



## Triay Pledges Open Door Policy, Renews Commitment to Safety



Triay addresses worker safety.

Calling worker safety a top value at the Department of Energy, EM Assistant Secretary Inés Triay this week encouraged union officials to provide feedback under an open door policy she will push as vital challenges remain in the nation’s nuclear weapons cleanup effort.

During a May 24 meeting with the United Steelworkers Atomic Energy Workers Council in Washington, D.C., Triay pledged to listen to union officials as her organization continues to focus on EM safety performance that she said has shown improvement in the past two years.

Addressing worker safety, Triay told the gathering of union officials who help manage work at cleanup sites throughout the country she “would encourage you to help us to standardize some of the approaches” in the program. EM “has a particular challenge” at many sites where there are

*continued on page 2*

### In This Issue

- Open Door Policy .....1
- NM Water Pact .....1
- In Brief.....1
- SRS Destroys Cooling Tower.....3

### – IN BRIEF –

#### ■ Triay Urges New Grads To Look Beyond Limits

Drawing parallels to past successes in the nation’s effort to clean up hazardous waste from the former nuclear weapons program, EM Assistant Secretary Inés Triay urged students at Washington State University’s Tri-Cities (WSUTC) to look beyond limits as they face challenges in the days and years ahead.

In her May 14 commencement address to about 400 college graduates at the Tri-Cities campus, Triay addressed new beginnings and the importance of looking forward, comparing the graduates’ journeys to those of the Manhattan Project and subsequent Environmental Management Program. WSUTC is

*continued on page 4*

## EM and New Mexico Water Project Sign Water Quality Protection Pact

Citing the importance of environmental cleanup work at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL), N.M., and the safety of local communities, DOE Acting Chief Technical Officer Frank Marcinowski joined in signing an agreement to ensure the drinking water of Santa Fe, N.M., contains no contaminants from the lab.



DOE Acting Chief Technical Officer Frank Marcinowski and Rebecca Wurzburger, chair of the Buckman Board of Directors and Santa Fe Mayor Pro Tem, sign water quality protection agreement during recent ceremony in New Mexico.

“The Office of Environmental Management understands how critical it is to protect

our natural resources such as water,” he said during the May 13 signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with New Mexico’s Buckman Direct Diversion Project board of directors. “This memorandum reaffirms our longstanding commit-

*continued on page 2*

## Open Door Policy

... continued from page 1

multiple contractors at a single location, she added.

*“We have a lot of construction programs and actual cleanup projects that are part of a very complex and dynamic portfolio and the only reason we’re being successful is because of you.”*

“To the extent that you can assist us as we strive to maximize standardization site-wide” of safety rules and standards, “I would encourage you to do so,” said Triay, who has championed a culture of excellence at the Office of Environmental Management since leading the massive hazardous waste cleanup effort.

James “Kip” Phillips, international vice president of USW and head of its atomic sector, termed Triay’s call for input “very refreshing.” He said his organization welcomed participation in the process, adding, “We’re interested in working with you.”

During the session, Triay commended the role of union organizations in stepping up to provide training and mentoring guidance to new workers required by the surge in cleanup work “as our portfolio has expanded significantly.” The EM portfolio has grown this past year to include \$6 billion in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds.

Current EM plans call for a reduction in the legacy footprint of Cold War-era sites across the country of 40 percent by the end of FY 2011, according to Triay. That means that the overall footprint of its facilities would shrink from about 900 square miles to roughly 540 square miles, she said.

Triay singled out work underway in the field by union organizations to ensure workers understand relevant safety rules and standards. “We have a lot of construction programs and actual

cleanup projects that are part of a very complex and dynamic portfolio and the only reason we’re being successful is because of you.”

Reminding union officials of the challenges ahead, Triay solicited input from union officials who deal with health and safety issues on a regular basis. “My door is always open. We know your work is hard...don’t be bashful” about discussing challenges and recommending ways to improve the process, she said. ■

## NM Water Pact

... continued from page 1

ment to protecting the communities and environment around our cleanup sites,” said Marcinowski, who also serves as deputy assistant secretary for technical and regulatory support.

Approximately 30 state and local officials, as well as congressional representatives, attended the event at Santa Fe’s City Hall.

Currently under construction, the Buckman Direct Diversion (BDD) Project will allow the City and County of Santa Fe to access surface water they own, including from the Rio Grande, to use for drinking water. The MOU describes DOE-funded measures to ensure lab-derived contaminants do not enter the city’s water supply. Earlier this month, the New Mexico Environment Department released a study of the Rio Grande that showed LANL-derived contaminants were not influencing water quality at the Buckman Project intake 12 miles away.

Rebecca Wurzbarger, chair of the Buckman Board of Directors and Santa Fe Mayor Pro Tem, who also signed the MOU, noted that the board and DOE have worked for several years to address concerns about the quality of LANL storm water entering the Buckman project.

“The process that will flow from this Memorandum of Understanding will result in a win-win situation for the entire Santa Fe Community,” she said. “I am confident that in less than a year we’ll be celebrating a true state-of-the-art project that will add to the reliability, sustainability and flexibility of our water supply system.”

Under the agreement, DOE will:

- Build additional sediment barrier and containment systems to stop migration of LANL contaminants to the Rio Grande and to groundwater;
- Monitor surface and groundwater flow from LANL to Buckman;
- Measure contamination of buried sediments upstream of the BDD project site; and
- Provide an early notification system allowing BDD to stop diversions of water expected to contain elevated levels of contaminants from LANL.

DOE also provided support for the board to retain independent peer review of LANL-origin contamination of the public drinking water resources of the City and County of Santa Fe. ■



## *Savannah River Site Destroys Massive Cooling Tower*

The Savannah River Site's (SRS) K cooling tower was demolished safely May 25 as part of the site-wide footprint reduction initiative funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).

The 450-foot-tall and 345-foot-wide structure posed a unique challenge to SRS project managers as the second largest cooling tower to be demolished worldwide.

Dewitt Beeler, Savannah River Nuclear Solutions (SRNS) director of Area D&D Projects said, "It isn't every day that we deal with the demolition of a structure the size of the K Cooling Tower, and it was clear early in the process that we needed expert help."

After weighing various demolition possibilities, SRS managers chose American DND (Demolition and Decommissioning), Grand Island, N.Y., for the work and contractor Maryland-based Controlled Demolition Inc. (CDI) helped perform the task.

For the demolition, more than 3,860 holes were drilled at selected spots on the tower and loaded with explosives. The charges were detonated in a controlled fashion involving precise sequencing and timing to ensure the tower fell in a selected impact zone. Plans call for the rubble to be transported to an on-site landfill for permanent disposal.

The tower, which was located east of K-reactor, was built in 1992. It was designed to cool the water in a reactor in support of national defense initiatives.

Rita Stubblefield, deputy federal project director for the Department of Energy, said, "The demolition of the K Cooling Tower marks the achievement of a significant milestone in the Recovery Act mission at SRS. It has allowed us to create new jobs while reducing the site's cleanup footprint."



*The massive structure is the second largest cooling tower to be demolished worldwide.*



*The rubble will be transported to an on-site landfill for permanent disposal.*

### *EM Update*

Published twice monthly by the Office of Environmental Management  
U.S. Department of Energy, 1000 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20585

**Contributors:** David Borak, Tony Chiri, Jim Giusti, Carrie Meyer

**Web site:** [www.em.doe.gov](http://www.em.doe.gov)

**Email:** [EMUpdateNewsletter@hq.doe.gov](mailto:EMUpdateNewsletter@hq.doe.gov)



## – IN BRIEF –



*Triay tells college graduates that passion fuels great contributions.*

... continued from page 1

located in Richland, Wash., and provides research and support relevant to the Hanford Site cleanup mission.

Triay said, "I went to Los Alamos with that firm belief and in 1999 when I was recruited to join the Department of Energy to lead the beginning of the operational phase of the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant in New Mexico, a deep geologic repository for the disposal of waste contaminated with elements such as plutonium, I was pleased and proud to serve the country."

Said Triay: "I assure you that in your journey you will face challenges, disappointments, and adversity that at times will seem insurmountable and yet I can guarantee you that the only thing that can limit you and your contributions to human kind is yourself. I speak from personal experience."

Triay spoke of challenges throughout her life, crediting her professional achievements to the teachers who

encouraged a young Hispanic girl to study math and science.

"As long as you are passionate, you can make a great contribution. Make sure that you do not limit yourself," said Triay, who spent 14 years as a scientist with Los Alamos National Laboratory before joining EM's management ranks in 1999.

WSUTC is a premier research university that provides students an opportunity to earn undergraduate and graduate degrees in an array of fields including math and science. WSU Tri-Cities is committed to providing quality education, research and service to the Columbia Basin region.

### ■ EM Joins Spring Meeting for State, Tribal Government Officials

The State and Tribal Government Working Group, the National Governors Association's Federal Facilities Task Force and the National Confer-

ence of State Legislatures' Environmental Management (EM) Roundtable met in Nashville, Tenn., May 3-5 for a joint spring meeting despite heavy flooding in the region.

Members of the groups met with EM officials to discuss state and tribal involvement in EM issues such as budgeting, strategic planning, waste disposition, and the Recovery Act. The meeting also included a tour of the Paducah, Ky. site, a joint plenary session with presentations by EM officials, and individual meetings by the groups.

Frank Marcinowski, DOE Acting Chief Technical Officer, answered the groups' questions in separate meetings and addressed them collectively at the plenary session. Other EM officials who presented at the meeting included John Mocknick, EM Recovery Act program manager, and Jay Rhoderick, Director of the Office of Strategic Planning and Analysis.

"This co-located meeting of three intergovernmental groups provided EM with an excellent opportunity to communicate with a wide variety of constituents," said Melissa Nielson, Director of DOE's Office of Public and Intergovernmental Accountability.

The State and Tribal Government Working Group (STGWG), formed by the Secretary of Energy in 1989, supports representation from each affected state and Tribe in semi-annual meetings with EM leadership that are focused to address concerns. These meetings help ensure that the DOE facilities and sites are operated and cleaned up in compliance with applicable federal and state laws and

*continued on page 5*

## – IN BRIEF –

... continued from page 4

regulations, and tribally protective rights and interests.

The National Governors Association Federal Facilities Task Force consists of Governor-appointed policy and technical representatives from 13 states that host DOE facilities. The task force assists DOE in improving coordination of its major program decisions with Governors' offices and state regulators, ensuring decisions reflect input from key state officials and stakeholders.

The National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) EM Roundtable is composed of legislators from states that host or border federal nuclear weapon complex sites managed by DOE for environmental cleanup. The EM Roundtable meets twice a year to share information, learn about federal activities from DOE officials, and tour facilities. NCSL is a bipartisan organization that serves the legislators and staffs of the nation's 50 states, its commonwealths and territories.

EM has a cooperative agreement with NCSL that provides both logistical and staff support for the State and Tribal Government Working Group as well as the NCSL EM Roundtable. With the support of this agreement, NCSL serves as a conduit for the exchange of information concerning cleanup of the nuclear weapons complex among the Department, state legislatures, legislative staff, state executive branch staff, and tribal government representatives.

### ■ DOE Issues Nickel Sale RFP

On May 14, DOE issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) covering solicitation of a sales agreement to buy approximately 15,300 tons of radiologically-contaminated nickel scrap recovered from uranium enrichment process equipment at its Paducah, Ky., and Oak Ridge, Tenn., facilities.

The potential buyer will be required to declassify and decontaminate the nickel scrap prior to gaining title. The title transfer and the sale will occur after DOE certification of declassification and decontamination of the nickel, and compliance with property management requirements.

Under the effort, the nickel will be transported, processed, and reused or recycled into products that will be used in radiologically-controlled applications. This material is not intended for unrestricted release into commerce and no nickel disposition activities will be performed outside the United States.

DOE invited potential bidders to submit their proposals by July 28.

### ■ Cooper Tapped Acting Deputy Manager for Idaho Project

James Cooper, who has 17 years of experience at the Department of Energy in various management positions, has been named Acting Deputy Manager of the Idaho Cleanup Project.

In a May 25 announcement, the Idaho Operations Office said DOE would competitively post the job and find "the best qualified candidate" for



*Richard Provencher, Manager of Idaho Operations Office*

permanent placement. The Idaho Cleanup Project has a staff of 70 federal employees and an annual budget of about \$450 million.

Richard Provencher, who was recently named new manager of the Idaho Operations Office said, "I have a high level of trust and confidence in Jim's ability to continue the great cleanup progress. He has demonstrated his ability to perform environmental cleanup work safely and efficiently."

In his new role, Cooper will be responsible for all of the EM work performed by the office and carrying out such work in accordance with applicable safety requirements. He will oversee management of spent fuel, high level waste, low level waste, transuranic waste, and mixed waste as well as the Research Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) and Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act programs.