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Subject: Vermont Yankee News Clips, August 14-16, 2004

News Clips, August 14-August 16, 2004

Bosses could operate reactor
 Carolyn Handy, Southern Vermont Bureau

Rutland Herald, August 14, 2004
 Region/State Section, Page B1
 Located at the top of the page

If contract negotiations fail between union employees at Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant and Entergy Nuclear, the plant might be run by management employees within a week.

Corey Daniels, unit chairman for the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Union Local 300 Unit 8, stated in a letter on the union's Web site that 148 plant workers may walk out at midnight on Thursday if they can't get a fair contract from Entergy.

Brian Cosgrove, spokesman for Entergy Nuclear, said Friday that the company is "committed to do everything we can to reach a fair settlement with our bargaining union and avoid a strike."

But if the strike is not prevented, Entergy still has the responsibility to provide one-third of Vermont's electricity, he said.

"We must keep the plant on-line and provide electricity for our consumers," he said.

Other Entergy employees from facilities outside Vermont will not be brought to Vernon to take over plant operations, Cosgrove said.

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"The men and women who will continue to operate the plant will be Vermont Yankee management employees," he said. "They will be the people doing the hands-on, day-to-day, frontline operation of the plant in the case of a strike."

Cosgrove said many of those management employees moved into management from the union and would be temporarily stepping back into jobs they held earlier in their careers.

"Several of them still hold reactor and senior reactor licenses," he said. "Having worked, in many cases, for many years at Vermont Yankee, they are completely familiar with plant operations."

The union employees include licensed reactor operators, auxiliary operators, instrument and control technicians, protection technicians, chemistry technicians, electricians, mechanics, work planners, control specialists, utility workers and store clerks.

Cosgrove said that in the case of a strike, the people who will operate Vermont Yankee will be "highly qualified and fully familiar with the plant."

The most important consideration at a nuclear plant is its safe operation, he said. "Everyone agrees on that, whether they are in the union or management."

But Brattleboro activist Gary Sachs said using replacement workers from management increases safety risks at the plant. He said Friday he would rather see the plant shut down than have someone running it who does not have all the "day-to-day information on how the system works and the information on all new changes recently made."

Sachs questioned how long it had been since the management employees had been union employees working in the plant. He also doubted that every system now in place was identical to those in place previously.

"There have been many alterations and changes in anticipation of their hoped for extended power uprate," he said. "It's my thought that those changes to the plant reflect some level of change for the worker."

Sachs said it is his opinion that the current Vermont Yankee workers are "the sole reason" that the plant runs as safely as it has.

"Entergy wouldn't exist without its skilled workforce," he said. "I have no doubt these people are skilled at what they do. We haven't had a serious release of radiation here, and this is an old plant."

According to Daniels' letter, the contingency workforce does not have the "experience, knowledge, familiarity, or ability to run the plant safely."

Sachs said that the plant should be shut down should the workers go on strike.

"The game that Entergy is playing with their employees is dangerous," he said. "It's bad timing in regard to the fact that they want a 20 percent uprate. It's important to have happy employees at a nuclear station."

Vt. Yankee workers rally on contract impasse

Keene Sentinel, August 14, 2004
Region/Nation Section, Page 4
Located at the top of the page

BRATTLEBORO - Unionized workers at the Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant are seeking to

demonstrate that they are serious about walking off the job if they don't reach a contract settlement.

Members of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers held a rally Thursday at Plaza Park.

With less than seven days left before their current contract expires, between 75 and 100 workers gathered to voice their displeasure with Entergy Nuclear's offer in ongoing negotiations.

According to Corey Daniels, chairman of Local 300, Unit 8, the company plans to increase workers' health care costs by 500 percent over the next three years. He also said that the wage increase proposed by Entergy would not keep pace with inflation.

"What they're offering isn't fair. It's completely unacceptable," said Daniels, who is a licensed reactor operator at the plant. "The employees here- with the deal that's on the table - they're walking out at midnight on Aug. 19."

The two sides will meet again next Wednesday with a mediator to discuss a final agreement. A vote on the offer will take place on Aug. 19, just hours before the strike deadline.

In addition to frustration with the contract negotiations, workers said they were concerned with Entergy's contingency plan if a strike does occur.

"The most important thing is that they can't run that plant safely without us," said Daniels. "If we're not there, they should pull the plug on that plant."

Officials at Vermont Yankee disagreed with that assessment, saying that the safe running of the plant would remain the company's top priority.

According to public affairs director Brian Cosgrove, positions left open by striking workers would be filled by managers who previously held those jobs and are familiar with the day-to-day running of the plant.

He denied rumors that workers from other plants would be brought in. Cosgrove did say, however, that a long-term strike might force the company to consider looking outside the plant to fill "ancillary" positions.

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission must approve the company's contingency plan before it can be implemented.

As talks loom, Entergy earnings up
By Carolyn Lorie, Reformer Staff

Brattleboro Reformer, August 14, 2004
Towns Section, Page 13
Located at the top of the page

BRATTLEBORO -- As officials from Entergy Nuclear Vermont Yankee and unionized employees belonging to the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers wrangle over a final contract, the company reported strong second quarter earnings.

Entergy Corporation, the parent company of Entergy Nuclear, reported a net cash flow of \$530 million from operating activities in the second quarter of 2004.

According to the company's Web site, this marks a \$55 million increase from last year's second quarter. Part of the growth is attributed to the increased megawatt hours generated at Entergy Nuclear. The company owns eight nuclear power plants, including the Vernon site.

The Web site also stated that Entergy Nuclear earned "\$0.27 per share on both as-reported and operational bases in second quarter 2004, compared to \$0.19 per share in the second quarter in 2003."

Net cash flow for the full year of 2004 is expected to be more than \$2 billion.

Entergy stocks closed on Friday at \$58.94 per share, holding steady from Thursday.

In a letter posted on the union Web site, Unit 8 Chairman Corey Daniels accused the company of being more concerned with taking care of its shareholders than its workforce.

"Entergy is having a banner year. Entergy just posted outstanding profits for the quarter and plans to add to that by compensating its employees poorly and charging them outlandish rates for their health benefits," Daniels wrote.

According to Daniels, the company plans to increase health care premiums by 500 percent over the next three years and provide pay raises that do not allow for inflation.

One hundred forty-eight workers are prepared to strike at midnight on Aug. 19 if an agreement with the company can't be reached. The workers include reactor operators, mechanics, document control specialists, and radiation control specialists.

If the strike does occur, Entergy said it will implement a contingency plan to keep the plant running. Plant officials have said that managers who previously held the positions would step in to fill vacancies, but union members have maintained that outside workers unfamiliar with the plant would be brought in.

The plan must be approved by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. On Friday, union members met with NRC resident inspectors David Pelton and Beth Siedel to request a more thorough inspection of the plan, which workers claim will compromise plant safety.

Jason Gibbs, spokesman for Gov. James Douglas, said the governor was hopeful a strike could be averted, but was reassured the company had a contingency plan. The governor also said it was fortunate that the NRC's engineering inspection team was on-site "insuring that safety continues to be a top priority at the facility."

Democratic gubernatorial candidate Peter Clavelle was less confident in Entergy's plan.

"There are no workers as qualified to run and maintain Vermont Yankee as those people who are doing it right now. I find it difficult to imagine the safe operation of that plant without the 148 employees who currently hold key positions at VY," Clavelle's spokesman, B.J. Rogers, wrote in an e-mail to the Reformer.

Negotiations are expected to resume next Wednesday, with a vote on a final offer taking place just hours before the strike deadline on Thursday.

Words of Windham

Brattleboro Reformer, August 14, 2004

Towns Section, Page 13

Located at the bottom of the page

Rudy to the rescue: Former New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani will be in Brattleboro on Aug. 19. He will be giving a seminar to local first responders and public safety professionals from towns in Vermont Yankee's emergency planning zone.

According to Rob Williams, spokesman for the nuclear power plant, Giuliani was hired by Entergy Nuclear Northeast last year to offer his expertise in the area of emergency planning. The company is sponsoring Thursday's seminar at the Quality Inn in Brattleboro.

Candidate throws hat into ring
By Daniel Barlow, Reformer Staff

Brattleboro Reformer, August 14, 2004
Front Page
Located at the top of the page

BRATTLEBORO -- Peter Diamondstone is not running for Vermont governor -- he is a candidate for Vermont governor.

"I don't use those gladiatorial terms," the Brattleboro resident said on Friday. "It turns it into a game where the voters are bettors and that is not what it is about."

Diamondstone, a member and co-founder of the Liberty Union Party, is seeking the Progressive Party's nomination for governor in the September primary.

He stopped by the Reformer offices Friday to discuss his campaign, his decision to run as a Progressive and his 2004 platform.

Diamondstone moved to Vermont in 1968 from New York City, will celebrate his 47th anniversary with his wife next week and has four kids and 12 grandchildren.

Over the years, he has made his living being a lawyer, short order cook and newspaper deliverer. His first introduction to politics came when he was 10 years old and got a job handing out campaign literature in 1944 for Franklin Roosevelt, who was running for his fourth term as president.

Diamondstone was a candidate for some local offices before moving to Vermont -- but it is in the Green Mountain State that his name began appearing on the ballot in general elections nearly every two years.

He said he has been a candidate for statewide offices in nearly every election since 1970; among the offices he has put his name forward for include state's attorney general, governor and congressman.

Diamondstone remains a member of the Liberty Union Party -- which he helped start in the late 1960s. It features a platform combining socialist, environmental and individualistic ideals -- although he has been a candidate for public office under the banners of the Democratic and Republican parties as well.

One of the main reasons that Diamondstone is seeking the governor's seat is access to its "bully pulpit," he said.

With the seat elevating his mouthpiece, Diamondstone said he would work to pull all U.S. troops out of Iraq, withdraw all aid to Israel, pay reparations to Iraqis and Palestinians and cease the use of ammunition containing depleted uranium.

These policies are part of his health-care plan, he said, linking war, terrorism and radiation to the basic healthiness of humans.

"There are kids being born with hands growing out of their shoulders and with no arms by the spouses of

U.S. troops at a rate of 10 times the occurrence within the rest of the population," said Diamondstone, discussing the effect of depleted uranium on reproduction.

His second goal as governor would be to seize the Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant in Vernon by eminent domain and then "let the citizens decide how long to keep it open, if they want to keep it open at all."

On the future of Vermont's economy, Diamondstone said the state needs to turn to organic farming of fruits, vegetables and meat and set up a plant to process the items.

Workers should also earn one hour of vacation time for every 12-hour shift, he added, amounting to approximately four weeks of paid vacation time each year.

"This is a health issue," Diamondstone said. "Workers need relief from the stress of their jobs and they need to spend some time with their families."

All the issues that Diamondstone talks about link back to his main issue: health care and the well-being of people.

He supports a socialized system of health care – not a single-payer insurance system – but health care that is run by the government and hospitals that are owned by the community.

"As long as profit is a goal, the drug companies will ruin health care any way they can," Diamondstone said. "All that matters to them is profit."

This year, Diamondstone chose to be a Progressive in the primaries, a decision that angered many top officials in that party.

"I'm always a Liberty Union candidate," said Diamondstone. "But I sometimes visit another party for the primary."

But members of the Progressive Party say Diamondstone made no attempt to contact them concerning his plans to run and their public disowning of his campaign is not an attack on his character.

"The party and party leaders has a strategy on how to approach the election and he [Diamondstone] does not fit into that," said Chris Pearson, the director of the Vermont Progressive Party.

The Progressives did not put a candidate forward for the governor's seat in this election. When asked about the decision, Pearson touted the work done by Burlington Mayor Peter Clavelle, a former Progressive turned Democrat, who is running for governor.

Pearson said the party does not plan to endorse Clavelle, however, and added that some party members have been discussing launching a write-in campaign to ensure that Diamondstone does not get the Progressive Party nomination for the seat.

Despite the Progressives damning his candidacy and the hundreds of thousands of dollars that Republican Gov. James Douglas and Clavelle are expected to raise – Diamondstone will carry out his campaign just as he has done in the past.

That means no campaign contributions, no stump speeches and little, if any, media advertising. Instead, he'll go and meet the Vermont voters, shake their hands, tell them why he is running and give interviews to the print and radio media outlets that want to speak with him.

"I don't raise money, although I occasionally get contributions, but never enough to report," said Diamondstone. "Instead, I'll go to the farmers' markets, the University of Vermont and the malls in Burlington and Rutland."

Yankee workers rally
Associated Press

Burlington Free Press, August 14, 2004
Business Section, Page B7
Located at the top of the page

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Among the 148 workers who may be striking are licensed reactor operators, auxiliary operators, instrument and control technicians, chemistry technicians, electricians and utility workers.

NRC inspection of Vermont Yankee plant begins today

Greenfield Recorder, August 16, 2004

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