

## ECA Update: April 9, 2015



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### **Message from Mark Whitney on Joe Franco's Transfer to Richland**

Colleagues,

The recovery of safe operations at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant in Carlsbad, NM, is one of EM's highest priorities. For a variety of personal reasons, the Carlsbad Field Office (CBFO) Manager, Joe Franco, has requested a transfer back to the Richland Operations Office (RL). The CBFO Manager position will be posted for competition very soon. Joe will continue to support the Carlsbad

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### Upcoming Events

[Congress Returns from Recess](#)  
April 13

[Deadline for Congress to Adopt a Budget](#)  
April 15

[Senate Strategic Forces Subcommittee hearing on NNSA Budget](#)  
April 15

[NNSA reports on MOX Program Cost Estimates](#)

Field Office to ensure a smooth transition to a new Manager.

With several Hanford contracts set to expire in the 2017-2019 timeframe, RL has requested the establishment of a DOE Hanford Senior Manager responsible for the planning, procurement, award and transition to a new set of Hanford contracts. Karen Flynn, the current Assistant Manager for Mission Support has been selected to lead this important effort. Joe Franco will become the Assistant Manager for Mission Support upon his return to RL.

I want to thank Joe for his unwavering commitment to the essential mission of WIPP, to his workforce, and to the Carlsbad community. Please join me in thanking Joe Franco and Karen Flynn for their service to EM and in wishing them continued success in their new positions.

Sincerely,

Mark

### **Fleischmann named vice chair of Appropriations panel**

Frank Munger's Atomic City Underground

April 8, 2015

[LINK](#)

U.S. Rep. Chuck Fleischman, R-Tenn., whose congressional district includes Oak Ridge, has been named vice chair of the House Appropriations energy and water subcommittee. Fleischmann's appointment and other vice chairs were announced by Appropriations Committee Chairman Hal Rogers, R-Ky.

The energy and water subcommittee is influential in deciding funding for the U.S. Department of Energy, including the federal operations in Oak Ridge. As vice chair, Fleischmann will act as chair of the subcommittee when U.S. Rep. Mike Simpson, R-Idaho, the chairman, is absent or unavailable and assist in official duties.

### **President Announces Nominations to DNFSB**

The President announced yesterday his intention to nominate Joyce Connery and Bruce Hamilton as members of the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board; Connery has been designated to serve as Chair once she joins the Board. Both will require Senate

April 16

[House Energy and Water Appropriations Markup of Spending Bill](#)

Week of April 20 or 27

[Commission to Review the Effectiveness of the National Energy Labs Meeting](#)

April 22

[Senate Strategic Forces Subcommittee hearing on Nuclear Enterprise Review](#)

[Recommendations](#)

April 22

[Environmental Management SSAB Chairs Meeting](#)

April 22-23

[House Strategic Forces NDAA Markup](#)

April 23

[NNSA Challenges Ahead: Meeting Nuclear Deterrent Requirements](#)

April 24

[Nuclear Energy Peer Exchange, Aiken County](#)

May 18-19

[Los Alamos Peer Exchange](#)

July 16-17

approval. Ms. Connery currently serves as Director of Nuclear Energy Policy on the National Security Council and previously worked for DOE, NNSA, and at the Argonne National Laboratory. Mr. Hamilton is currently a consultant to the nuclear industry and previously served as President of Fuelco LLC and was an officer in the Navy. More information on the nominees can be found [here](#).

### **DNFSB WIPP Public Hearing**

The Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (DNFSB) will hold a public hearing and meeting on Wednesday April 29, 2015 in Carlsbad, NM regarding the actions taken to recover the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant. Four sessions are planned: during Session 1, the Board will receive testimony from a senior DOE official; Session 2 will include testimony from DOE EM, the DOE Carlsbad Field Office, and the site contractor; Session 3 will involve a discussion of DOE's strategy for improving the oversight of contractor activities, and; during Session 4 the Board will update the public on proposed oversight actions associated with recovery and corrective actions to resume safe waste operations. For more information, click [here](#).

### **DOE Releases Draft Report on National Laboratories**

The Secretary of Energy Advisory Board National Laboratory released a draft interim report late last month. The report proposes to targeted "experiments" in the areas of management and operation contracting, technology transfers to create value for the private sector, and Laboratory Directed Research and Development to enhance the performance of the National Laboratory system. The draft report makes 15 recommendations, including clarifying the roles and responsibilities for mission execution at the laboratories, evaluating options for changes to the contracting model, and having National Laboratories track their impacts on the industry. The draft report can be found [here](#).

### **More security problems at DOE**

Frank Munger's Atomic City Underground

April 1, 2015

[LINK](#)

Security concerns in one of the Department of Energy's most

sensitive operations — the Office of Secure Transportation, which transports nuclear weapons, bomb parts and special nuclear materials around the country — have been further fleshed out in a story by Greenwire, a subscription trade publication that covers energy and environmental issues.

Late last year, DOE's Office of Inspector General released a brief summary of an inspection report that checked out allegations of "unsuitable behaviors" among agents and a supervisor involved in the high-security transport of nuclear weapons. The IG, however, refused to release the entire report, citing its classification as "official use only."

Greenwire obtained a partially redacted version of the full report via a Freedom Of Information Act request and published a story today by Kevin Bogardus that provides more details about the concerns. Greenwire reported that much of the investigation apparently focused on the OST's Eastern Command based in Oak Ridge, which has 128 federal agents.

According to the Greenwire report, a number of the allegations involve a squad commander who has been "temporarily removed" from the Human Reliability Program and placed on paid leave while the allegations are reviewed further.

Some of the allegations identified in the Inspector General's report took place years ago, with some details still in dispute.

In a redacted report made available by Greenwire, the IG said:

"Specifically through extensive interviews with numerous OST agents, we found that Squad Commander (name redacted), along with other agents, engaged in unsuitable, reportable behavior such as uncontrolled anger, hostility or aggression toward fellow workers and authority figures. These incidents were not reported as required.

"While one of the incidents was relatively recent, many were dated, including one that occurred as much as 10 years prior to our inspection. Each of the seven incidents reported to us involved physical or verbal altercations, some of which occurred off-duty. Senior OST officials told us that none of the incidents were reported to them, thus they were unable to take disciplinary or other action."

The most recent allegation investigated by the IG was that the

squad commander threatened to kill another agent. The squad commander reportedly denied making the threat, and the IG could only confirm that a “heated discussion” took place between the parties.

A number of allegations made against the squad commander were not substantiated, according to the IG report.

The Office of Inspector General indicated that the biggest concern may be the lack of reporting that took place following the incidents.

“We recognize that a number of the reporting issues we identified during the course of our inspection were dated,” the report stated. “However, we are concerned that the failure to report such activity could expose the Department to unnecessary risk.”

The IG report noted that individuals certified for the Human Reliability Program are required to report such incidents and adhere to the program’s requirements.

“Otherwise there is an increased risk that unsuitable individuals could be allowed to protect nuclear weapons, weapon components and special nuclear material, raising possible national security concerns,” the IG report stated.

## **INL defends nuclear shipments**

Idaho Mountain Express

April 8, 2015

[LINK](#)

Idaho National Laboratory representatives defended a proposed shipment of 200 pounds of spent nuclear fuel to Idaho during a Hailey City Council meeting Monday, saying research conducted with the materials could improve the safety of long-term nuclear waste storage at INL and lead to recycling of partly spent nuclear fuel.

“This is an important research mission,” said Todd Allen, INL’s deputy science and technology director.

Former Idaho Govs. Phil Batt and Cecil Andrus recently condemned the proposed new shipments, saying they would violate a 1995 agreement that prohibits commercial nuclear waste shipments into Idaho. Hailey Mayor Fritz Haemmerle had

invited Gov. Butch Otter and Attorney General Lawrence Wasden to the Monday meeting to explain their support of the proposed shipments to the site east of Arco, but he said they did not respond.

During the Cold War, the U.S. Department of Energy's nuclear research complex served as a storage site for spent nuclear fuel. Much of the waste sent to INL came from a nuclear bomb construction facility at Rocky Flats, Colo. The INL has for decades been conducting a cleanup operation that has cost billions of dollars.

Under a 1995 settlement agreement between the state of Idaho, the U.S. Navy and the Department of Energy, the DOE promised to remove 65,000 cubic meters of transuranic waste stored at INL by 2018. INL shipped nearly 42,000 cubic meters of waste to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant near Carlsbad, N.M., before an accident closed that plant on Feb. 14, 2014.

Amy Lientz, INL director of partnership, engagement and technology deployment, said Monday that the DOE has missed important milestones under the 1995 agreement for processing high-level liquid nuclear waste, which is stored in three large tanks.

DOE spokesperson Danielle Miller said in an interview that the high-level liquid waste is scheduled for preparation for removal from Idaho by 2035, but that at this time there is no long-term storage facility prepared to hold it.

Lientz said that even though the DOE was fined \$600,000 by the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality for missing the deadline for processing the liquid waste into a solid state, allowing the proposed new shipments to the facility would be beneficial because they would allow studies to improve the long-term safety of stored solid nuclear waste.

The safe storage of nuclear waste from 100 nuclear reactors around the U.S. has become increasingly troublesome with the indefinite halt of the planned Yucca Mountain, Nev., repository, and the February 2014 closure of WIPP.

WIPP stores transuranic waste—that resulting from man-made elements—in excavated salt caverns some 2,150 feet underground. The facility began receiving waste in 1999 and continued the activity until the accident forced the shutdown in 2014. The accident consisted of a radioactive release of unknown cause and the failure of air-filtering equipment to keep radioactive particles

from reaching the surface and spreading more than half a mile away from the exhaust shaft where the underground air is released. Twenty workers were confirmed to have received internal radiation contamination from plutonium-239 or americium-241, which is also radioactive and classed as a transuranic isotope.

Allen showed the City Council a thin metal tube containing small metal pellets the same size as spent fuel pellets that he said are needed at INL to conduct research. He said the proposed new shipment would contain “high burn” spent fuel pellets that have been kept in a nuclear reactor longer than other fuels, making them more suitable for research purposes.

Allen said the new materials would be used to study the effectiveness of casks that could be used to store nuclear waste for 100 years.

The DOE is working toward reopening WIPP and has stated that it intends to resume receipt of wastes, at least on a limited basis, in early 2016.

The last shipments of nuclear waste from INL are scheduled for 2035.

## **DOE Issues Request for Proposals for Services at Carlsbad New Mexico**

DOE-EM

April 1, 2015

[LINK](#)

Cincinnati -- The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) today issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a technical assistance contract acquisition at the Carlsbad Field Office in New Mexico. A Requirements contract that includes time-and materials (T&M) and fixed-price task orders, will be awarded. The total estimated value of the resulting contract is \$30-35 million, with a period of performance of three years with one two-year option period. The contract will be a 100 percent set-aside for small businesses.

Services to be provided under this requirement include: quality assurance (QA) audit and surveillance, technical oversight, business operations, and executive management support services to the Carlsbad Field Office (CBFO) in all program areas.

The technical assistance contract functions support the following:

- Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) site operations
- WIPP recovery
- safety and security
- environmental and regulatory compliance
- scientific and international programs
- Transuranic (TRU) waste characterization and certification
- TRU waste transportation and packaging
- General business operations
- Information technology
- Executive management support

Proposals are due on May 14, 2015. Additional information on the RFP is available [here](#).

### **DOE Seeks Contractor for Depleted Uranium Hexafluoride (DUF6) Operations at Ohio and Kentucky Facilities**

DOE-EM

April 1, 2015

[LINK](#)

Cincinnati -- The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) today issued a Draft Request for Proposal (RFP) seeking a contractor to perform Depleted Uranium Hexafluoride (DUF6) Operations at the two DUF6 conversion facilities at Portsmouth, Ohio, and Paducah, Kentucky.

A cost plus award fee contract with firm-fixed-price contract line items is anticipated. The total estimated value of the contract ranges from \$400 million - \$600 million with a base period of performance of three years and one two-year option period.

These facilities will convert DOE's inventory of DUF6, located at the Portsmouth and Paducah Gaseous Diffusion Plants, into a stable chemical form that will be acceptable for transportation, reuse, or disposal. A related objective is to provide cylinder surveillance and maintenance (S&M) of the DOE inventory of DUF6, low-enrichment uranium hexafluoride (UF6), natural assay UF6, and empty and heel cylinders in a safe and environmentally acceptable manner.

Additional information on the Draft RFP is available [here](#).