

Three Mile Island

ALERT

March
2008

The Newsletter of Three Mile Island Alert - 315 Peffer Street - Harrisburg, PA 17102

Volunteers, Help, & Resources Needed

Plans Begin for 30th Anniversary Observance

Planning has begun for the observance of the 30th anniversary of the beginning of the nation's most serious nuclear accident at Three Mile Island. The observance will take place under the cloud of a pending application to renew the license for TMI Unit 1 for an additional 20 years, but will provide opportunities to both recall past battles and look to a brighter, greener, safe-energy future. Plans for the 30th anniversary include some presentations and exhibits on what happened at TMI, some discussions of current issues facing TMI and the nuclear industry, and some looks forward at the future of energy policy. Unfortunately, battles TMI Alert has been waging for years will likely still be considered current a year from now. These include security issues at TMI and other plants, as well as the failure of government and the nuclear industry to adequately address evacuation planning. TMI Alert welcomes all donations and volunteers and encourages readers to return the enclosed "Donation/Volunteer" form.

NRC Explains Relicensing Procedure

At a pair of public meetings in the Middletown area on March 4, representatives of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) explained the steps they will go through before they extend the license of TMI Unit 1 to operate for another 20 years. As the industry is battling a thousand—48 requests for renewal decided to date, 48 licenses renewed—no one expects the request will be denied, though there are compelling reasons to do so. The clean-up of Unit 2 is scheduled to take place at the expiration of the license for Unit 1. The current license expires in 2014. Under previously approved plans, both units are scheduled to be decommissioned with all fuel and wastes removed at the same time. Until the license expires in 2014, 2034, or, heaven forbid, a later date, Unit 2 will continue to serve as a home to tons of highly-radioactive nuclear wastes left over from the 1979 meltdown. Though few would argue that an island in a river prone to flooding is an ideal site for storing high-level atomic wastes, NRC officials focused on the silver lining: that's 20 more years for the radiation to decay so the pile won't be quite so hot at the time of decommissioning. Information on the license renewal process is available at the NRC's web site: <http://www.nrc.gov/reactors/operating/licensing/renewal.html>

TMIA Plans to Fight Relicensing

The odds of keeping TMI Unit 1 from being relicensed by the NRC are slim, but TMI Alert's Eric Epstein says he'll fight it with everything he's got. "To be realistic, I think TMI Unit 1 will be renewed, but there are serious issues that need to be addressed and, if we're successful in presenting these issues to the NRC, we should be able to ensure a safer plant, with a more stable work force, more stable management, with realistic evacuation plans in place, and reasonable tax support for local communities."

Epstein pointed out how the license renewal process provides yet another forum to address long-held community concerns about the operations of the plant. These range from the dramatic cutbacks in staffing since Exelon purchased the plants, the frequent turnover in Exelon's on-site management personnel, the failure of the company and state government to address the issue of evacuation of preschoolers and other at-risk populations, the restoration of tax payments to local communities, and the massive amounts of water the plant takes from the Susquehanna River during routine operations even when the region is under drought conditions.

Education Lottery Foundation
www.laka.org
Digitized 2018

Help Wanted - TMIA Webmaster

Every fifth year, as the 5th, 10th, 15th, 20th, and 25th anniversary of the accident approached, TMI Alert was inundated with requests for information from the news media, academics, journalists, safe energy activists, and other interested citizens. With the 30th anniversary approaching and the whole world watching our website (www.tmia.com), the organization is currently without the talent and resources to keep the site up-to-date and up to current standards for the effective presentation of information using web technology. Computer savvy? Or have a kid who is computer savvy, environmentally conscious, and looking to pad a resume? Though there's no pay, the successful candidate will get to work with middle-aged safe energy activists who won't understand half of what s/he is saying about web site operation, but will inspire him/her with their passion, commitment, and concern for our neighbors.

King Joins Planning Council

Randy King, who worked for the City of Harrisburg for 22 years, serving as the Mayor's press secretary and director of communications, has agreed to join TMIA's Planning Council. King currently serves as a Senior Communications Associate with Triad Strategies in Harrisburg. Before his city government service, King served as Executive Director of the Three Mile Island Public Interest Resource Center (TMI-PIRC) which served as an umbrella group for all of the area's safe energy groups (TMIA, the Susquehanna Valley Alliance, York Environmental Alliance, People Against Nuclear Energy, the Middletown-based Mad Mothers, and others) and coordinated their work and resources.

Just How "Green" is Nuclear Power?

From an article by **By Mark Hertsgaard**

"... nuclear power is seven times less cost-effective at displacing carbon than the cheapest, fastest alternative -- energy efficiency," according to studies by the Rocky Mountain Institute. For example, a nuclear power plant typically costs at least \$2 billion, or up to \$5 billion with overruns. If that money were spent to insulate drafty buildings, purchase hybrid cars, or install superefficient light bulbs and clothes dryers, it would lead to seven times less carbon consumption than if that money were spent on a nuclear power plant. In short, energy efficiency offers a much bigger bang for the buck. In a world of limited capital, investing in nuclear power will divert money away from cheaper and faster responses to global warming, thus slowing the world's withdrawal from carbon fuels at a time when speed is essential.

Mark Hertsgaard is a fellow at The Nation Institute and author of *Nuclear Inc.: The Men and Money Behind Nuclear Energy* and *Earth Odyssey: Around the World in Search of Our Environmental Future*. Contact Hertsgaard through his Web site, www.markhertsgaard.com.

Protection sought for whistle-blowers

Casey Demands Answers on Security Issues

U.S. Senator Bob Casey (D-PA) wrote to Gary Sanders, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the Wackenhut Corporation, demanding more information about incidents involving inattentive security guards at the Peach Bottom nuclear plant in York County. Exelon, owner of Peach Bottom and TMI, has terminated its contracts with Wackenhut, but the company is under contract to protect about half of the commercial nuclear plants in the U.S. Guards were found to be sleeping while on duty at Peach Bottom. Though reported to management by other guards, the employee reporting the lax security was told to keep quiet.

"Exelon's decision to terminate security contracts with Wackenhut at all of their nuclear power plants should improve the security of our nuclear power plants and the peace of mind of all Americans. I have serious concerns about the manner in which Wackenhut handled security issues raised by one of their own employees months ago. I will continue to monitor the security situation at the five nuclear facilities in Pennsylvania and those around the country," said Casey.

Casey also said he would introduce legislation that would create an office within the NRC dedicated to processing complaints from whistle-blowers who report lapses in security or other threats to public safety. The whistle-blower at Peach Bottom fired by Wackenhut was not hired by Exelon when it moved the security detail in-house.

Noll Named Site Vice President at Three Mile Island

Exelon Nuclear announced in mid-February that William G. Noll was named Three Mile Island Site Vice President, replacing Rusty West, who decided to leave Exelon to pursue other opportunities.

Noll brings more than 30 years of experience within the nuclear industry to his new position, with experience in plant operations, engineering, training, and major project design and implementation. Before joining Exelon as Vice President, Mid-Atlantic Operations in May, he was Director, Site Operations, at the Robinson Nuclear Plant in South Carolina.

Said our own Eric Epstein, "There must be something in the water down there. That's four vice presidents for one nuclear reactor in eight years. It would be nice if radioactive waste left the Island at the rate Exelon replaces vice presidents. Hopefully, Bill will stay around long enough to improve emergency planning for kids, install a new radiation monitoring system, and hire more workers."

THREE MILE ISLAND ALERT

DONATION/VOLUNTEER FORM

Mailing address: TMIA, 315 Peffer Street, Harrisburg, PA 17102 --- www.tmia.com--- phone 717/233-7897

Please add my name to the list of supporters of Three Mile Island Alert.

I would like to be a dues paying: new member renewal member

Membership Categories: Individual \$20 Non-Profit Org \$25 Sustaining \$50 Institutional or Corporate \$100

I would like to make an additional donation of \$_____ \$_____ Total enclosed

I am interested in contributing my time to assisting TMIA (check all that apply)

- Staff TMIA booth at local events Present talks and slide shows Contact local businesses for support
 Web site development Help with or coordinate anniversary events Radiation monitoring

Name: _____

NRC Approves Power Increase at PPL Nuke

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission in late January approved an increase in the amount of power the Susquehanna nuclear plant near Berwick can generate. Because the increase would require the utility to draw more water from the Susquehanna River, approval from the Susquehanna River Basin Commission was also required and won. However, TMIA's Eric Epstein filed an appeal with the SRBC, voicing concerns about increased draws from the water, especially when the midstate is in a drought condition. PPL has announced it would like to add a third reactor to the site which would place additional pressures on downstream lifeforms.

Fiscal Conservatives Pan New Nukes

The conservative CATO Institute joined with Ralph Nader and Bonnie Raitt in pointing out that if it weren't for government subsidies, there would be no private sector interest in building new nuclear power plants. Tufts economist Gilbert Metcalf reported that absent the subsidies, the cost per kilowatt hour for electricity generated at new nuclear power plants is 5.94 cents. Compare that to a conventional coal plant, 3.53 cents, or a clean coal plant, 3.55 cents, and the economic case for nuclear power disappears. Concludes CATO, "There is no more to the right-wing case for nuclear subsidies than there is to the left-wing case for solar subsidies."

Casey Circulates Anti-Power Line Petition

Sen. Bob Casey's website features a petition for those opposed to the federal government's plan to designate 52 of Pennsylvania's 67 counties as part of an electric power transmission corridor. If approved, the corridor would enable dirty coal-fired power plants in the midwest to ship power across Pennsylvania to power hungry states in the northeast, thereby befouling Pennsylvania's air with no benefit to the state. Get more information and sign the petition here: <http://casey.senate.gov/actions/>

TMI Alert celebrated its 30th anniversary in 2007.

March 28, 2009 will mark 30 years since the beginning of the TMI accident.

TMI Alert - fighting for you and your family's safety for more than ~~three decades~~.

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