



Office of the Chancellor

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August 10, 2001

50-186

David B. Matthews, Director
Division of Regulatory Improvement Programs
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation
United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, DC 20555

Subject: Transmittal of University of Missouri Review Results and Future Actions Re:
(1) July 25, 2001, Independent Assessment of the Continuing Effectiveness of Corrective Actions Taken to Address Past Chilling Effects at the University of Missouri-Columbia Campus
(2) July 25, 2001, Independent Assessment Report Review of the Freedom of MURR Employees to Report Problems Without Fear of Retaliation

Dear Mr. Matthews:

Your letter dated March 5, 2001, requested that the University of Missouri-Columbia (MU) provide the NRC with (1) an assessment by the University of the freedom of University of Missouri Research Reactor (MURR) employees to report problems without fear of retaliation, and (2) an assessment by the University of the continuing effectiveness of corrective actions taken to address the past chilling effect at the reactor facility. Subsequent to that NRC request, MU requested supporting information from the NRC pursuant to the Freedom of Information Action (FOIA). MU also requested that the submittal date for the independent reports be delayed until 30 days after the FOIA information was received. MU believed that it was important for the University and the independent report preparers to have adequate opportunity to review relevant background information to better ensure that the reports would be responsive to NRC expectations.

The subject FOIA information was provided to MU on July 10, 2001. By letter dated July 27, 2001, the University of Missouri-Columbia Campus transmitted to the NRC a copy of the two above referenced independent reports. This letter supplements that submittal by providing MU's summary conclusions regarding the two independent reports and providing a summary of actions that will be taken at MURR to further improve the safety conscious work environment.

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David B. Matthews
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Simply stated, we at MU do not have any substantive disagreements with the findings of either report. In fact, we are disappointed in our performance related to how freely MURR employees feel regarding problem reporting. We must improve the working environment at MURR in the near- and long-term.

We were reminded by the corrective action assessment discussion that MURR responded aggressively and broadly to previous concerns regarding the safety conscious work environment. However, we also note, in hindsight, that it appears that we were not clear or efficient in what we were trying to achieve through those many actions. As we have gained more experience in this area, we have more clearly realized that it is not the volume of actions that count. It is the effectiveness of the actions and accountability for improvement that yields the best results. In that regard, MURR's action plan (attached) is simple and focused. We will periodically monitor results and will hold reactor management accountable for improving the working environment. Since our efforts will evolve over time, we anticipate that the plan will be periodically updated to reflect areas of needed focus.

We at MU and MURR are committed to these improvements. Having our workers feel comfortable in raising problems is extremely important for the success of the University, and MURR in particular. We will not lose focus on these measures.

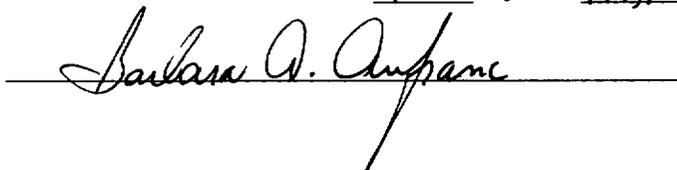
Sincerely yours,



Richard L. Wallace
Chancellor

Enclosures

Subscribed on this the 10th day of Aug., 2001



BARBARA A. AUFRANC
NOTARY PUBLIC
NOTARY SEAL
STATE OF MISSOURI
BOONE COUNTY
MY COMMISSION EXPIRES: MAY 3, 2003

Action Plan for Enhancing the Safety Conscious Work Environment University of Missouri-Columbia Research Reactor

Enhancing a Safety Conscious Work Environment (SCWE) is an ongoing process. Licensees continuously strive to create the elusive ideal SCWE within their respective organizations. There is no simple solution. To effect significant performance enhancement requires time and a concerted effort to implement change.

The University of Missouri-Columbia (MU) and its Research Reactor (MURR) have worked hard to implement change and long-term programmatic solutions in order to create the ideal SCWE. A relevant article by Gayle Ashbridge entitled "Transforming the organization: One nuclear plant's journey" appears in the July 2001 edition of Nuclear News. In her article Ashbridge states

"In attempts to alter organizational cultures, many innovations are cast to employees with the expectation that they will buy into the change and produce management's hoped-for results . . . when programs and initiatives designed to produce change are introduced, perception and past learning have taught employees to avoid the situation and in turn hope that it will eventually go away."

During the last several years MURR has been transforming its organization. As Ashbridge states in her article, "True change often requires 'metanoia' (a shifting of the mind) and takes time. Organizational change is an ongoing process that typically takes three to five years to embed." MURR's transformation is not complete: more time and more change are needed.

To ensure the continued transformation, MURR will implement an Action Plan comprised of specific activities aimed at enhancing the SCWE at MURR. The two independent assessment reports referenced in the transmittal letter identify areas for improvement in MURR's SCWE. The report's observations can be broadly categorized as:

1. Need for multiple avenues of concern identification and resolution.
2. Lack of understanding and training regarding the NRC expectations for SCWE and a need for periodic training.
3. Need for additional channels of communications with the director.

The activities described below are intended to address the reports' observations; this document and the attached Gantt chart will serve as MURR's SCWE Action Plan. The Gantt chart outlines those tasks necessary to implement each activity. It also identifies the individual responsible and associated schedules for the activities. The SCWE Action Plan will function as a formal communication and progress tracking tool in order to provide our stakeholders confidence that every effort is being taken to enhance the SCWE at MURR. These activities, along with SCWE programs previously established, will serve as the foundation for long-term enhancements to the SCWE at MURR.

Observation: Need for multiple avenues of concern identification and resolution.

Enhancement Activity: Ombudsman Program

The recent assessments reveal that there are long-standing conflicts between certain workers in the research organization and upper management, particularly at the MURR Director level. The researcher-management relationship must be improved to better ensure that employees in the research organization feel free to raise Nuclear and Radiation Safety concerns at MURR. To facilitate resolution of concerns the University/MURR will create an Ombudsman program for researchers. The Ombudsman program will consist of a panel of three non-MURR employee scientists/researchers selected by senior University officials from the MURR Reactor Advisory Committee. The three-member Ombudsmen panel will be a contact point for receiving employee concerns related to Nuclear and Radiation Safety which could not be resolved through the supervisory chain, the Corrective Action Program, or the MURR Safety Oversight Committee (MSOC). The Ombudsman panel will not only hear concerns, but recommend solutions to University management.

The objectives of the Ombudsmen will be to (1) serve as a conduit for communications between the researchers and management, and (2) more specifically identify reasons for and areas of breakdown in the relationship, and (3) identify paths toward restoring a healthy working relationship. It is envisioned that the Ombudsman panelists will serve temporary appointments for a period of 12 months. Management's goal is that each of the Ombudsman:

- will be viewed, to the extent practicable, as a "neutral"
- is someone who is respected for such abilities as good communications skills, good coaching skills, and good mediation skills
- is someone who understands and/or has been coached/trained in safety conscious work environment attributes and expectations.

The Ombudsman program is not intended to replace the MSOC. The MSOC charter states that it is a program that "...provides staff members, who may feel their safety concerns are not being adequately addressed through normal channels of communication, another, highly visible avenue by which concerns may be formally presented." If researchers feel the MSOC is not adequately equipped to address their concern, then the Ombudsman program will provide an alternate avenue by which their concerns may be formally presented to a panel of peers. The University/MURR envisions conducting an annual evaluation of the Ombudsman program to determine both effectiveness and the need for any modification to the original program.

Observation: Lack of understanding and training regarding the NRC expectations for SCWE and a need for periodic retraining.

Enhancement Activity: Training

MURR will provide training for all supervisory/management staff at MURR regarding the attributes of a safety conscious work environment. The recent assessment indicates that supervisors could be more proactive in soliciting safety concerns, and also that managers, on occasion, have sent messages that unintentionally may have caused some staff members to perceive that their opinions and perspectives should not be expressed and/or are not valued. This is an area requiring constant attention and management involvement.

MURR's intent is to provide a significant annual training course lasting three hours or more on SCWE expectations for all managers, supervisors, and all MSOC members. This training should ensure staff clearly understands that although MURR, like any other nuclear facility, cannot reach the ideal SCWE, management and supervisors are committed to moving toward the ideal SCWE.

Enhancement Activity: Focus Groups

MURR management will meet with all MURR staff, via small group meetings, to discuss the results of our assessment on employee perceptions regarding the freedom to raise safety concerns. Our intent is that these meetings be arranged on a departmental basis and that they include senior and departmental managers. In the meetings, managers will again emphasize that employees should feel free to raise safety concerns and that they will not be retaliated against for doing so. It is envisioned that these Focus Group type meetings will continue on a regular basis.

Enhancement Activity: Policy

MURR will develop and implement a policy applicable to anyone with MURR facility access that specifically expresses zero tolerance for harassment, retaliation or discrimination.

Observation: Need for additional channels of communications with the director.

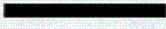
Enhancement Activity: Communications with the MURR Director

The MURR Director must continuously work to improve lines of communications and to enhance the effectiveness of communication between staff and the Director. Actions include efforts to (a) ensure better explanations of management decisions and the “big picture” of events occurring at and/or affecting MURR; (b) help make management decisions more transparent and thus viewed as more honest by employees; (c) enhance interdepartmental communications; (d) explain and publicize MURR’s open door policy; and (e) assure adequate feedback to employees on how their concerns have been resolved. These communication channels include:

- MURR Lunch Program - Twice a month three randomly selected staff members join the Director for lunch. These are extended lunches held away from MURR. These lunches facilitate open and candid conversation. They also provide an opportunity for participants to learn more about each other, to discuss individual backgrounds, families, and unique contributions to MURR.
- Open Office Hours – Open office hours are held weekly. This is a time the Director is specifically available so anyone can come in and speak to the Director about any topic. These “open office hours” are held in a conference room so that an individual is not intimidated by the physical office of the Director. This is in addition to the Director’s own open door policy.
- ‘Direct to the Director’ Mailbox – This is a locked mailbox to which only the Director has a key. It is located in the MURR lunchroom so that any staff member may leave for the Director either signed or anonymous letters regarding their concerns.

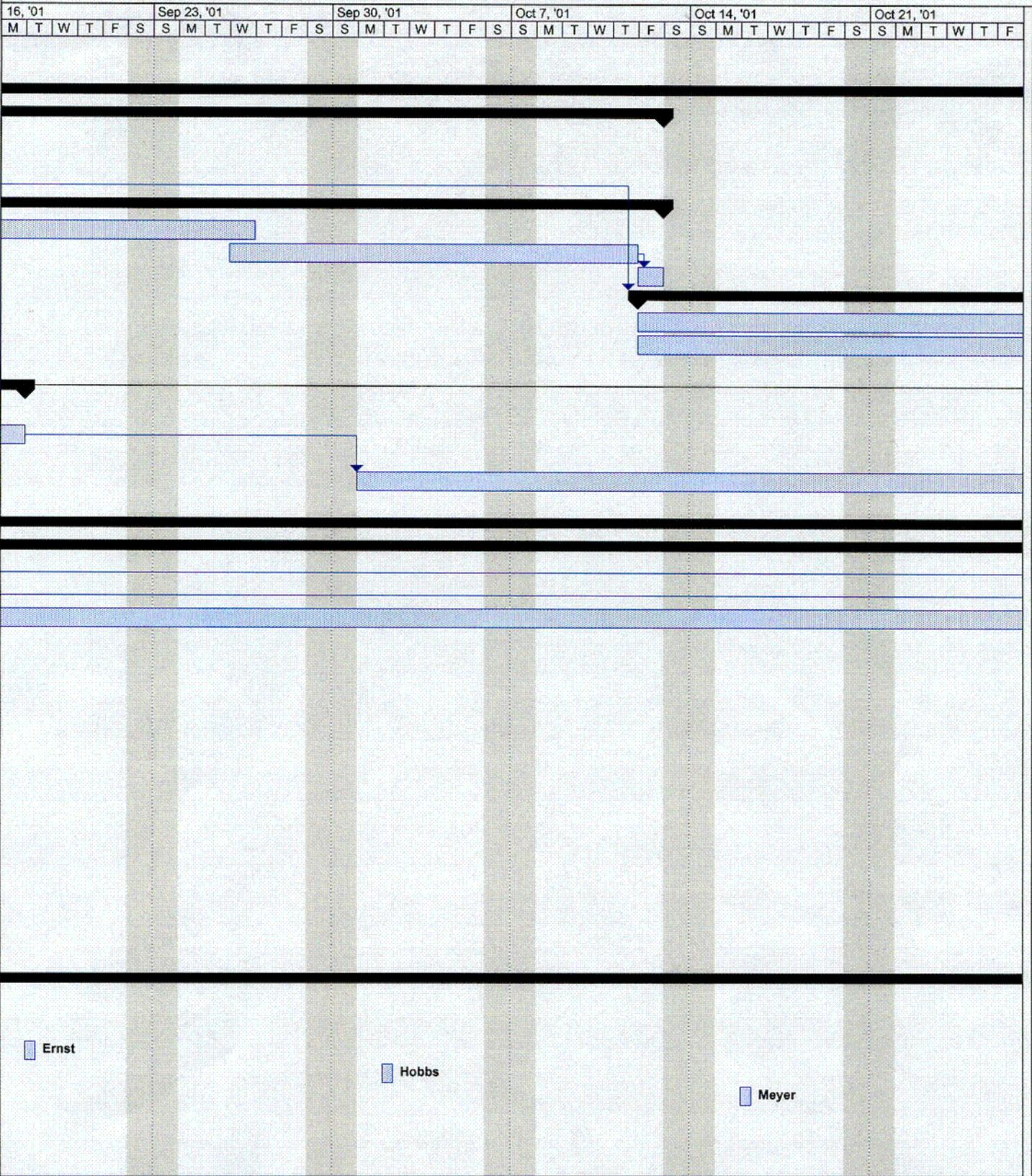
Promoting a Safety Conscious Work Environment

ID	Task Name	Duration	Start	Finish	Predecessor	Resource Names
1	Presentation of the SCWE Program to the MURR Staff/Researchers (All Staff Meeting)	0 days	Tue 8/21/01	Tue 8/21/01		Butler
2						
3	Ombudsmen Program	63 days	Wed 8/15/01	Fri 11/9/01		
4	Develop guidelines for the Ombudsmen Program	43 days	Wed 8/15/01	Fri 10/12/01		Butler
5	Establish Program Scope and Purpose	6 days	Wed 8/15/01	Wed 8/22/01		
6	Define Responsibilities	6 days	Wed 8/22/01	Wed 8/29/01		
7	Determine criteria for selecting panelists	6 days	Wed 8/29/01	Wed 9/5/01		
8	Establish program procedures	40 days	Mon 8/20/01	Fri 10/12/01		
9	Draft Procedures	28 days	Mon 8/20/01	Wed 9/26/01		
10	Finalize Procedures	12 days	Wed 9/26/01	Thu 10/11/01		
11	Issue Ombudsmen Program Procedures	1 day	Fri 10/12/01	Fri 10/12/01	10	
12	Ombudsmen Program Implementation	21 days	Fri 10/12/01	Fri 11/9/01	7	Butler
13	Selection of Staff panel members	21 days	Fri 10/12/01	Fri 11/9/01		
14	Selection of Researcher (RAC) panel members	21 days	Fri 10/12/01	Fri 11/9/01		
15						
16	Zero Tolerance Policy Development	26 days	Mon 8/13/01	Mon 9/17/01		Butler
17	Finalize Policy	25 days	Mon 8/13/01	Fri 9/14/01		
18	Issue Policy	1 day	Mon 9/17/01	Mon 9/17/01	17	
19						
20	Integration of SCWE attributes into Performance Appraisals Program	23 days	Mon 10/1/01	Wed 10/31/01	18	HRCC
21						
22	MURR SCWE Program Training	90.44 days	Mon 8/13/01	Mon 12/17/01		
23	Staff SCWE Training Development	73 days	Mon 8/13/01	Wed 11/21/01		
24	Develop basic content requirements for training on "SCWE expectations" and "Attrit	10 days	Mon 8/13/01	Fri 8/24/01		
25	Develop basic content requirements for training on "Effective Mediation Skills"	10 days	Mon 8/13/01	Fri 8/24/01		
26	Hire outside consultant to develop training sessions	49 days	Fri 8/24/01	Wed 10/31/01		
27	Develop training sessions	15 days	Thu 11/1/01	Wed 11/21/01	26,24,21	Outside Consult
28	Ombudsmen Training	2 days	Wed 11/28/01	Thu 11/29/01	12,23,16	Outside Consult
29	SCWE expectations (1)	3 hrs	Wed 11/28/01	Wed 11/28/01		
30	Zero Tolerance Policy Reinforcement (1)	30 mins	Wed 11/28/01	Wed 11/28/01	29	
31	Effective Mediation Skills	1 day	Thu 11/29/01	Thu 11/29/01	30	
32	Supervisory/Management & MSOC member training (2)	0.44 days	Tue 12/4/01	Tue 12/4/01	23,16	Outside Consult
33	SCWE Expectations (2)	3 hrs	Tue 12/4/01	Tue 12/4/01		
34	Zero Tolerance Policy Reinforcement (2)	30 mins	Tue 12/4/01	Tue 12/4/01	33	
35	Supervisory/Management & MSOC member training (3)	0.44 days	Thu 12/13/01	Thu 12/13/01	23,16	Outside Consult
36	SCWE Expectations (3)	3 hrs	Thu 12/13/01	Thu 12/13/01		
37	Zero Tolerance Policy Reinforcement (3)	30 mins	Thu 12/13/01	Thu 12/13/01	36	
38	Supervisory/Management & MSOC member training (4)	0.44 days	Mon 12/17/01	Mon 12/17/01	23,16	Outside Consult
39	SCWE Expectations (4)	3 hrs	Mon 12/17/01	Mon 12/17/01		
40	Zero Tolerance Policy Reinforcement (4)	30 mins	Mon 12/17/01	Mon 12/17/01	39	
41						
42	Focus Group Meetings	70.25 days	Tue 8/21/01	Tue 11/27/01		
43	Administrative and Support Group	2 hrs	Tue 8/21/01	Tue 8/21/01		Touzeau
44	Research Group	2 hrs	Tue 9/4/01	Tue 9/4/01		Hay
45	Regulatory Assurance Group	2 hrs	Tue 9/18/01	Tue 9/18/01		Ernst
46	Reactor Operations	2 hrs	Tue 10/2/01	Tue 10/2/01		Hobbs
47	Income Generating Operations	2 hrs	Tue 10/16/01	Tue 10/16/01		Meyer
48	Technical Support Services	2 hrs	Tue 10/30/01	Tue 10/30/01		Oladiran
49	Medical Radioisotope Program	2 hrs	Tue 11/13/01	Tue 11/13/01		Ketring
50	Special Projects & Others	2 hrs	Tue 11/27/01	Tue 11/27/01		Butler

Project: SCWE Date: Mon 8/6/01	Task		Milestone		External Tasks	
	Split		Summary		External Milestone	
	Progress		Project Summary		Deadline	

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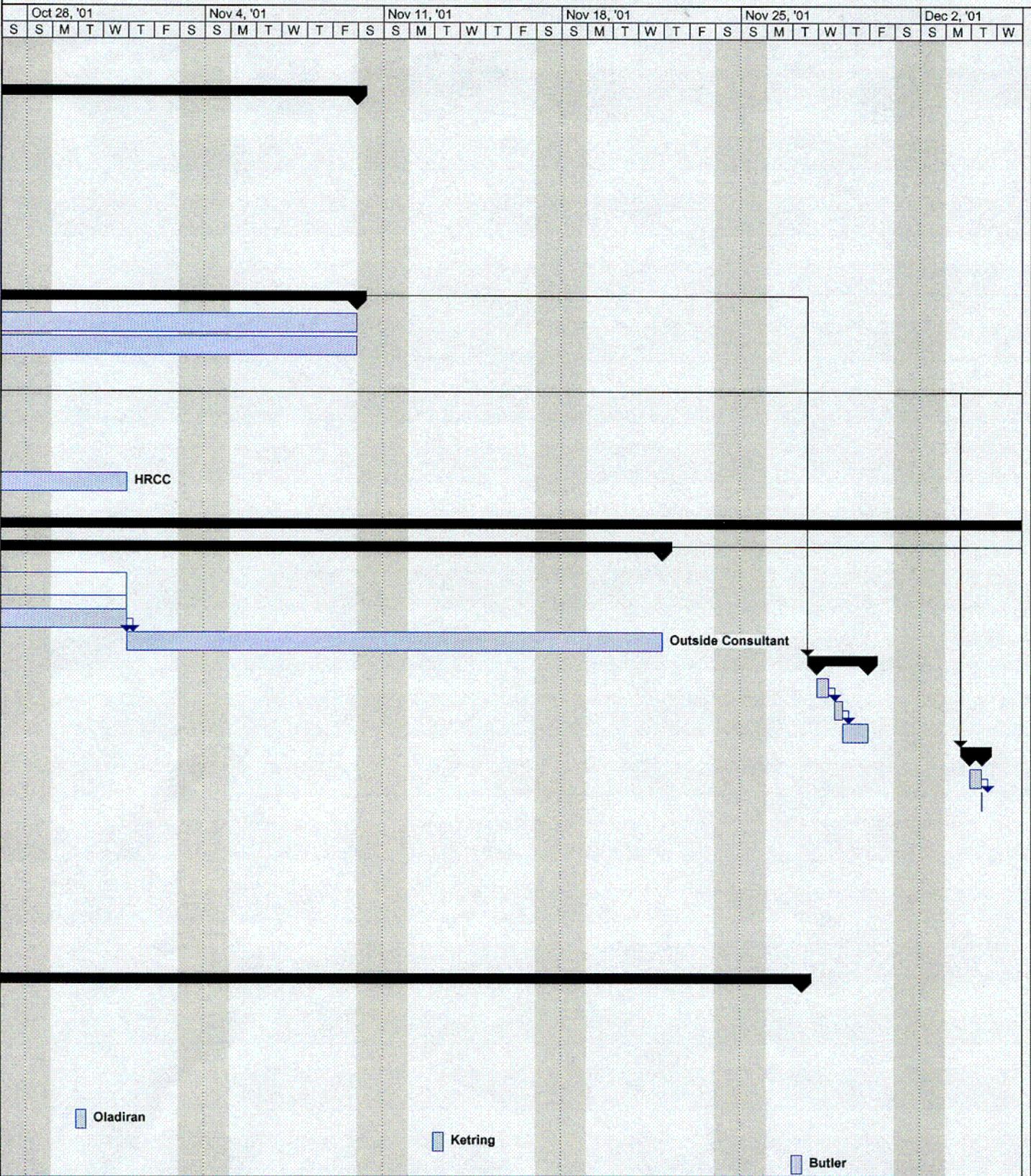
Promoting a Safety Conscious Work Environment



Project: SCWE Date: Mon 8/6/01	Task		Milestone		External Tasks	
	Split		Summary		External Milestone	
	Progress		Project Summary		Deadline	

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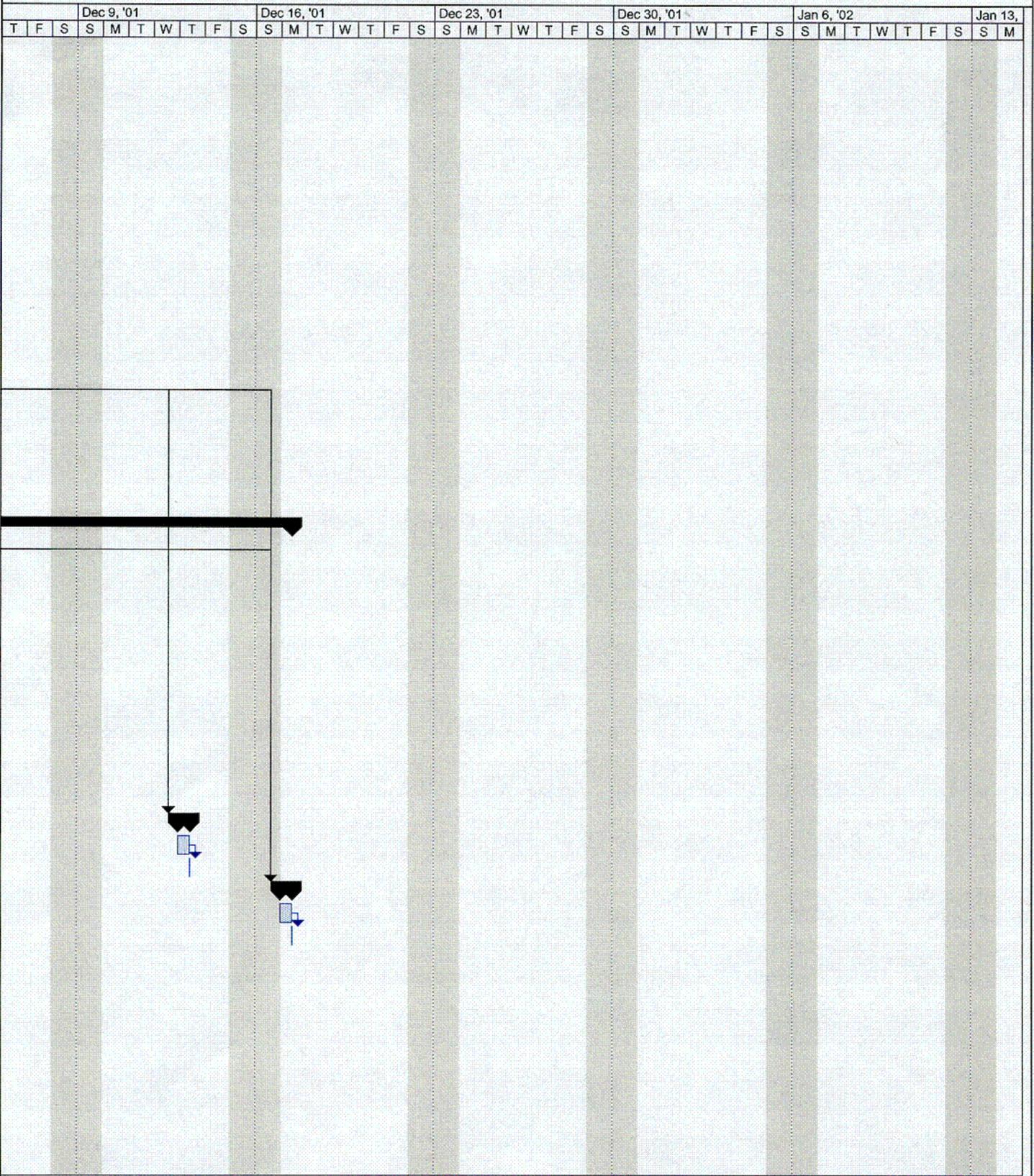
Promoting a Safety Conscious Work Environment



Project: SCWE Date: Mon 8/6/01	Task		Milestone		External Tasks	
	Split		Summary		External Milestone	
	Progress		Project Summary		Deadline	

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Promoting a Safety Conscious Work Environment



Project: SCWE Date: Mon 8/6/01	Task		Milestone		External Tasks	
	Split		Summary		External Milestone	
	Progress		Project Summary		Deadline	

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