

Blue Grass *exchange*

A Partnership for Safe Chemical Weapons Destruction

Design Update

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Summer 2005

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Blue Grass Chemical Agent-
Destruction Pilot Plant

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An Even Dozen

Good Conversation Is Served at Community Roundtables



After a dozen community roundtable luncheons, from April 2004 to the present, more than 70 local residents have visited the project office, dined with senior leaders and quizzed them in a small group setting. In this photo montage, beginning at top and moving counterclockwise, winners of educational grants at the recent May luncheon; Madison County residents at the January luncheon; Richmond area ministers at the October 2004 luncheon; and newcomers to Madison County at the February luncheon. For more information, see article on page 2.

Photos by Sandra Plant and Jill Abner

An Even Dozen

Good Conversation Is Served at Community Roundtables

The community roundtable luncheons held in late May marked the 12th small group meeting of special guests from the community with the four senior leaders involved in the safe storage and destruction of the chemical weapons stockpile.

The goal of the roundtables, according to Chris Midgett, project manager for Bechtel Parsons Blue Grass, "is to provide an informal setting for small groups of invited community members and leaders to interact with project team members."

Since the first luncheon meeting in April 2004, more than 70 persons have heard informal briefings on project status and had the opportunity to ask questions and express concerns. Midgett brought the idea of the roundtables from the Anniston, Ala., Chemical Agent-Destruction Facility.

The guests have been able to quiz Midgett as well as the commander of Blue Grass Army Depot, Col. Martin Jacoby (who is retiring), and the government's site project manager, Jim Fritsche. The Blue Grass Chemical Activity is represented by Lt. Col. George Shuplinkov, who has been commander since mid-summer 2004. The previous chemical activity commander, Lt. Col. Dennis

Cantwell, attended until June 2004, when he left for a new assignment in Belgium. The July roundtable will be the first for the new depot commander, Col. Rick Mason.

Danella Tate attended the community roundtable luncheon in September 2004, representing the Madison County Extension Homemakers. She wrote a note expressing her appreciation for the opportunity. "I was very impressed with Mr. Midgett's ability to explain technical procedures simply enough for a layman to understand."

She also commended Jim Fritsche's "down-to-earth assessments and Col. Jacoby's enthusiasm for his job and our community."

The inaugural roundtable in April 2004 welcomed local elected officials. Subsequent roundtable dates and attendees include: May 2004, public safety officials; June 2004, school superintendent and principals; July 2004, Richmond Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors; August 2004, County Judge-Executives; September 2004, civic club leaders; October 2004, Richmond-area ministers; November 2004, agricultural leaders; January 2005, Madison County residents; February 2005, newcomers to Madison County; April 2005, elected officials

and district congressional staffers; and May 2005, winners of educational grants. The next session, in July 2005, will welcome members of the board of directors of the Berea Chamber of Commerce.

If you or your organization is interested in attending one of the community roundtable luncheons, please contact the Blue Grass Chemical Stockpile Outreach Office at (859) 626-8944.

New Commander Takes Charge at Blue Grass Army Depot

Col. Rick Mason is the new commander of Blue Grass Army Depot. Mason comes to the depot from the Middle East, where he served as chief of support for the Multinational Force and Observers operating in the Sinai desert in Egypt under the Camp David Peace Accords.

From June 2002 to June 2003, Mason was a staff officer at Headquarters, Department of the

Army, in Washington, D.C., where he was responsible for developing policy and guidance for munitions management and readiness, including planning the movement and support of critical ammunition and missiles for Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Mason's military education includes the Logistics Executive Development Course, the Army Command and General Staff College and the Army War College. He holds a Bachelor of Science in chemistry from Loyola College of Baltimore and a Master of Science in logistics management from Florida Institute of Technology.

Look for an interview with the new depot commander in a future issue of *Blue Grass Exchange*.



Col. Rick Mason

2005 Safety Fair Draws a Crowd



Photo by Diane Osbourne

The recent 2005 Madison County Safety Fair drew more than a thousand visitors to the Madison County Fair Grounds. The visitors toured exhibits and displays set up by more than 25 emergency and safety organizations. Madison County Chemical Stockpile Emergency Preparedness Program employees Stephanie Parrett (left front) and Lana Lynch (at back), help Madison County residents identify the emergency response zones where they live or work and the zones where their children go to school. For more information about your zone, contact the Madison County Emergency Operation Center at (859) 624-4787.

Managers' Quarterly Update

By JIM FRITSCHÉ
Blue Grass Chemical Agent-Destruction
Pilot Plant Site Project Manager
and CHRIS MIDGETT
Bechtel Parsons Blue Grass
Project Manager

Both of us are looking forward with much enthusiasm to the dynamic path forward laid out for the project. All of the project partners are involved in a major new design effort resulting from the government's redirection of priorities.

In addition to the design consideration studies discussed in the spring 2005 issue of the *Blue Grass Exchange*, we

have now been tasked to re-examine concepts for safe processing of M55 rockets stored at Blue Grass Army Depot. This initiative is based on M55 rocket fires that occurred during rocket processing at the Army's Alabama, Arkansas and Oregon destruction facilities.

Please see pages 4 and 5 of this issue of *Blue Grass Exchange* for an update on the overall design consideration studies plus new information on the exploration of separating the rocket motors from the warheads. This will significantly reduce the total quantity of energetics to be processed, thus reducing the size of the facility and the hazards associated with rocket motor shearing. We are referring to this new activity as design consideration number 43B.

We take every opportunity to inform the public about our new direction. We encourage you to ask questions and give us your input both formally and informally. You will notice in the calendar of upcoming events that the Chemical Destruction Community Advisory Board (CDCAB) working group meets July 19. There will also be a public information session July 26.

One impact of the redirection of top priorities is that we will need to revise project deliverables and costs. The term we use is "rebaselining," and we will be at work on this effort through August. Hopefully, we will have new schedules and cost information in the next issue.

Many of you have asked about the budget situation. The released funding announced in the spring issue will cover work through fiscal year 2006, which ends Sept. 30, 2006. Congress has proposed increasing the Program Manager Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives budget by \$20 million for fiscal year 2006. There are still some issues with identification of military construction

funds that will be needed to start construction. We will keep you informed as the budget process continues.

The summer begins with a new commander at Blue Grass Army Depot. We welcome Col. Rick Mason to his new post and look forward to working with him. We certainly wish the retiring commander, Col. Martin Jacoby, all the best in the future. We will miss his background and leadership. Because of his

previous experience as commander of Umatilla Chemical Depot, Ore., during construction of that chemical weapons demilitarization facility, Jacoby brought to this project the experience needed to help integrate depot operations with the chemical weapons disposal project.

In closing: June 13 marked the second anniversary of the government's award of the chemical weapons destruction contract to Bechtel Parsons Blue Grass. Much progress has been made in these two years, and we are proud that we still maintain a perfect safety record.



Jim Fritsche, at far right, the government's site project manager, gives a project update to Rob Rumpke, at left, executive director of the Richmond Chamber of Commerce, and Amy Scarborough, center, president of the Chamber. Rumpke and Scarborough co-host the monthly cable television program.

National Research Council Report on Blue Grass Available Online

The letter report of the National Research Council (NRC) committee to assess the design of the Blue Grass Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant is available online. The report can be accessed at the following link on the Web site of the National Academies at <http://www.nap.edu/catalog/11330.html>.

The study was initiated at the request of the Department of Defense and the Program Manager Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives. The NRC committee began the Blue Grass study in February and published its report at the end of May 2005.

Speakers Available

When Tracy McIntosh, family resource center coordinator for Daniel Boone Elementary School, needed presenters for the school's health and science night, she knew to contact the Blue Grass Chemical Stockpile Outreach Office.

McIntosh knew that the outreach office could assist in coordinating speakers for the event. She said, "We always look for opportunities to involve the community with our school, and the chemical demilitarization program is such an integral part of our community, it seemed like a natural fit." The team members gave briefings, provided handouts and answered questions for parents, students and teachers.

If your group or organization would like a speaker on the chemical weapons stockpile, please contact the Blue Grass Chemical Stockpile Outreach Office at (859) 626-8944 or e-mail outreach@bechtel.com. Speakers are available from the Blue Grass Army Depot, the Blue Grass Chemical Activity, the Program Manager Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives or any of the teaming partners of Bechtel Parsons Blue Grass.

Based on anticipated funding constraints, the Program Manager Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives (PMACWA) and Bechtel Parsons Blue Grass are continuing to study options that may reduce the cost of constructing and operating the Blue Grass Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant (BGCAPP).

After receiving direction from PMACWA, the project immediately began redesign efforts in three areas:

- Design changes in the munitions demilitarization building (MDB) that result from reduced processing rates. The engineering team in Pasadena, Calif., has worked to reduce the size of the MDB from 99,000 square feet to approximately 75,900 square feet. (See graphic.)

Potential Savings:

Approximately \$115 million.

Status: On schedule.

- The team has optimized post-treatment processing rates and reduced the number of super-critical water oxidation units from five to four.

Potential Savings:

Approximately \$4 million.

Status: Being implemented into the design.

- Originally, in the container handling building (CHB), the project was going to use the same conveyors as overhead cranes that were used in the incineration facilities in Utah, Alabama, Arkansas and Oregon. However, this equipment is expensive and high maintenance, and the project is now going to use forklifts to move munitions within the CHB.

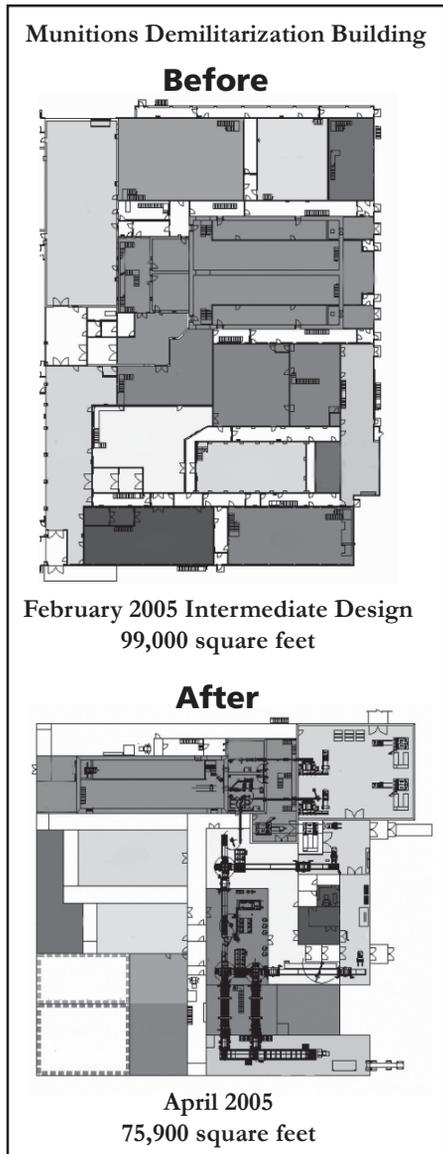
Potential Savings:

Approximately \$14 million.

Status: Undergoing government review.

The government and systems contractor team are also investigating additional design alternatives that may reduce the overall life-cycle cost of the facility. The community — through elected officials, the Kentucky Chemical Destruction Community Advisory Board (CDCAB) and the governor-appointed Kentucky Chemical Demilitarization Citizens' Advisory Commission — has been involved in the decision-making process. (See related article on page 6.)

The project has put together seven design consideration study teams to evaluate these additional potential design alternatives. These teams,



comprised of representatives from PMACWA, Army Corps of Engineers, Bechtel Parsons Blue Grass, Blue Grass Chemical Activity, Blue Grass Army Depot, FOCIS Associates, Mitretek Systems and Science Applications International Corporation, are currently looking at:

- Reconfiguring the mustard projectiles by removing the energetics before treatment in the facility. The team is examining the physical removal of the burster and burster well from the projectile. This material can then be processed at a facility separate from the agent-containing projectile. This operation can be performed manually under engineering controls using well-developed technology and trained personnel. The team is also investigating alternative destruction methods including the explosives destruction system, controlled detonation chamber and a static kiln that is currently undergoing testing in Germany.

Potential Savings:

Approximately \$31 million.

Status: Ongoing. Soliciting input from the Kentucky CDCAB before making final decision.

- Moving structures currently within the restricted area to areas outside the chemical limited area fence line. This will reduce the number of employees who need to be part of the chemical personnel reliability program, which is designed to ensure the highest possible standards of individual reliability in employees performing duties associated with chemical weapons storage, handling and disposal. The program was established to ensure that the individuals

assigned to positions involving access to or responsibility for the security of chemical material are emotionally stable, loyal to the United States, trustworthy and physically fit to perform assigned duties. Individuals working outside the fence will not be handling chemical weapons.

Potential Savings: Approximately \$36 million.

Status: Being implemented into the design effort.

- Shipping chemical agent hydrolysate and energetics hydrolysate out of state to a permitted treatment and disposal facility. In the destruction process, munitions will be disassembled by modified reverse assembly. The chemical agent and energetics are separated. Agent and energetics are chemically mixed with a caustic solution or

Design Considerations to Reduce Costs

water to destroy the chemical agent using hydrolysis. The resulting chemical compounds, known as hydrolysates, are held and tested to ensure agent destruction before proceeding to secondary treatment. The current design calls for using supercritical water oxidation as a post-treatment.

Potential Savings: Approximately \$41 million.

Status: Ongoing. Continuing to request cost information from licensed commercial treatment facilities. Soliciting input from the Kentucky CDCAB before making final recommendations to PMACWA.

- Shipping secondary wastes to out of state facilities permitted to handle hazardous wastes.

Potential Savings: Approximately \$27 million.

Status: This action has been endorsed by the Kentucky CDCAB and will be incorporated into the redesign.

The following options were also examined and found to have no cost benefit:

- Reviewing the new guidance on airborne exposure limits to evaluate the potential to eliminate the heated discharge conveyors.

- Reevaluating closure needs, laws and requirements. The project will continue to involve the Blue Grass Army Depot, Kentucky Department for Environmental Protection, the Kentucky CDCAB and other stakeholders in closure planning and implementation.

In addition, the project will:

- Continue with the supercritical water oxidation processing building intermediate design as originally planned. This design is due to the government in November 2005.
- Delay other support facility intermediate designs until the munitions demilitarization building redesign effort is further along.

Other items that have been redesigned include replacement of the catalytic oxidizer and the smaller upstream venturi scrubber in the off-gas treatment system with an air-heated bulk oxidizer. This will be used for treatment of off-gases from the metal parts treater and energetics bulk hydrolyser off-gas waste streams, not for the treatment of chemical agent or agent-contaminated energetics. We will also continue to monitor secondary waste treatment lessons learned from other chemical weapons destruction sites and apply them to the project as appropriate.

New Program to Focus on Rockets

The recent rocket motor propellant fires at chemical weapons destruction facilities in Oregon and Arkansas have caused officials at the Blue Grass Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant project to reassess current plans for destroying M55 rockets at the Blue Grass Army Depot.

"While the current design for the neutralization plant calls for the same type of rocket shear equipment in use at the incineration facilities, we are exploring alternatives to reduce the risk of possible similar incidents occurring once the Blue Grass plant becomes operational," said Jim Fritsche, government site project manager.

As a risk reduction effort, the project team is now evaluating the separation of rocket warheads and motors and processing the rocket motors in another facility on the depot or transporting offsite for disposition.

The team will identify the recommended technology and approach to separate rocket motors (which contain propellant) from warheads (which contain nerve agent) and

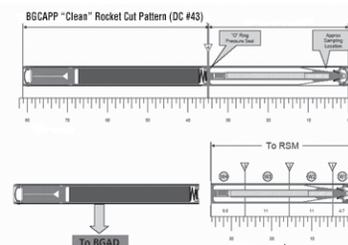
recommended method for destroying and disposing of the rocket motors and propellant. This effort will be executed as a "project within a project" with a dedicated team drawn from Bechtel Parsons Blue Grass supplemented by Blue Grass Army Depot personnel and others as needed. The current plan is to finalize the design in 2005 and initiate operations in late 2006.

"This effort is our top priority," said Chris Midgett, project manager for Bechtel Parsons Blue Grass. "As part of the evaluation we will submit a design for government approval. Upon approval, we will go into the fabrication and construction phase."

Prior to the recent events in Oregon and Arkansas, the concept of separating the rocket motors had been under consideration for the last several months by the project design team as a way of improving operations and reducing overall cost. It will now be pursued more vigorously as a potential risk reduction measure.

In addition to the technical aspects, the public will play a key role.

Rocket Motor Separation Concept



"Public participation will be a critical element of the decision-making process," said Fritsche. "We also will be working with stakeholder groups such as the Kentucky Chemical Destruction Community Advisory Board, state regulators, elected officials and others."

Fritsche and Midgett emphasized the government and contractor commitment to safety.

"Our goal has always been to reduce the risk of the chemical weapons to the community. We are confident that as we develop solutions to destroying these obsolete weapons, we will make Madison County a safer place to live and work," they said.

Guest Columnists

Advisory Board Engages in Project Redesign Issues

By CRAIG WILLIAMS AND KENT CLARK

Co-Chairs, Chemical Destruction Community Advisory Board

The Chemical Destruction Community Advisory Board (CDCAB) meeting on May 24 focused primarily on funding and design issues associated with the weapons disposal project. After an intense few months of working to ensure adequate funding for the Blue Grass chemical demilitarization program, the project is back on track.

In January, the Chemical Weapons Working Group held a press conference revealing the Pentagon's intention to delegate the Blue Grass, Ky., and Pueblo, Co., stockpiles to a "caretaker" status for the next five years, thus putting both disposal projects on hold. In close coordination with our Congressional delegation, members of the CDCAB let the Pentagon know that such a postponement of the disposal project was unacceptable. And through Senator Mitch McConnell's leadership, funds have now been restored. At the May meeting the CDCAB asked that Senator McConnell's representative convey the entire board's appreciation to the senator for his decisive and dedicated efforts in addressing this situation.

Even with funding restored, project officials are still directed to consider a range of design changes that could reduce disposal costs. In their search for viable changes that would lower the price tag while maintaining the integrity of the Blue Grass process, the Army and Bechtel Parsons remain committed to citizen participation as an integral part of their decision-making. Responding to that commitment, the CDCAB created a Redesign Subcommittee to gather details on the design changes being proposed and make recommendations back to the full board.

That subgroup met April 20, with their next meeting scheduled for July 19. The changes under consideration cover a wide range of options — some fairly simple and straightforward, others very technical and complicated.

For example, one proposed change was to move the support buildings outside the security area of the disposal operation itself (where the chemical agent is actually destroyed). This would reduce the number of workers requiring special security clearance and thereby save millions in administrative costs. The CDCAB supported this change.

A more complicated change deals with reconfiguring the M55 rockets and mustard projectiles (removing the explosives from the munitions) before the disposal facility is even built. This would reduce the size of the plant, allow the explosives to be treated as non-chemical weapons and reduce the processing time. However, there are all sorts of complex issues associated with this proposal — from safety (Where would these weapons be taken apart?) to regulatory (What type of permits would have to be issued by the state?).

The Redesign Subcommittee of the CDCAB will continue its engagement in these and the other areas being considered for modification



U.S. Army Photo

Seated at the conference table during the recent advisory board meeting, from left to right, are Dr. Robert Miller, Kentucky Chemical Demilitarization Citizens' Advisory Commission; Madison County Judge-Executive Kent Clark; Craig Williams, Chemical Weapons Working Group; Tim Thomas of the Kentucky Department for Environmental Protection and Rob Rumpke, Richmond Chamber of Commerce. Judge Clark and Williams are co-chairs of the advisory board.

over the next several months, making sure the interests of the community are fully considered as decisions are made.

Remember, the community advisory board's purpose is to provide community participation in how this program is executed. If you have comments, ideas or suggestions, please feel free to contact any of the board members.

Editor's Note: Meetings notes from CDCAB quarterly meetings and a roster of board members can be accessed on the Web site for the Program Manager Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives at www.pmacwa.army.mil.

Stay Informed; Stay Involved

Calendar of Upcoming Meetings and Events

- **July 19, 1:30 – 3:30 p.m.** Chemical Destruction Community Advisory Board (CDCAB) is holding a design consideration/secondary waste working group meeting at the Bechtel Parsons Blue Grass project office.
- **July 26, 6:30 – 9:30 p.m.** A public information session is scheduled at the Madison County Extension Center on Duncannon Lane to update the community on the project, to receive comments and to answer questions.
- **Sept. 13, 1 – 4:30 p.m.** The CDCAB will hold its seventh quarterly meeting at the Perkins Building, Eastern Kentucky University, Richmond, Ky. The Kentucky Chemical Demilitarization Citizens' Advisory Commission will meet following the CDCAB meeting. The public is invited.

For more information, contact the Blue Grass Chemical Stockpile Outreach Office at (859) 626-8944 or by e-mail at outreach@bechtel.com.

Co-Op Student: "Recycling Improves Office Safety"

When Eastern Kentucky University cooperative education student Curt Collins saw a "mounting" problem in the Bechtel Parsons Blue Grass office, he came up with a plan to increase recycling in the project office.

"There were a few small recycling bins for paper and only one bin for cans. The bins were overflowing with paper and boxes, creating the potential for a safety hazard. As the project grows, so does the need for recycling materials," Collins stated.

Collins coordinated with the local recycling center to deliver more recycle bins and strategically placed them around the office. He added bins for plastic materials and one for used printer cartridges. The bins are clearly marked, more accessible, and user-friendly. The recycling center has a regular pick-up schedule for the office, and printer cartridges are sent to an office supply store for recycling.

Increasing the ease of recycling was only half the plan. Informing employees about the new opportunities for recycling and encouraging them to participate was the other. Collins developed and implemented a communications campaign for recycling. During the bi-weekly safety meeting he informed employees about the changes in recycling in the office. He also developed written procedures that were provided to each project employee.

Collins is pleased with the increase in recycling throughout the office. "We always put safety first, so I thought this was a good way to decrease the risk of a safety hazard around the office. It also helps to keep waste down in the community."

Collins, a Berea, Ky., resident and graduate of



Curt Collins' recycling ideas included a communication plan for fellow employees.

Photo by Diane Osbourne

Madison Southern High School, is an administrative services specialist with Bechtel Parsons Blue Grass through the cooperative education program at Eastern Kentucky University. He graduated in May 2005 with a bachelor's degree in communication studies. He plans to continue his co-op experience through the summer.

Citizen *Exchange*

Citizen Exchange focuses on questions frequently asked by members of the community. If you have a question you would like to have answered in this section, please send it to Editor, Blue Grass *Exchange*, ATTN: Bechtel Parsons Blue Grass, 301 Highland Park Drive, Richmond, KY 40475. You may also send questions via e-mail to outreach@bechtel.com. We hope you find this section informative and useful in understanding the efforts to safely destroy the chemical weapons stored at the Blue Grass Army Depot.

Have there been any recent leaks of chemical munitions stored at the Blue Grass Army Depot?

Officials from the Blue Grass Chemical Activity recently confirmed the detection of GB (sarin) nerve agent vapor inside a chemical weapons storage structure containing M55 rockets. The agent vapor was detected and confirmed using gas chromatographs, which detect chemical agent at extremely low levels.

Following the preparation of a work plan to ensure maximum safety, chemical workers in protective clothing and masks entered the structure to determine which of the rockets was leaking. After two weeks of extensive isolation procedures, five leaking rockets were identified. These rockets were placed into leak-proof containers (called "over-packing") and kept in the storage structure until it was determined that these were the only leaking munitions. The rockets have been moved into another specially monitored storage structure that contains only over-packed munitions. While there was no danger to the community at any time during this process, local and state emergency preparedness officials were kept informed throughout all phases of the operation.

Do you have any information related to the fires that have occurred during the destruction of M55 rockets at chemical weapons destruction plants in Arkansas and Oregon?

Five rocket propellant fires occurred in April and May at the Army's chemical weapons disposal facilities at Umatilla Chemical Depot, Ore., and Pine Bluff Arsenal, Ark. The fires occurred during the automated processing of drained GB (sarin) M55 rockets inside explosive containment rooms at the facilities and posed no threat to the workers or the local communities.

Safety is the cornerstone of the chemical demilitarization program in eliminating the chemical weapons stockpile and the threat posed by these weapons to the community. During events such as these fires, the safety features at the facilities have worked as they were designed. In each instance, workers and the surrounding communities were fully protected. The explosive containment rooms completely contained the fires as well as any potential agent contamination.

While such events were anticipated and safety features designed into the facilities, their recent frequency has caused concern. The

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Citizen Exchange

continued from page 7

Army is actively investigating the cause of these fires. As part of that investigation, samples of the rocket propellants are being sent to an Army investigative laboratory at Picatinny Arsenal in New Jersey. We are asking Picatinny to inspect the rocket motors and propellants to see if either has any potential relationship to the cause of the fires.

The Army works in concert with Congress, the National Research Council, state regulatory agencies, other Army agencies and many other independent oversight agencies in the chemical stockpile disposal program. The Army and its contractor partner that operates the Pine Bluff, Ark., and Umatilla, Ore., disposal facilities, Washington Group, International, appointed an internal working group and hired independent experts to review potential causes and solutions to the M55 rocket fires. The Army is confident that working with the oversight agencies in this collective effort will resolve the issue safely.

The best way to protect the public is to dispose of these weapons safely and expeditiously. In the 15 years since the Army began destroying the U.S. chemical weapons stockpile, there were six total fires until the recent events. All of the fires, except for one, have been associated with destroying drained GB-filled M55 rockets.

What has the Army done in response to the fires?

The U.S. Army Chemical Materials Agency formed a rocket task force to conduct an in-depth investigation into the five fires that occurred in April and May at its chemical weapons destruction facilities in Arkansas and Oregon. Preliminary results from the task force assessing the design integrity of explosive containment rooms at the two sites showed that “the (explosive containment rooms’) structural integrity, including explosion containment capability, is not compromised by repeated inadvertent ignition of propellant events.” To date, preliminary assessments have indicated that the rockets remain stable in storage and during the routine handling operations that bring them to the destruction facility. At this point, all fires have been associated only with rockets involved in the actual shearing/disposal process.



Blue Grass Chemical Agent
Destruction Pilot Plant

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