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Date: 1/13/06 9:18AM
Subject: News to Me

Dear Sponsors and colleagues,

While I have just finished formulating a contingency plan in case the AGHCF is closed or the reopening is delayed, I read the following announcement in the Argonne News today (Friday the 13th). After you and I recover from the shock -- if we ever recover, please consider my plan for continuing to generate high-burnup cladding data for LOCA and SNF application, as well as mechanical properties needed to assess normal performance of high-burnup cladding. The Argonne News is located at http://www.anl.gov/Media_Center/Argonne_News/index.html

Mike

Nuclear Operations . We will separate programmatic and operational responsibilities for our nuclear facilities, so that all nuclear facility operations will be carried out by a new division whose sole focus will be nuclear operations; we are now in the process of setting up this new division.

<http://www.anl.gov/Media_Center/Argonne_News/2004/Bulletx.gif> Alpha-Gamma Hot Cells . After the OA and Price-Anderson Amendments Act assessments of last year, I directed that all programmatic work in our Alpha-Gamma Hot Cells be suspended, and I requested a detailed business plan for the continued (future) operations of our hot cells. My original intent was to re-start programmatic work once we could credibly claim that we had addressed all of the DOE's concerns, on the assumption that there is in fact also a credible business plan for moving forward. It turns out that there is no credible business plan, i.e., hot cell work can only continue if the lab chooses to subsidize that work. In my view, such subsidies are unjustifiable, and for this reason, I have directed that the Alpha-Gamma Hot Cells no longer be used for programmatic work. This course of action will also substantially lower the lab's safety risks. We are now in the process of working out alternate off-site arrangements for carrying out the programmatic work that will now no longer be done in our hot cells.

<http://www.anl.gov/Media_Center/Argonne_News/2004/Bulletx.gif> "Nuclear Facilities." According to DOE regulations, locations that have more than a certain well-defined threshold amount of radioactive materials must be

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regarded as "nuclear facilities." Argonne has a substantial number of such "facilities," mostly due to nuclear materials that are the remnants of our extensive nuclear reactor work of more than a decade ago. I have directed that all such materials be transported (in an appropriately safe manner) to the Alpha-Gamma Hot Cells; thus, while the hot cells will no longer be used for programmatic work, they will be used as a very safe interim storage location until we can get these nuclear materials off site. Once the lab has removed all such materials, these hot cells can then be fully shut down.

The past week has seen a real surge in activities related to these organizational changes, and I was very pleased to see the "can-do," cooperative attitudes displayed by all concerned. Argonne is at its best when we come together with a common purpose, and I think all of us would like nothing better than for Argonne to become "best in class" for safety - nuclear or other - within the DOE labs system. This is an achievable goal - so let's do it!

Mike

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