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TO: Mr. John Greeves, Director, LLWM
 FROM: Paul T. Prestholt, Sr. On-Site Licensing Representative
 DATE: December 17, 1987
 SUBJECT: Newspaper Articles

Please find enclosed more information that appeared in our local newspaper that is of interest.

PTP:nan

cc: Mr. Greg Cook
 Ms. Sue Gagner

WM Record File
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WM Project 11
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Insight

The on-again, off-again nuke waste dump battle

Thank God for Tennessee — temporarily. Its House conferees put the kibosh on the "Screw Nevada" nuclear dump site Tuesday, however long that will last.

Tennessee's bargaining chip in the House-Senate settlement of differences in the new energy and water resources bill involved the small matter of a plant at Oak Ridge, Tenn., where all the nation's utility plant spent fuel rods would be taken, re-packaged and stored for later shipment to the final resting place for these lethal wastes.

We couldn't think of a better place for the temporary interment, to use the morticians' term, than Oak Ridge. It has been home to the Oak Ridge Institute of Nuclear Studies, the Oak Ridge National Laboratory and government uranium processing plants. That is to say, its residents are skilled in matters atomic.

Nevada's Yucca Mountain was unceremoniously singled out in that Tuesday afternoon conference by a coalition of House members from Washington state, Texas, Louisiana and Tennessee. One would naturally expect Washington and Texas lawmakers to take that stand, since Hanford, Wash., and Deaf Smith County, Texas, are the only other prime targets of the Department of Energy for its nuclear cemetery.

Louisiana's salt domes also had been mentioned, but veteran Pelican State Sen. J. Bennett Johnston has been able, thus far, to skew DOE's thinking "processes in a westerly direction.

It is as we said long ago: With only four votes in

Congress, Nevada is outnumbered by the horde of lawmakers anxious to increase the business in their states from the thousands of truckers who'll be coming through, hauling their deadly nuclear loads. The lawmaking horde cares not a whit for the millions of dollars in construction jobs that would be created in their economically depressed congressional districts, nor for the increased real estate values this new disposal business would bring.

Nor has there been any mention of the \$100 million a year bribe for the next 25 or 30 years to the lucky state on which this nuclear bounty is bestowed. But then, \$100 million is apparently peanuts to most Washingtonians.

The permanent nuclear dump site issue may be settled before this weekend, or it may already have been quietly settled. Or the on-again, off-again issue may not even be settled before Congress ends its session early next week. If not, the matter will await the next session, starting in January with most of the same old faces.

Politics, they say, is the art of compromise. But Nevada is not permitted a say in these last-minute deliberations from the inside. How can Nevada's four congressional votes hold off the combination of Texas' 29, Washington state's 10, Louisiana's 10, Tennessee's 11? In matters nuclear, politics is who has the most votes. We've been saying that all along, too.

Besides, the Department of Energy would like the dump out here — whether or not Yucca Mountain's a safe place for the tomb.

So after spending millions of dollars for "studies" and after hours and hours of debate, all fingers still seem to be pointed at Nevada.

Shipments improperly packaged

Leaking nuclear barrels net \$23,000 fine

CARSON CITY (UPI) — A California company has been fined \$23,000 and given a minimum 30-day suspension for shipping leaking radioactive containers to a dump in central Nevada, it was announced Wednesday.

Jerry Griepentrog, director of the state Department of Human Resources, said the disciplinary action was taken against US Ecology Nuclear of Pleasanton, Calif., which transports hazardous and nuclear waste to burial sites.

The company is a subsidiary of US Ecology of Louisville, Ky., which operates the low-level nuclear dump in Beatty in central Nevada. The \$23,000 is in addition to an earlier \$5,000 fine for a similar violation.

On Nov. 17 and 19, state inspectors found that

shipments from Texas City, Texas, were improperly packaged and that there were leaks of radioactivity from barrels that had holes in them.

Griepentrog said the radioactivity was confined to the inside of the truck and there was no public danger. Before US Ecology Nuclear can resume using the Beatty site, Griepentrog said the company must develop an adequate plan for correcting the deficiencies.

He said the company will also be required to have its shipments inspected at the pickup sites "to make sure it is complying with revised procedures."

US Ecology Nuclear will be required to hire Nevada Inspection Services, an independent firm, to monitor whether the containers are properly packaged and if there are leaks.