

ECA Update: August 7, 2014



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Questions remain after talk with DOE Secretary Moniz

Aiken Standard

August 3, 2014

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It's been a week since Department of Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz toured the Savannah River Site, but local and state leaders are hoping the significance of his visit will translate into funding current and future SRS missions.

Local leaders, members of the Legislative Delegation and local educators made up a room of more than 80 people who were able to ask him questions regarding the Site and the impact it has on the community.

The Aiken Standard reached out to several of these individuals and got their take on how the conversation covered various areas of interest.

Current SRS Missions

As expected, the Site's Mixed Oxide Fuel Fabrication Facility, or MOX, came up during the meeting.

S.C. Rep. Bill Taylor, R-Aiken, was in attendance and said that while Moniz's visit was appreciated, there was nothing he heard that convinced him the project would regain funding for construction.

"Regrettably, there was nothing in his words that offered any hope the Obama administration intends to change its wrong-headed strategy to defund the construction of MOX," • Taylor said.

Taylor added there was also no news on finding a permanent location for

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disposing of nuclear waste now stored in Aiken.

S.C. Sen. Tom Young, R-Aiken, agreed with Taylor on the liquid waste issue and referenced the tank closure milestones that DOE is obligated to uphold.

"We asked that the Department, under his leadership, keep the milestones for waste treatment and tank closure," Young said.

Young added the group reminded Moniz of the used fuel rods currently stored at SRS that have no defined disposition path.

"We do not want SRS to become a permanent dumping ground for nuclear waste," he said.

New missions and community impact

Other SRS issues that were addressed included future Site missions and employment.

David Jameson, Greater Aiken Chamber president and CEO, said he asked Moniz about future private sector and public sector missions at SRS. Moniz responded by bring up small modular reactors as a possibility and also referenced the work going on at the Savannah River National Lab.

"He was very impressed by the real time 'new science' being created at the SRNL to solve problems around the world," • Jameson added.

Will Williams with the Economic Development Partnership also mentioned the National Lab and said he was excited to hear Moniz's interest in third-party financing for a new lab complex.

"It would be a positive game changer for Aiken if we could get SRNL in a new facility and off the Site," he said.

Chuck Munns, chair of Citizens for Nuclear Technology Awareness, said the conversation was a frank one, but also did a great job of celebrating SRS' achievements.

"I believe events like this will help to realize SRS's full potential, will contribute to better policies, more successful projects and more efficient execution of SRS tasks," said Munns.

Educational Impact

Others present during the meeting with Moniz included USC Aiken Chancellor Dr. Sandra Jordan and Dr. Susan Winsor, the president of Aiken Technical College.

From an educational perspective, Winsor asked how the community could work together with DOE to fill the expanding employment opportunities at the Site with locally prepared talent.

"He acknowledged that projected retirements would open substantial opportunities for employment in scientific and technical fields across many career fields," Winsor said.

She added Moniz was interested in deepening collaborations to prepare local citizens with the education needed to fill those positions.

Jordan also said Moniz stressed the importance of education to prepare the next workforce.

"He also pointed to the value of facilities like the Aiken County Applied Research Center to leverage the intellectual capital at the Site into innovations that can support new business ventures and economic vitality," Jordan said.

The Takeaway

The individuals that assembled Monday to meet Moniz all walked away with a general conclusion: They all agreed that Moniz is a knowledgeable person who is passionate about the Site.

However, many of them still question the Energy Department's funding decisions for Site projects, including waste cleanup and storage.

"(Dr. Moniz) said that he understood the concerns related to liquid waste and nuclear waste, and again challenges exist in funding even though SRS is the only place in the world to have actually successfully emptied and closed liquid waste tanks," • said Sen. Tom Young.

Jordan added, "Concern that this region not become a long term storage site for nuclear waste was clearly conveyed to the secretary and at one point, he stated that there was no intention in Washington to allow that to happen."

DOE secretary to hold town hall meet in Carlsbad on WIPP leak

Albuquerque Journal

August 6, 2014

[LINK](#)

Department of Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz will host a town hall to address questions, concerns and fears stemming from a February truck fire and subsequent radiation leak at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant that resulted from the breach of a waste drum from Los Alamos National Laboratory.

Moniz will speak at the Leo Sweet Center on Monday beginning at 6:30 p.m.

Many of Carlsbad's elected officials said they are grateful for the opportunity to express the community's support for WIPP.

"We just need to let him know that the community still supports WIPP," said Carlsbad City Councilor J.R. Doporto. "We had a hiccup and I think we'll get over it, but we need their help and we need to make sure he (Moniz) understands that."

The visit will be Moniz's first to Carlsbad since President Barack Obama appointed him as secretary for the DOE in May 2013. Prior to the town hall, Moniz will tour WIPP, the nation's only nuclear waste disposal facility, and meet

with officials about the latest underground recovery efforts and financial needs.

Janelle Whitlock, a Carlsbad City Councilor for Ward 4, said she hopes the community takes advantage of the opportunity to hear directly from the cabinet secretary about the recovery efforts and the future of WIPP in Carlsbad.

"It's been a while since we've had a DOE Secretary visit Carlsbad and WIPP, and I'm anxious to hear what he has to say," Whitlock said. "We're interested in the recovery period and of course safety is always important to me."

Those who cannot make it to the event at the Leo Sweet Center, 1302 Mission Ave., can watch a live stream of the meeting online at <http://new.livestream.com/rrv/>.

The regularly scheduled WIPP town hall originally set for Thursday evening has been cancelled because of Moniz's visit next week.

WIPP opened in 1999 and disposes transuranic waste, commonly referred to as "TRU," into the Permian-age salt bedrock 2,150 feet below ground. Most of the waste WIPP receives is primarily low-level, solid materials such as discarded tools and cloths used in the manufacturing of Cold War-era nuclear weapons.

A truck used to haul salt below ground in the north mine caught fire on Feb. 5, forcing immediate evacuations of all workers to the surface. Six employees were treated for smoke inhalation at Carlsbad Medical Center and discharged the same day.

On the evening of Feb. 14, a radiation leak was detected below ground in WIPP's south mine.

An unknown chemical reaction caused an explosion inside of a waste drum packaged and shipped from Los Alamos National Laboratory. Trace amounts of americium and plutonium were detected about a half mile outside of the facility in the outside air.

Areva to build concrete vaults for low-level radioactive waste at

INL

Idaho Statesman

August 4, 2014

[LINK](#)

Areva Federal Services, an Areva Inc. subsidiary, will build a remote-handled low-level radioactive waste disposal facility at Idaho National Laboratory.

AREVA was awarded the \$34 million contract by Battelle Energy Alliance, which manages INL on behalf of the U.S. Department of Energy.

The facility will provide disposal capacity for low-level waste generated at DOE's Idaho site, replacing the existing facility that will soon close, a news release said. The facility will include administration and maintenance buildings, waste handling systems and environmental monitoring installations, as well as more than 200 concrete vaults located underground for the safe disposal of the

waste.

"This is a tremendous opportunity for Areva to demonstrate its experience in the development and deployment of safe, proven radioactive waste management solutions," said Tara Neider, president and CEO of Areva Federal Services.

Areva Inc. in 2010 won a U.S. Department of Energy \$2 billion loan guarantee for the construction of an uranium enrichment plant near Idaho Falls. Plans for that plant have been on indefinite hold.

Energy Department Selects Deactivation Contractor for Paducah Gaseous Diffusion Plant

DOE

July 22, 2014

[LINK](#)

LEXINGTON, Ky. -- The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) today awarded a Task Order under the Nationwide Environmental Management ID/IQ Unrestricted Contract to Fluor Federal Services, Inc. for deactivation activities at the Paducah Gaseous Diffusion Plant (GDP) in Paducah, Kentucky, which is currently leased to the United States Enrichment Corporation (USEC).

The award is anticipated to support transitioning and preparing the site for Deactivation and Decommissioning of the former uranium enrichment facilities. The task order provides extensive and detailed hiring preferences for the available, highly skilled labor force.

Services to be provided under the task order include, but are not limited to, Project Management (including Paducah GDP Delease Planning and Facility Transfer); Facility Modification and Infrastructure Optimization (including Stabilization and Deactivation of GDP Facilities); Decontamination and Demolition, and Environmental Services. The Task Order will contain both firm fixed-price and cost reimbursable elements including award fee components. The estimated award value is approximately \$420 million over three years.

The Paducah Gaseous Diffusion Plant (Paducah GDP) is located on a 3,423-acre Federal reservation in Western Kentucky, approximately 10 miles west of Paducah and 3.5 miles south of the Ohio River. It is a Government-owned uranium enrichment plant that was constructed in the early 1950's and operated by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and its predecessor agencies for producing enriched uranium to support commercial and military nuclear reactors and to support weapons development activities. In 1993, the GDP facilities were leased to the United States Enrichment Corporation (USEC) for uranium enrichment operations. DOE is preparing for return of the GDP facilities that are leased and operated by USEC.

The Department of Energy is responsible for cleaning up the nation's gaseous diffusion buildings in accordance with the U.S. Energy Policy Act of 1992. The mission of the DOE Environmental Management program is the safe cleanup of the environmental legacy resulting from five decades of nuclear weapons development and Government-sponsored nuclear energy research.

The nuclear story told at National Atomic Testing Museum, Las Vegas

Communities Digital News

August 6, 2014

[LINK](#)

Most retellings of Las Vegas' history focus on the mob, casinos or the evolution of the neon sign.

Since March 2005, the National Atomic Testing Museum has focused its attention on a more ominous bit of Sin City's history: its connection to nuclear testing and the development of atomic bombs.

The nearby Nevada Test Site (now officially renamed the Nevada National Security Site) served as a testing site for nuclear devices starting in 1951.

For visitors of Vegas who are focused on glitz and glamour, the museum offers a dose of unexpected history on a subject that has been controversial and debated for seven decades.

The museum "tells the story of America's nuclear testing program at the Nevada test site. But it's also of the nation's nuclear testing program," • said Karen Green, the museum's curator.

The world changed forever on Aug. 6, 1945, when the first atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, sparking a nuclear arms race during the Cold War. In the years and decades that followed World War II, Las Vegas grew into a popular destination for tourists wanting to see the large mushroom clouds at the nearby testing site.

In addition to the actual testing, the museum looks at life at the site and its impact on the surrounding communities. The test site was responsible for "doubling, then tripling" the population of Las Vegas during the 1950s and 1960s.

"I think most people expect it to be pretty darn boring, number one," Green said. "And they're absolutely amazed that, one, we tested in Nevada," most people don't believe that. Two, we tested over 1,000 atomic bombs in Nevada, and that it was 63 miles from Las Vegas."

That aspect of the city's growth was the focus of "Building Atomic Vegas," • an exhibit that ran through early 2012.

The museum's collection includes more than 12,000 artifacts, including radiation testing devices, Geiger counters and pop culture memorabilia while "Ground Zero Theater" simulates the detonation of an atomic bomb.

"If you don't understand the Cold War and World War II and that history, it's very hard to understand why a nation would develop an atomic bomb, why we used an atomic bomb and then why we continue to test it," Green said. "They think it's the past when it's still the present. We still test bombs. We do it sub-critically now."

In December 2011, the museum was designated as a national museum and is

today affiliated with the Smithsonian Institution. As part of the designation, the museum has shifted its focus from a regional museum to a national museum, dedicated to telling the country's history of nuclear development.

"We use lessons of the past and present to better understand the extent and effect of nuclear testing," Green said.

"This is a pretty amazing place for a very serious discussion," Green said. "We like to consider ourselves a place where people can come to discuss some difficult subjects that normally you don't see discussed anywhere."

Future of popular Oak Ridge park in question

WATE News

August 5, 2014

[LINK](#)

The future of one popular Oak Ridge park could be in jeopardy.

Clark Center Park is currently owned and maintained by the U.S. Department of Energy, but now they are looking at getting rid of it to cut costs.

Some Oak Ridgers are not too happy about that.

"It's just been passed on from generation to generation," said Wesley Miller of Oak Ridge.

Clark Center Park in Oak Ridge, also known as Carbide Park, is 80 acres of waterfront land.

Built in the 1960s it was first used for Department of Energy employees.

It was later opened to the public, and many like Miller have spent much of their time there.

"People bring their kids out here. Their kids grow up. They bring their kids out here," said Miller.

Now the DOE is facing budget cutbacks and say they cannot keep spending \$300,000 each year maintaining the park.

"If it's not directly supporting what the department does, we have to take a long hard look at it," said DOE spokesperson John Shewairy.

The problem for some is that they fear once the DOE gets rid of the park it will cease to be a park, but the DOE says they are doing everything they can to make sure whoever takes over the park leaves it the way it is.

"To provide the park property in a public benefit conveyance to the city, which would be at no cost, gives everybody the best shot at making sure the citizens of Oak Ridge still get the benefit of something that they've grown used to admittedly," said Shewairy.

Rumors have been spreading that the park might be developed into a housing community, but so far no plans have materialized.

Hundreds of people are even joining a social media movement, with a Facebook page called "help Save Carbide Park," to save the park from those potential plans

"We hope that we can do something here. We can be part of a process that continues to benefit the citizens," said Shewairy.

DOE officials say there is no time limit to figure out what the best option for the land is.

"I hope to see the city take it over and make it a city park," said Miller.

The Oak Ridge City Council is meeting next Monday, August 11, to weigh its options and decide if it is in the city's best interest to take over the park.

