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DESTROYING ONE OF EUROPE'S MOST HAZARDOUS NUCLEAR LEGACIES

July 12, 2012 – 12:00 pm | 0 Comments

Fifty-seven tonnes of highly-contaminated liquid metal from fast reactor research tested the minds of engineers and scientists in the UK for two decades. Now, after an operation that took five years to complete, the team working for a consortium of Babcock International, CH2MHILL and URS has completed arguably the biggest hazard reduction in the UK decommissioning sector to date. Britain's experimental fast breeder reactor operated from 1959 until 1977, paving the way for a larger prototype fast reactor that operated until 1994.

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2012 EPRI Groundwater Protection Workshop Wrap-Up

Submitted by **kellie** on July 10, 2012 – 9:42 pm

By Tim Blake

The EPRI Groundwater Protection Workshop (in association with the Nuclear Energy Institute RETS/REMP Workshop) was attended between June 26th and June 29th in Orlando, Florida, US by over 100 nuclear power industry professionals responsible for groundwater protection initiatives at nuclear power plants.

With a focus this year on continuing development of groundwater protection programs, the Workshop aims to present the latest information on related tools, strategies, technologies and experience for specific aspects related to groundwater management. Over the course of three days, question and answer sessions, seminars and presentations were conducted, with input from a wide range of technical specialists, from “boots on the ground” power plant workers, to regulatory specialists from the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). Through this open dialogue approach, themes such as Groundwater Monitoring and Sample Analysis, approaches for detecting and mitigating spills, and the importance of comprehensive and accessible data management tools were discussed, and plans for the continuing excellence of performance in groundwater protection programs were drawn up.

The most significant discussions focused on the recent Nuclear Energy Institute (NEI) guidance to combine Underground Piping and Tank Integrity efforts with the Groundwater Protection program as a whole. This guidance suggests that more thorough and informed communication should exist between those responsible for the physical components of a plant, and the environmental monitoring personnel responsible for groundwater sampling, monitoring and protection.

All of these conversations pointed toward an ever increasing amount of data being collected, with a greater value placed on tools to help share, analyze and report these data to regulators, experts and stakeholders, be it for ongoing monitoring, remediation or decommissioning purposes.

One such tool that was presented was Locus Technologies' Environmental Information Management software. This web-based tool

is currently in place at Exelon's nuclear fleet, as well as a number of other nuclear power plants and Department of Energy (DOE) sites, and is used to collect, verify, analyze and report all data collected at a facility. By managing data from sampling events, monitoring wells and effluent testing, and combining them with maps and physical properties of a site, this tool allows for a holistic view of a facility to be generated, and as it is cloud-based, information can be shared among all stakeholders and interested parties with ease.

As the workshop came to a close, the focus turned toward the future, with new techniques for remediation, preparations for decommissioning, and potential NRC and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulation changes all presented and discussed. The EPA, for example, outlined plans to bring the 40 CFR Part 190 Radiation Protection Standards up to date, based on the current status of the United States' nuclear fleet, and the increased understanding that 30 years of best practices and sampling results have provided. Any such changes would affect operating plants, and may well influence decommissioning timeframes and action plans, so the attendees of this workshop will be keeping a close eye on this revision process as it develops. They also know that both EPRI and the NEI will provide support as needed, and by uniting their combined experience with cutting edge technologies, the nuclear power industry will be prepared for whatever the future holds.

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ENERGY SPENT IN DECOMMISSIONING



Quite recently, I was taken aback when somebody asked me about the energy (e.g. Mwh or Petajoules, PJ) spent to demolish a NPP, and the innuendo was that the decommissioning-related energy could be comparable with the construction of the same NPP, and even to the energy generated by that plant. I must admit I had no answer to offer on the spot. And yet, I realized soon that this is an argument used at times by the anti-nuclear groups. Was this really a loaded question? I decided to launch an enquiry among my colleagues

and friends and I am glad to share the results with you.

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