



Many Voices Working for the Community

Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board

For Immediate Release

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Site Specific Advisory Board Meeting to Feature Presentations on Western Disposal Facilities

Oak Ridge, Tenn. - June 26, 2000 - Representatives from three western radioactive waste disposal facilities—the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP), the Nevada Test Site (NTS), and Envirocare of Utah—will discuss disposal operations at the Wednesday, July 5, meeting of the Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board (SSAB). The meeting will begin at 6:00 p.m. at the Garden Plaza Hotel in Oak Ridge.

“Shipping wastes to offsite repositories is a crucial part of DOE’s plan for remediation of the Oak Ridge Reservation,” says SSAB Chair Steve Kopp, “so our board has followed developments in this arena closely. By inviting representatives from these three key facilities to visit Oak Ridge, we’re providing an opportunity for local citizens to hear about these facilities firsthand and to have their questions answered about how the facilities operate, what transportation options are available, and so on.”

Located 26 miles southeast of Carlsbad, New Mexico, WIPP was designed to store transuranic radioactive wastes left over from the production of nuclear weapons. The facility has been in operation for just over a year, following over 20 years of scientific study, public debate, and regulatory deliberation. According to Bryan Westich of DOE’s Waste Management organization, DOE-Oak Ridge is not currently shipping wastes to WIPP, but it plans to start sending transuranic wastes there in 2003.

NTS is located 65 miles north of Las Vegas and is larger than the state of Rhode Island, encompassing 1350 square miles of land. Originally established as a proving ground for nuclear weapons testing, site missions have diversified over time to include radioactive waste disposal. DOE-Oak Ridge began shipping low-level wastes to disposal facilities located at NTS in April and will ship 11,000 cubic feet of waste there this year, says Westich.

While WIPP and NTS are both DOE facilities, Envirocare of Utah is one of the few private radioactive waste treatment and disposal operations. The company’s Clive, Utah, site has been in operation since the late 1980s. Westich says DOE-Oak Ridge is currently shipping mixed radioactive and hazardous wastes to the facility.

Presentations on radioactive waste disposal and other environmental topics of interest to the community are a regular part of the SSAB monthly meetings, which are usually held at the Garden Plaza on the first Wednesday of the month.

The SSAB is a volunteer citizens' panel providing advice and recommendations to the DOE-Oak Ridge Environmental Management Program. Chartered in 1995 under the Federal Advisory Committee Act, the SSAB is composed of up to 20 members, chosen to reflect the diversity of gender, race, occupation, and interests of persons living near the Oak Ridge Reservation.

For more information, call the SSAB at 576-1590 or 241-3665 or see the Boards' web site at www.oakridge.doe.gov/em/ssab.

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