the mission of the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant has a date with the Senate. Eddy County governments are sending a small delegation to Washington, DC, to drum up support for the bill. Pearce earlier this year introduced an amendment to the 2014 National Defense Authorization Act, which would expand WIPP's mission to allow for non-defense-related transuranic waste to be buried at the nuclear waste dump roughly 27 miles east of Carlsbad.

This Sunday, Carlsbad Mayor Dale Janway, Eddy County Commission chairman Jack Volpato and Eddy-Lea Alliance vice chairman John Heaton will leave for Washington to meet with U.S. congressmen and representatives from the Dept. of Energy, to voice their support of the amendment, which is held up in Conference Committee.

The U.S. Senate will resume consideration of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2014 on Monday, according to the Office of the Secretary of the Senate.

Pearce's amendment would change the definition of the type of waste WIPP could receive to "any non-defense Federal Government-owned transuranic waste that can be shown to meet the applicable criteria described in the document entitled 'Transuranic Waste Acceptance Criteria For The Waste Isolation Pilot Plant.'"

"This amendment does not alter the type or grade of waste handled by WIPP, maintaining restrictions to only federally-owned TRU waste that meets existing federal guidelines," Pearce said.

Sen. Martin Heinrich (D-NM) voiced his support for the amendment, while Sen. Tom Udall (D-NM) said he is in favor of working to improve WIPP.

"I'm willing to work with anyone on proposals to keep it strong -- as long as WIPP's primary mission remains disposing of defense waste, which is critical to our national security," Udall said. "Changes shouldn't delay

cleanup at Los Alamos or other defense facilities."

It is currently unknown if Pearce's amendment will make the final draft of the defense bill, especially since it was not attached to the Senate version. One thing that could inhibit its progress is a jurisdictional concern over whether the legislation should be considered by the Armed Services Committee or the Energy Committee, according to Jennifer Talhelm, communications director for Udall.

Despite the national debate, Carlsbad's delegation hopes the amendment eventually becomes law.

"We're going to be pushing our agenda to ensure that WIPP has a continued future and expand the usefulness of (the site)," Volpato said.

The majority of new TRU waste received by the facility is "orphan" commercial waste owned by the federal government and about 1,400 cubic meters of it exists, according to Heaton, who also leads the mayor's Nuclear Opportunities Task Force.

Some waste currently stored at Los Alamos National Laboratory falls into the category that is currently not allowed to be stored at WIPP.

Pearce, a five-term representative from the state's southern district, has been a major proponent of WIPP and originally introduced legislation to allow for additional waste storage at the facility in 2011.

The bill, H.R. 2367, was co-signed by Heinrich when he was a representative from the Albuquerque district but failed to make it out of subcommittee.

"WIPP plays an important role in keeping our nation safe and in bolstering the economy in the region," Heinrich said. "I fully support WIPP's mission and believe it is scientifically the right location to safely dispose of transuranic waste that meets the waste acceptance criteria."

Pearce reintroduced the legislation in May 2013, only to have his initiative suffer the same fate. He says it is crucial for the economy of Southeastern New Mexico.

"Under its current limited mission, WIPP is expected to start losing jobs as it runs out of material to process, impacting the local economy," Pearce said. "The amendment allows WIPP to accept the exact same kinds of waste from other federal sources, which is a sufficient change to protect WIPP jobs."

Heaton says the Permian Basin's underground salt deposits make WIPP the safest and best method to dispose of the nation's TRU waste.

"Salt requires no engineering barriers, it's the cheapest, encloses on itself and no water can go through it," Heaton said. "(No matter) how things progress politically, salt is capable of doing any of these things. We want WIPP to be the main waste repository."

Haley to DOE secretary: SRS needs proper funding

Derrek Asberry, Aiken Standard

December 6, 2013

[LINK](#)

Gov. Nikki Haley said she made it clear to Department of Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz that the 37 million gallons of waste at the Savannah River Site has to be taken care of. Haley spoke with the secretary in a face-to-face meeting in Washington, D.C. this week.

After the meeting, Haley spoke about her visit in a phone interview with the Aiken Standard. Haley said Moniz appears to be equally concerned with the SRS budget shortfall. Currently, environmental operations at the Site are financed by a \$318 million continuing resolution; SRS requested \$1.2 billion for the fiscal year.

"He made it very clear that in this next budget, he's working to push SRS waste cleanup and will do what it will take to get things back to their proper place at SRS," Haley told the Standard. "He is very well engaged in the Site and realizes the value of it."

Haley also shared the DOE secretary's views on the MOX facility. According to Haley, Moniz admitted that generating funding for the MOX facility is more difficult than other projects at the Site.

"We also spoke about the MOX facility, and that issue seems to be a little more difficult. He's concerned about the movement of it, but is working to find answers," Haley said.

Other topics the two discussed included the potential use of small modular reactors - or SMRs.

The reactors have an electricity output of less than 300 megawatts and are touted by supporters as a way to allow for less on-site construction and a way to increase economic efficiency.

SRS has recently been vying for a grant to bring SMRs to South Carolina. Haley, several other legislators and SRS representatives have all vocalized their support of SMRs.

Haley said she made it clear to Moniz that the Site is interested in bringing SMRs on board.

"We spoke about SMRs, and he knows we are interested in receiving the grant for them. We understand the significance of bringing them to SRS and Secretary Moniz knows that we are very anxious to do just that."

Haley said she communicated her appreciation of the reconsideration of Yucca Mountain as a waste repository, and that South Carolina expects to see a resolution.

In addition, Haley extended another invitation to Secretary Moniz to visit the Savannah River Site, which Moniz accepted. While a date has not yet

been set, Haley is confident that he will visit the Site.

"We have had lengthy and good conversations, and I felt that face-to-face meeting was necessary," Haley added. "I made it clear that our Site needs proper funding, and he seemed to be receptive of that. This was one of many conversations we plan to have."

Y-12/Pantex contract follow-up

Frank Munger's Atomic City Underground

December 8, 2013

[LINK](#)

Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz and Deputy Secretary Dan Poneman did not participate in the selection decision of the \$22 billion Y-12/Pantex contract award that was announced Nov. 1, according to a spokeswoman for the National Nuclear Security Administration.

"The Secretary and the Deputy Secretary were not involved in the selection of CNS (Consolidated Nuclear Security, a team headed by Bechtel) nor was it discussed in advance of a decision," Keri Fulton said in an email response to questions. "This was done in order to ensure the SSA's (Source Selection Authority Bob Raine's) decision was completely independent. Once the decision was made, they were informed of the selection prior to the selection announcement," Fulton said.

I asked about the pre-decision involvement of Moniz, Poneman and NNSA Interim Administrator Bruce Held. The NNSA has not yet responded about Held's role.

The Y-12/Pantex contract award, of course, is still under dispute, with a new protest by B&W-led Nuclear Production Partners pending before the Government Accountability Office. As a result, it appears the NNSA will not move forward with the transition of contractors at Y-12 and Pantex until it's settled. The GAO ruling isn't due until the end of February.

Earlier, the NNSA issued a statement saying that Raines, the NNSA's associate administrator for acquisition and project manager, was the Source Selection Authority for the latest contract award, announced Nov. 1. Raine's decision took into account the corrective actions that followed the first protest upheld by GAO and reaffirmed the original contract award made to Consolidated Nuclear Security (a team that includes Bechtel and Lockheed Martin). Michael Lemke was the SSA for the initial contract decision.

I later asked questions about who was involved in the contract decisionmaking the second time around and specifically whether the Source Evaluation Board reviewed the addition and participated in process.

Fulton confirmed that some members of the original SEB participated in the review and provided their findings to Raines, but she said the evaluation board for the corrective action was called an Integrated Project Team, not an SEB. So far, the NNSA has not revealed the names of the IPT members.

Parties ask court to reverse ruling on NRC chief's Yucca Mountain role

Platts

December 6, 2013

[LINK](#)

Nye County in Nevada, Aiken County in South Carolina, and the state of South Carolina are asking a US appeals court to reverse its decision rejecting some of their legal challenges to NRC Chairwoman Allison Macfarlane's refusal to recuse herself from commission decisions related to the agency's resumed review of DOE's license application for a proposed nuclear waste repository in Yucca Mountain, Nevada.

The US Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit on October 22 denied a request by the counties and South Carolina that the court order Macfarlane to recuse or disqualify herself from all Yucca-related decisions. The court said the petitioners had not shown a "clear and disputable right" to such relief.

The counties and state filed a petition with the court September 26, saying they doubted Macfarlane's ability to be impartial on Yucca Mountain licensing issues because of criticisms she had voiced about the site as an academic or independent consultant before joining the commission in 2012. In response to a similar challenge Nye County filed with the NRC in September, Macfarlane said that "[a]cademic work performed on the basis of data available in the early 2000s is not a basis for recusal now."

In a petition filed with the court Thursday, the counties and South Carolina requested a summary reversal of the October decision, saying that "Macfarlane's refusal to recuse herself violates NRC's rules for mandatory recusal under the 'disinterested observer' standard and was an abuse of discretion."

The petition said "a visual comparison" of Macfarlane's opinions on some issues related to the suitability of Yucca Mountain to host a repository -- as expressed in a 2006 book she edited on the subject -- "with those of the license applicant (DOE) and the principal opponent of the license (Nevada) demonstrate that any objective observer would conclude she has made up her mind on several dispositive issues in the NRC Yucca Mountain license proceeding."

Some of those issues include the suitability of computer modeling used by DOE to support its application, whether "the Yucca Mountain region is seismically and volcanically inactive" and whether "natural and engineered barriers are adequate protection" at the site, the petition said.

Macfarlane and NRC have yet to file a response to the petition. Oral arguments have not been requested or scheduled in the case, and there is no public schedule for a decision in the matter.

Ebb in Uranium Enrichment in U.S. Raises Questions About Nuclear Policy

Matthew L. Wald, The New York Times
December 4, 2013

[LINK](#)

But amid the good cheer and talk of mutual cooperation, the United States' policy on uranium enrichment -- the same technology that is at the heart of the dispute with Iran -- is a point of contention here, too, for much the same reason: the ambiguous overlap between the technology's military and civilian use.

In the Middle East, the issue is why Iran has been producing enriched uranium in excess of its civilian needs. When further enriched, it can be used as bomb fuel.

The United States does not need enrichment to make any new nuclear weapons, because it already has thousands of them. But the United States could lose the ability to maintain its nuclear arsenal, many experts say, because its nuclear infrastructure is withering. The last American factory for enriching uranium that used American technology closed in May. It was a victim, after 60 years, of changing technologies and economics -- some of it resulting from the Megatons to Megawatts program, which provided the enrichment needs for half of the civilian nuclear industry.

That plant was operated by USEC, a private company in Bethesda, Md. Now, USEC, with extensive government support, is developing a new kind of centrifuge that would have a military role by making low-enriched fuel for a Tennessee Valley Authority civilian reactor that produces a component of nuclear weapons.

USEC, which was formerly known as the U.S. Enrichment Corporation, was a government enterprise that was spun off to the private sector in 1998. It has been trying for years to find a toehold in the centrifuge business, but it has struggled against technologically advanced and well-financed foreign competitors. The new USEC centrifuges would primarily produce fuel for civilian reactors, which use low-enriched fuel that is unsuitable for bombs.

To round up government support for it what it calls the American Centrifuge Project, USEC is making a national defense argument: the Tennessee reactor would be making a weapons material -- tritium, a form of hydrogen that is the "H" in the H-bomb. USEC and its supporters say that under international agreements, such work can be done only with American uranium, enriched using an American technology. The stockpile of such uranium will be exhausted in 10 to 20 years, the Energy Department says.

The dominant uranium enrichment plant in the United States, in Eunice, N.M., uses centrifuges built by a European consortium, Urenco.

USEC, which handles the American end of the Megatons to Megawatts

deal, is asking the Energy Department for a \$2 billion loan guarantee to commercialize the technology, which it is testing in Piketon, Ohio. For now, the department has given USEC a series of short-range performance targets that the agency calls "necessary but not sufficient" to get the loan guarantee. USEC must pass the next set of such performance reviews this month.

In a paper published Tuesday by the Center for Strategic and International Studies, two prominent nuclear analysts, George David Banks and Michael Wallace, argue that with the growing concern over global warming, the use of nuclear power is certain to grow and the United States should have a native technology for making fuel and for disposing of it. That would allow the United States to supply fuel to developing nations for their nuclear reactors and take it back afterward, making sure that the countries use it to produce electricity and not bombs. "The lack of policy on the front and back end in the fuel cycle will really come back and bite us on the proliferation agenda," Mr. Banks said in an interview.

If the United States gets out of the business of enriching uranium, there is little hope that it will be able to influence other countries' policies, Mr. Banks and Mr. Wallace argue. And the end of the Megatons to Megawatts program could create an opening for a new supplier, experts say, although Russia will continue to ship low-enriched uranium to the United States.

There are private competitors too. G.E., which has substantially more nuclear experience and resources than USEC, is seeking to license an enrichment system that uses lasers instead of centrifuges. It is based on Australian technology and thus could not be used for fuel in a plant that makes tritium for weapons, according to G.E.

Some experts question whether the ability to enrich uranium will enhance American influence over places like Iran: countries with emerging civilian nuclear programs that might also want to develop weapons. Henry D. Sokolski, executive director of the Nonproliferation Policy Education Center, said that the prohibition on the use of low-enriched uranium fuel to make tritium was an American policy, not a treaty obligation.

There is no reason that the United States has to be self-sufficient in enrichment technology, he said, because there is no reason to think that the European consortium, Urenco, that runs the plant in Eunice, N.M., will close it. The self-sufficiency argument, he said, was "desperation."

"I don't get it. Do we not trust Urenco?" he said. "It's like saying we can't buy cars from Japan because they're Japanese."

Recapturing U.S. Leadership in Uranium Enrichment

Center for Strategic and International Studies

December 3, 2013

[LINK](#)

The United States is at risk of finding its nuclear weapons capabilities

severely weakened by the absence of an available capability to enrich uranium. International legal obligations prohibit the United States from using, for military purposes, foreign-produced enriched uranium or uranium enriched here in this country by foreign-source technology. With the closure of the Paducah, Kentucky, plant earlier this year, the United States has no domestic facility that uses U.S.-origin technology to enrich uranium, which, for example, could then be used to produce tritium, a key component in maintaining our nuclear arsenal. Further, existing stockpiles of tritium and enriched uranium produced by U.S.-origin technology are limited. Efforts to deploy a next-generation American enrichment technology must succeed so that our nation has the ability to address the forthcoming shortage of this strategic material. This national security requirement could be met with little cost to taxpayers if the federal government implemented policies that ensure a strong U.S. enrichment industry.

Management Challenges at the Department of Energy - Fiscal Year 2014

DOE Inspector General

November 26, 2013

[LINK](#)

With its critically important missions in mind, the Office of Inspector General identifies what it considers to be the most significant management challenges facing the Department of Energy each year. The purpose of this effort is to identify challenges to the Department's wide-ranging operations as well as problems with specific management processes. The overall goal is to focus attention on key issues with the objective of aiding Department managers in their efforts to enhance the effectiveness of agency programs and operations.

Based on the results of our body of work over the past year, in our judgment, the management challenges list for Fiscal Year 2014 remains largely consistent with that of the previous year. These challenges include: operational efficiency and cost savings, contract and financial assistance award management, cyber security, environmental cleanup, human capital management, nuclear waste disposal, safeguards and security, and stockpile stewardship.

Ride with Santa on Secret City Scenic Excursion Train

John Huotari, Oak Ridge Today

November 28, 2013

[LINK](#)

For the next two weekends, a train ride that starts in west Oak Ridge and rolls north of the former K-25 site in Roane County will feature a special guest--Santa.

"Santa will leave his sleigh in the garage and climb aboard the Secret City Scenic Excursion Train," a press release said. "He's sure to delight all the children as he and Mrs. Claus make their way through the coaches passing out Christmas gift bags and posing for pictures with the

children."

Santa will be the excursion rides that run Saturday and Sunday, Dec. 1 and 2, and again Dec. 8 and 9. The Southern Appalachia Railway Museum volunteers will have the train "all decked out in true holiday style to add to the enjoyment of the trips and the season."

The train boards next to the Heritage Center in East Tennessee Technology Park on Highway 58, 10 miles west of downtown Oak Ridge or six miles north of Interstate 40, Exit 356-A.

On Saturdays, the train departs at 11 a.m., 1 p.m., and 3 p.m. Sunday departures are at 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. The rides last about one hour, and tickets are \$17 for adults and \$13 for children 3 through 12. Payment must be by cash or check only. Reservations are suggested and can be made by calling the museum at (865) 241-2140.

Here is more information from a SARM press release:

The train rolls through the former Manhattan Project site of the K-25 uranium enrichment plant and north through the hills and hardwoods of scenic Poplar Creek Valley. Riders will hear a short narrative on the railroad and the historic Manhattan Project, one of the world's greatest industrial achievements. Coaches are heated, and restrooms are available. Popcorn, snacks, and souvenirs are for sale in the train's commissary car.

Riding on the Secret City Scenic is a trip back in time, as the coaches used are from the 1930s and 40s, and have been restored by the museum's volunteers. Even the track itself is a rich part of East Tennessee railway history, as the railroad was built in 1943 to serve the Manhattan Project and carried up to 50,000 freight car loads into and out of the site during World War II and beyond.

SARM is a nonprofit, all-volunteer museum dedicated to the preservation of the rich railroad history of East Tennessee and the South. Anyone 18 or older is eligible for membership. The museum's volunteers take great pride in their restoration efforts and in enabling the public to experience riding back in time in classic vintage equipment on Tennessee rails.

The museum has commissioned an original oil painting, "SOUTHERN ROYALTY," as a means to raise funds for the complete restoration of their former Southern Railway E-8A locomotive number 6913. The highly realistic oil painting shows 6913 on a spring day in 1969 leading Southern's famed Royal Palm between Cincinnati and Jacksonville. The scene is in Nemo, Tennessee, on the CNO&TP mainline. The original was painted by Nicholas Hankins, an up-and-coming artist and native East Tennessean.

All proceeds from the sale of this fine lithograph will go to the museum's 6913 restoration fund. A limited number of prints will be signed and numbered by the artist, including only eight canvas giclee prints. All those which are signed and numbered will be accompanied by a commemorative history booklet complete with signature of authenticity and matching number. An order form for prints can be found on the museum's web site at <http://www.techscribes.com/sarm/sarm.htm> or by calling the museum at (865) 241-2140.

