

## OPSMPEm Resource

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**From:** Harrington, Holly  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 01, 2012 2:03 PM  
**To:** OPSMPEm Resource  
**Cc:** Leong, Edwin  
**Subject:** NRC Public Blog February 2012  
**Attachments:** blog-published-2012-03-01.pdf

Office of Public Affairs

**Hearing Identifier:** NRC\_OfficialPresenceSocialMedia\_Public  
**Email Number:** 11

**Mail Envelope Properties** (65FB43187ED87C46B3F00CB97D081E605409BAC8C8)

**Subject:** NRC Public Blog February 2012  
**Sent Date:** 3/1/2012 2:02:51 PM  
**Received Date:** 3/1/2012 2:02:55 PM  
**From:** Harrington, Holly

**Created By:** Holly.Harrington@nrc.gov

**Recipients:**  
"Leong, Edwin" <Edwin.Leong@nrc.gov>  
Tracking Status: None  
"OPSMPEm Resource" <OPSMPEm.Resource@nrc.gov>  
Tracking Status: None

**Post Office:** HQCLSTR01.nrc.gov

<b>Files</b>	<b>Size</b>	<b>Date &amp; Time</b>
MESSAGE	26	3/1/2012 2:02:55 PM
blog-published-2012-03-01.pdf	573952	

**Options**  
**Priority:** Standard  
**Return Notification:** No  
**Reply Requested:** No  
**Sensitivity:** Normal  
**Expiration Date:**  
**Recipients Received:**

# U.S. NRC Blog

Archive file prepared by NRC

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## NRC's Blog Celebrates Its First Birthday

posted on Wed, 01 Feb 2012 16:25:32 +0000



It was one year ago that the NRC unveiled its first foray into social media with this blog. We didn't know how it would be met – and weren't entirely sure what we were doing. But we were hopeful the blog would give us a new avenue to educate and inform the public about what the NRC does, and provide a place for meaningful dialogue with the public. We were extremely happy with the response from Day One. It far outweighed our expectations. We also quickly realized that we couldn't – and shouldn't – restrict comments just to the topics we were covering. With the OK of Chairman Jaczko, we created the [Open Forum section](#), which allows all readers to talk, vent, question, praise or criticize about any NRC-related topic on their mind. In our first year, we put up about 150 posts, which generated almost 1,000 comments and 170,000 views. By far the most popular were those posts that went up in March, in response to the events in Japan. Other topics garnered attention, too – the North Anna earthquake, the River Bend flooding, Open Government and the lessons-learned from Fukushima. We want to thank you for taking the time to read this blog. We hope we'll continue to earn your attention in 2012. The blog is now also joined

by [Twitter](#), [Flickr](#) and [YouTube](#), and we hope you'll access those sites as well. And, as always, we welcome your comments. Let us know what topics you'd like covered in the future or any way we can make this blog more interesting and relevant to you.

*Holly Harrington*  
*Blog Moderator*

### Comments

comment #5169 posted on 2012-02-08 11:40:16 by Alliance Tickets

I think your blog and social media has opened up many avenues for the NRC and others to educate and inform the public with more interaction and convey their message to a broader audience. Good work so far on the blog.

comment #4961 posted on 2012-02-02 09:30:03 by

Congratulations on a successful first year! We look forward to more enhanced content!

comment #4942 posted on 2012-02-01 14:15:04 by Barry Woodard

I think your doing great Holly, Keep up the good work. Hope to join your group soon Barry W

comment #5088 posted on 2012-02-07 02:10:29 by Zain Munawari

Pretty fantastic and good job, good going Holly.

comment #5063 posted on 2012-02-06 07:19:06 by Alexander Biersack

Very necessary in times, were we should be building hundreds of nuclear power plants while the public knowledge about nuclear power is so poor, fear based instead of fact based. It is time to get off the imports of fossil fuels, save the hundreds of billions now paid for the imports and put them to a better use. As a side effect air pollution would be reduced. Do more of this!

comment #5077 posted on 2012-02-06 18:10:17 by Constantine

Congratulations! Great content! Keep the good work!

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## 2011 New Reactor Annual Review Available

posted on Fri, 03 Feb 2012 14:18:52 +0000

For the [NRC's New Reactor Program](#), 2011 was a year of significant progress. By year's end, we had completed reviews of the first combined license application, one design certification and two design certification amendments. We also started on the first design certification renewal review. In addition, we began addressing substantial policy issues related to the licensing of advanced reactors, while markedly refining the processes for overseeing construction activities, such as those underway at Georgia's Vogtle nuclear power plant. You can find comprehensive information on these developments and many others in the just-published second Office of New Reactors (NRO) annual review. The publication, "[2011 New Reactor Program](#)," makes finding timely and accurate information on the agency's new reactor activities easy and fast. The review is written in plain language and covers NRO's three main areas of focus: new reactor licensing, construction oversight and the Advanced Reactor Program. In addition, the publication features an "International Cooperation" section, as well as an "Overview" summary and "A Look Ahead" write-up. It concludes with "At a Glance," an organizational summary of divisions within the office, their branches and responsibilities. The 40-page review is available on the agency's public web site at: <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/nuregs/brochures/br0476/br0476.pdf>. Requests for print copies can be sent to:

[opa.resource@nrc.gov](mailto:opa.resource@nrc.gov).

*Bob Jasinski*  
*Senior New Reactors Communications Specialist*

### Comments

comment #5143 posted on 2012-02-08 01:06:27 by Principles of Prosperity

Very interesting. I wonder where nuclear energy is heading and the impact it'll have on foreign relations for the US.

comment #5089 posted on 2012-02-07 03:14:27 by Aladar Stolmar

I found two key issues to rise regarding the severe accident phenomena. 1. NRC is obsessed with post fuel damage phenomena and a lack of effort to avoid the damage to the fuel is evident. 2. The operators are not dealt with the deserved respect and do not have necessary means for interfering with the progression of a severe accident. It is necessary to revise the regulatory environment and correct it on the knowledge basis, including the zirconium firestorm in the steam as the leading severe accident phenomenon. Doing that will require the addition of a vent-depressurization line from the top of reactor of PWR type and the rerouting to the atmosphere of an alternate relief line from the turbine driven emergency cooling pumps of BWR reactors, which are left to be operated without any power source directly by the operators. It will add a shortcut pathway for energy release directly from the reactor into the atmosphere, operated by the operators in case of a severe accident. With sufficient gravity (staged pre-charged) water reserves it will avoid the zirconium firestorm in the core and the fuel damage.

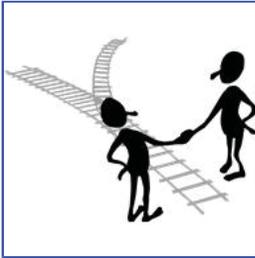
comment #6002 posted on 2012-02-20 21:01:34 by Glass

Nuclear power should be part of the solution for a greener future. If waste is properly managed, it'll play a vital role in meeting our future energy demands.

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## Using mediation to resolve issues at the FitzPatrick nuclear plant

posted on Tue, 07 Feb 2012 17:44:16 +0000



King Solomon may have been one of history's most revered mediators, but many others have tried to follow his lead when it comes to resolving disputes in a way that all parties involved can agree on and that yields practical results. Count the NRC among the proponents of mediation, where appropriate. The NRC, like many other regulatory agencies, uses a variety of regulatory tools to enforce its regulations. These can include the issuing fines, orders and confirmatory letters, all of which are designed to promote safety by preventing recurrence of the infractions. But starting in 2004, the agency's Office of Enforcement added another arrow to its quiver: [Alternative Dispute Resolution](#) (ADR). Under the ADR Program, a neutral mediator with no decision-making authority assists the parties in reaching an agreement resolving differences for certain enforcement issues. Most recently, the NRC and Entergy used ADR to achieve a settlement regarding apparent violations at the [James A. FitzPatrick nuclear power plant](#), in Scriba (Oswego County), N.Y. The issues stemmed from failures by radiation protection technicians at the facility to perform or properly execute their duties. Following an ADR mediation session held in the NRC's

Region I Office on Nov. 9, 2011, the parties arrived at an agreement that will not only lead to additional corrective actions at FitzPatrick but also raise awareness of the issues – and what is needed to prevent such problems -- throughout Entergy's nuclear power plant fleet and at plants nationwide. For instance, Entergy will prepare a case study about what occurred, with top managers at each of the company's nuclear power plants presenting the report to employees at their respective facilities. They will have to complete these presentations within 180 days. In addition, the company will, within 360 days, deliver a presentation to managers of other U.S. nuclear power plants on lessons learned and actions taken in response to the issues identified at FitzPatrick. Other agencies also make use of ADR in their enforcement programs. They include the Environmental Protection Agency, Securities and Exchange Commission and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Data on the NRC's use of ADR is available at: <http://www.nrc.gov/about-nrc/regulatory/enforcement/adr/trending-data.html>. More information about the use of ADR throughout the federal government is available at: <http://www.adr.gov/>.

*Neil Sheehan  
Region I Public Affairs Officer*

### Comments

comment #5123 posted on 2012-02-07 14:13:20 by Mike Mulligan

How is there justice for the community in such a widespread event questioning the integrity of so many staff members of a nuclear plant when the event was found before July 1, 2009 and punishment or the fix not happening into some distant future. That is two and a half years. Does anyone understand the magnitude of confirmatory orders fleet wide with Entergy, really a agreement between the NRC and a bad behavior utility and plant. Then we got all the rather large fleet wide problems that has occurred after July 1, 2009. The NRC could have immediately issued a set of orders and maybe half these other fleet wide violation wouldn't have happened. How many other discovered infraction are digesting in the intestines of the beast and we won't find the fix to the problems outwards too 3 or more years? What is the justice to the community, a quick identification to the problems and a immediate fix to it. Entergy has had a mind boggling numerous amount of fleet training and repeated third party safety cultural surveys over a host of serious problems through the recent years and the evidence proves this kind of stuff doesn't change the heart of this corporation. Matter of fact, this proves how ineffective the ADR process is at changing the bad behavior of nuclear plants...the parent corporations in general with numerous plants...with enduring systemic trouble fleet wide for years...

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## NRC Congressional Affairs Office Provides Link to Congress

posted on Thu, 09 Feb 2012 20:42:41 +0000



Last August, shortly after a magnitude 5.8 earthquake in Virginia triggered the shutdown of two reactors at the [North Anna nuclear station](#) and rattled 12 other nuclear power plants across the eastern U.S., NRC's phones began ringing. It had only been five months since a massive earthquake and tsunami pummeled Japan's eastern coast and severely damaged the Fukushima nuclear station. Questions streamed in about the structural safety of U.S. nuclear plants and their ability to withstand high-intensity seismic activity. Many residents living near nuclear power plants called their congressional representative, who turned to NRC's Office of Congressional Affairs (OCA) for answers. Over the next several days and weeks, OCA

responded to questions about reactor designs, safety equipment, loss of offsite electrical power, and the integrity of dry cask storage pads. In the aftermath of an international or domestic event like the Japan and Virginia earthquakes, OCA can receive a spate of inquiries. But throughout the year, members of Congress seek updates on nuclear facilities in their districts and various other issues under NRC's jurisdiction, such as information on nuclear medicine and effects of radiation exposure. OCA acts as the liaison between the agency and Congress, providing information on events and keeping members current on rulemakings and program and policy changes. Last year OCA arranged 93 NRC staff briefings for congressional aides and conducted 342 courtesy visits with congressional staff in Washington, in addition to 45 meetings with congressional staff in the district or state offices of the members of Congress. OCA works closely with the House and Senate authorizing, appropriations, and oversight committees of NRC. This time of year gets busy, when the president outlines his budget priorities and Congress digs into the budget process to develop its own version of funding levels for federal agencies. The Administration's budget request is set to be released on February 13, and congressional budget hearings are expected to follow. OCA will assist with the preparation of NRC witnesses and testimony for hearings, as well as responses to follow-up questions from Congress. Other activities include coordinating requests for briefings and reviewing correspondence with members of Congress. NRC testimony, congressional reports and correspondence to Congress are posted on NRC's [website](#).

*Jenny Weil*

*Office of Congressional Affairs*

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#### Comments

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### NRC Ranked as a "Top 20" Government Agency in "CAREERS & the disABLED" Magazine

posted on Tue, 14 Feb 2012 15:01:51 +0000



The NRC was recently recognized for its diverse workforce. Readers of "CAREERS & the disABLED" magazine selected the top agencies in the country for which they would most prefer to work or believe are progressive in hiring people with disabilities. Readers ranked the NRC as one of the "Top 20 Government Agencies." "CAREERS & the disABLED" magazine is the nation's only career-guidance and recruitment magazine for people with disabilities at undergraduate, graduate or professional levels. The NRC works hard to recruit people with disabilities. The NRC provides reasonable accommodations to remove workplace barriers for people with disabilities. These accommodations may include specialized computers and other assistive technology or equipment, telework and other flexible work schedules and sign language interpreting services. In addition, employees with disabilities are provided opportunities for advancement and leadership roles within the agency. Employees with disabilities hold such positions as engineers, branch chiefs and program analysts, among others. In 2011, one such employee was awarded the 2011 NRC Meritorious Service Award for Equal Employment Opportunity Excellence. We are proud that the readers of this magazine recognize our efforts.

*Kim English*

*Outreach & Recruitment Branch*

#### Comments

comment #5933 posted on 2012-02-16 21:12:00 by Aaron

Huh. I never knew that NRC has such a diverse workforce.

comment #5936 posted on 2012-02-16 21:57:11 by online college

Congratulations to you. Continue in hiring people with disabilities. I also believe that they can do better more than a normal person.

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### NRC Talking Research Next Week in Virginia, Pennsylvania

posted on Thu, 16 Feb 2012 14:40:26 +0000

We recently issued the [draft report](#) summarizing several years' worth of detailed research and analyses into what might happen during an accident at a nuclear power plant. Now we're heading to the two plants we analyzed -- one in Virginia and one in Pennsylvania -- to discuss the results with the surrounding communities. The project, called the State-of-the-Art Reactor Consequence Analyses, or SOARCA, looked at situations that could disable a reactor's normal safety systems. The project used powerful computer programs to predict the plants' behavior based on decades of real-world experiments into issues such as how reactor fuel responds during the extreme temperatures expected during these accidents. SOARCA then plugged up-to-date information about the plants, including the latest updates to plant systems and operations, into the programs and examined how an accident might unfold. SOARCA found that additional equipment the NRC required after the 9/11 attacks can, if used according to plan, help prevent a reactor accident from affecting public health. Even if accidents can't be controlled with the new equipment, the research came to three basic conclusions: • Accidents occur much more slowly than we originally thought; • Accidents release much less radioactive material than we originally thought; and • The emergency plans every U.S. reactor has in place can keep people safe. The project came to some more specific conclusions about accident effects around the two plants, Surry (southeast of Richmond, Va.), and Peach Bottom (southeast of Lancaster, Pa.). For example, the slowly developing nature of the accidents and the existing emergency plans would keep everyone safe, even during uncontrolled accidents. Some of the NRC staff involved in SOARCA will discuss the project on Feb. 21 in Surry, Va., and then on Feb. 22 in Delta, Pa. Details are available in the [press release](#). If you have comments on the draft report, you have until March 1 to send them in. The best way to comment is through [regulations.gov](#), using Docket ID NRC-2012-0022. You can also mail comments (referencing the Docket ID) to Cindy Bladley, Chief, Rules, Announcements, and Directives Branch (RADB), Office of Administration, Mail Stop: TWB-05-B01M, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001. Comments can

also be faxed to 301-492-3446, referencing the Docket ID. If you submit comments in writing or in electronic form, they will be posted on the NRC website and on regulations.gov. The NRC will not edit or remove any identifying or contact information; please don't include any information you wish to keep private.

*Scott Burnell*  
*Public Affairs Officer*

### Comments

comment #5912 posted on 2012-02-16 10:07:44 by Asparagusutter

This blog's discussion extension to accident boundary conditions beyond the two cited reactors opens the realm of US reactors to evaluation. Your attention is respectfully invited to the non fiction, "Goodby Phoenix Hello Tucson", ISBN 142516083-2. With winds from the West in eleven months of each year, temperatures at, or over, 122 degrees F and with evacuations such as Fukushima and Chernobyl denying coolant water from Phoenix area, what is NRC's evaluation of this worst case nuclear power plant's accident of a COLA (cooling water pipe break) with ultimate meltdown.

comment #5919 posted on 2012-02-16 17:37:48 by Water Damage Cleanup

This is a wise investment. The world has had a chance to see firsthand what happens when there is an accident at a nuclear plant. I can't wait to see any follow-up posts on this. Thanks all.

comment #5942 posted on 2012-02-17 03:20:30 by emily.krys@hotmail.com

It might be time to review safety measures at the site before any major accidents take place hopefully things can be resolved.

comment #5945 posted on 2012-02-17 05:01:32 by Aladar Stolmar

A brief review resulted in that the key process of Zirconium firestorm in steam is still missing. I found two key issues to rise regarding the severe accident phenomena. 1. NRC is obsessed with post fuel damage phenomena and a lack of effort to avoid the damage to the fuel is evident. 2. The operators are not dealt with the deserved respect and do not have necessary means for interfering with the progression of a severe accident. It is necessary to revise the regulatory environment and correct it on the knowledge basis, including the zirconium firestorm in the steam as the leading severe accident phenomenon. Doing that will require the addition of a vent-depressurization line from the top of reactor of PWR type and the rerouting to the atmosphere of an alternate relief line from the turbine driven emergency cooling pumps of BWR reactors, which are left to be operated without any power source directly by the operators. It will add a shortcut pathway for energy release directly from the reactor into the atmosphere, operated by the operators in case of a severe accident. With sufficient gravity (staged precharged) water reserves it will avoid the zirconium firestorm in the core and the fuel damage.

comment #5953 posted on 2012-02-17 21:32:35 by Nucleargrrl

Will either of the meetings to discuss SOARCA be web broadcasts or possibly tele-communication accessible? (For some reason the press release is not loading for me.) I would love to hear about the project in more detail.

comment #5956 posted on 2012-02-18 06:27:54 by nasal para

This is a wise investment. The world has had a chance to see firsthand what happens when there is an accident at a nuclear plant. I can't wait to see any follow-up posts on this. Thanks all.

comment #5966 posted on 2012-02-18 21:41:16 by Bella Piel

I just find it very difficult to believe that somehow circumstances just happened to occur that were completely unforeseeable. While I believe nuclear power can be made safe, I also believe that the profit-motive undermines the ability of the builders and operators of nuclear power plants from doing everything necessary to ensure Public Safety.

comment #5987 posted on 2012-02-19 18:48:35 by Electrical Contractor

Everybody will be safe even during uncontrolled accidents, I'm afraid this is a little hard to believe. How can the unknown be marked as safe? Nuclear is getting safer and more efficient and it keeps electricity costs low, but these companies should be investing in cleaner methods also, like wind, solar, tidal etc.

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### Transcripts Provide Unique Glimpse of an Agency in Action

posted on Tue, 21 Feb 2012 19:49:00 +0000



The NRC today has made available about 3,000 pages of [transcribed conversations](#) from the

agency's emergency operations center representing much of our communications over the first 10 days of the Fukushima reactor crisis in Japan in March 2011. These documents provide a rare look inside the workings of the agency's crisis center as the men and women of the NRC worked 24/7 to find ways to help Americans in Japan, the Japanese government and the firm that owns the Fukushima reactors. It is up close and personal, gritty and unvarnished. It lays out the very human stories of staffers working with little rest, talking to counterparts half a world away while at the same time conversing with other agencies in the executive branch, our armed forces and the domestic nuclear industry. This is a historical record of what went down in those early days. As you read these transcripts – partially redacted and produced at substantial cost over nine months in response to [Freedom of Information Act](#) requests -- you'll see that the first days were very hectic. There wasn't a lot of information. There was confusion and communication problems. But the NRC staff quickly settled into a rhythm after the first alert – long hours, little rest, bad food – and important handoffs between shifts, regular communications with our teams in Japan, and in time working directly with the Japanese and TEPCO, the plant owner. And there was steady communication with the American public and the news media. In fact, this blog became a primary communications tool and readership greatly exceeded our expectations. The situation appears stable now, but it was far from it in the early days as staff experts, under the direction of Chairman Jaczko, made tough and sometimes controversial recommendations. Today, the NRC is working to implement [lessons](#) our experts have culled from what happened at Fukushima. We invite you to read these [transcripts](#) to see an agency hard at work in the name of safety.

*Eliot Brenner  
Director, Office of Public Affairs*

#### Comments

comment #6098 posted on 2012-02-23 11:16:28 by MaskThor @ Anime Blog

I won't read all 3000 of them (who would?), but I will check out at least few pages.

comment #6045 posted on 2012-02-22 15:33:30 by Web Designer Edinburgh

Chairman Jaczko is very controversial person however many his guidelines needs to be followed

comment #6055 posted on 2012-02-22 21:13:26 by Pictures Of Disney World

yes it is the historical record of what went down in those early days.

comment #6654 posted on 2012-02-24 11:47:22 by SEO

Must of been a crazy time during the beginning

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#### A Reminder about the RIC

posted on Thu, 23 Feb 2012 16:51:55 +0000



The NRC's 24th annual [Regulatory Information Conference \(RIC\)](#) is around the corner, March 13th to 15th, in North Bethesda, Md. Yes, the conference is free and open to the public, but you still need to register. You can [register online](#) before Feb. 28 or on-site at the registration service desk. In addition to a comprehensive program agenda and network opportunities, participants will have their pick of 36 technical sessions and 24 technical poster and tabletop presentations. There will also be several sessions addressing high-interest topics associated with the Fukushima Dai-ichi accident and the NRC's response to lessons-learned such as seismic and station blackout events, flooding and ventilation issues, emergency preparedness and incident response. For your convenience, we have introduced new social media elements including a RIC Twitter feed, Quick Response (QR) codes and YouTube videos. • Twitter: Follow us @NRCGOV\_RIC and get the up-to-the-minute postings of RIC news and highlights and you can go to the direct [RIC Twitter feed](#). Non-Twitter followers can access the same information at the [RIC website](#). • QR Codes: displayed on conference materials and technical posters and tabletops that you can quickly scan using compatible hand-held devices to take you to specific conference information links • YouTube: view the short video snippets of the RIC opening and plenary sessions the day after each session. Additional links will take YouTube visitors to the NRC video archives to view the entire sessions at the [NRC video archive](#) web page. Visit the [NRC website](#) for more information on the RIC, registration and access to post-RIC event materials. And check out our new [YouTube video](#): Three Minutes on the RIC.

*Ivonne Couret  
Public Affairs Officer*

#### Comments

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#### Reaching Out to Help around the Globe

posted on Tue, 28 Feb 2012 13:55:39 +0000



When you think about countries where the NRC conducts international cooperation and

assistance, Tanzania would probably not be the first one that comes to mind; however, that is where a group of five NRC employees recently held a workshop on regulatory practices related to uranium production. In recent years, there has been increased global interest in uranium mining and milling. This has led to a significant impact on countries with limited experience and a lack of regulatory infrastructure and trained staff. As a result, the NRC's Office of International Programs initiated outreach on this topic to our counterparts around the world. Uranium is a naturally occurring radioactive element that has been mined in the U.S. and other countries around the world for centuries. After being processed, uranium can be turned into fuel for nuclear power plants; however, if uranium mining and milling sites are not properly regulated, the radioactive materials and wastes at those sites can be hazardous for the public and the environment and lead to complex and expensive clean-up operations. Abandoned or unregulated uranium recovery sites where hazards remain after operations have ceased, are known as "legacy sites." Restoring these legacy sites may require clean-up of contaminated land and groundwater, and activities to reduce contamination from waste piles. With proper strategies undertaken early in the planning stages of uranium mining and milling, countries can take steps to avoid the creating these legacy sites, which are costly and difficult to clean-up. The NRC is providing best practices and lessons learned to its international counterparts who are beginning to embark on uranium production, with the focus on helping to build strong regulatory infrastructure and preventing future legacy sites. The NRC has hosted three workshops for international counterparts on the "Regulation of Uranium Recovery Operations" in Denver (August 2009), San Antonio (May 2011) and Arusha, Tanzania (January 2012). The three workshops have included participants from 31 countries from Central and South America, Asia and Africa. These workshops facilitate the sharing of best practices on the regulation of uranium mines and mills, including regulatory framework (laws, regulations, and guidance), application review, licensing process, oversight and inspection, cleanup, and decommissioning. The workshop presenters stress the importance of independent regulatory authorities, well-established laws and regulations and long-term planning related to uranium recovery. Presenters from the NRC, the International Atomic Energy Agency and Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission have discussed the environmental, health, and safety aspects related to uranium mining, milling and decommissioning and have facilitated the exchange of information between workshop participants. The workshops in the U.S. also included tours of uranium recovery facilities and decommissioned uranium mills. Future workshops targeting specific regions are being planned.

*Eric Stahl*

*International Relations Specialist*

**Comments**

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