

Citizens Advisory Board Committee Minutes



Committee: Strategic Issues

Date: December 19, 2005 – 9:00 a.m. (MT)

Participants

Board Members: John Bolliger, Committee Chair
Doc DeTonancour
David Kipping
Larry Knight

DOE-ID: Shannon Brennan
Alan Jines

Support Staff: Lisa Aldrich
Lori Isenberg

Objective(s) for the Committee Call

- Safety issues and reporting strategies.

Safety Issues and Reporting Strategies

Recently, there have been a number of accidents. Some information was acquired by the Snake River Alliance via the Freedom of Information Act. Which brings up the following questions: How severe before DOE tells the public about the event? What is the reporting process? What is not reported and why? What is the follow-up? Bolliger would like to see if it can be on the next meeting agenda for information and discussion.

DeTonancour commented on the drum fire being a lot more serious than the propane leak including the facility shut down involved because of the accident. The local Idaho Falls news did report on this event.

Knight commented about December 15th Statesman editorial that he thought had a very positive view on this. The editorial reported so far this year INL has written 170 occurrence reports and the public has access through FOI act. But that is a rare and difficult procedure and contents may be an embarrassment to the lab. By giving the public the run around the DOE compounds public relations damage by looking like they have something to hide. They recognize that some the groups (environmentalists) have some of their own agenda (those who oppose ongoing nuclear work at the site) and use these instances as tactics in favor of raising opposition against new projects. The article states “we will take a different tact in arguing for openness. We understand the value of nuclear research. This work is the INL mission and is valuable to the state and the nation, but would like to see how scientists routinely respond to and learn from safety problems.” And the ending statement “openness breads comfort and comfort breads support.” He would like to hear from Rick what the criteria are and how they publicize the incident.

Alan Jines (DOE public affairs covering EM work) updated how they put together incident reports. For example, today there was a small fire out on the shooting range. There was no issue other than the fire department was called using the wrong phone number, so it wasn't done by procedure, but it was still done safely. These reports are written for internal audience and done quickly and effectively without worry of how it will look in a public article. They internally monitor these reports for trends (i.e., lockout/tagout violations) and if they see a trend, it is then brought to the attention of the contractor and classified as a recordable. Beth Sellers is developing a plan to issue a summary (2-3 sentences for each incident) every few weeks with a press release or similar.

Jines also reported that threshold criteria (reporting criteria) for the press releases will be given to the Snake River Alliance and any other stakeholder group interested. This would be a good discussion for the CAB. A discussion to include what is the threshold criteria, review copies of internal reports for familiarity, and the plan for the summaries (currently being developed and may still be in planning stage).

Kipping commented on the difference in reporting between the propane leak and the drum fire. There wasn't the same kind of reporting for the drum fire, which seemed to be more serious. Why? Also commented that safety is not an environmental management issue, it is a sitewide issue and would like to hear the NE protocol for safety reporting or if safety coordinated across the site.

Plan for 30 minute presentation on the January agenda.

Actions

- Jines will submit any prior information to Brennan for distribution in the pre-meeting package.
- Brennan to contact Stacy Francis and any others that may be interested in this subject.
- Portage to develop and distribute minutes for the call.