

February 28, 2002

LICENSEE: Department of Veterans Affairs, Nebraska - Western Iowa Health Care System (VA)

FACILITY: Alan J. Blotcky Reactor Facility (AJBRF)

SUBJECT: SUMMARY OF MEETING BETWEEN VA AND NRC STAFFS

On November 28, 2001, representatives of the NRC staff met at NRC Headquarters with representatives of the VA, the licensee for the AJBRF. Representatives of the licensee's contractors also attended the meeting. Enclosed is a list of meeting attendees.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss decommissioning of the AJBRF. Topics were the timetable for decommissioning, decommissioning planning activities, site characterization, and development of a decommissioning plan (DP).

The licensee stated that a decision had been made to decommission the AJBRF. The NRC would be formally informed of the decision in the near future. (Subsequent to the meeting, the licensee formally informed the NRC of the decision to shut down and decommission the AJBRF in a letter dated December 6, 2001).

What actions that the licensee could take without an approved DP were discussed. Some acceptable activities include general housekeeping such as disposal of loose items and characterization (as long as decommissioning was not needed to perform the characterization). The most significant action to be taken prior to decommissioning is the removal of fuel from the site. The licensee was early in its planning for fuel shipment. The licensee had never shipped fuel before. Some of the tasks to be performed to ship fuel, such as development and approval of procedures for fuel movement, shipping cask loading and shipping, and quality assurance requirements for shipping, were discussed. The licensee should inform the Spent Fuel Project Office in the Office of Nuclear Materials Safety and Safeguards of their intentions to ship fuel.

The licensee discussed its plans to start a historical site assessment and characterization studies this spring. The licensee plans to submit their DP in the fall of 2002. The fact that some characterization studies (such as the radiological condition of the reactor pool and soil surrounding the pool) would have to occur after decommissioning activities were in progress was discussed. The licensee asked about the boundary of the reactor facility for decommissioning purposes. The staff believes that the boundary of the facility is clearly indicated in the AJBRF Safety Analysis Report. The licensee asked about decommissioning financial assurance. The licensee has met the decommissioning financial assurance regulations with a statement of intent because the licensee is part of the Federal government. An updated decommissioning cost estimate should be included in the licensee's DP.

Contact: Alexander Adams

301-415-1127

The important of close communication between the NRC and licensee staffs was stressed. The licensee stated that they would provide a communication plan to the NRC (this was included with the licensee's letter of December 6, 2001).

/RA/

Alexander Adams, Jr., Senior Project Manager
Research and Test Reactors Section
Operating Reactor Improvements Program
Division of Regulatory Improvement Programs
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket No. 50-131

Enclosure: List of Meeting Attendees

cc w/enclosure: Please see next page

Veterans Administration
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Docket No. 50-131

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