

HOMELAND SECURITY

Y-12 plant vulnerable to earthquake damage

The Associated Press

OAK RIDGE, Tenn. — A seismic analysis has found that the Y-12 nuclear weapons plant is literally on shaky ground, raising questions of whether to repair or replace a key building in the aging plant to better withstand earthquakes.

A review of Building 9212, where uranium warhead parts are made, "indicated extensive seismic deficiencies with the building structure as well as facility systems and components," according to an internal memo.

Repairing the building could cost \$35 million to \$72 million and take up to five years, according to the Oct. 15 memo from the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board.

But replacing the building, which the government hopes to do by 2013, could cost \$1 billion or more.

"It shouldn't be too surprising that the 1950s-era facilities would have deficiencies in terms of earthquake standards," said Kent Fortenberry, the safety board's technical director in Washington.

But it does raise questions about what to do immediately.

"We're not going to discuss this publicly until we discuss it with the board," said Bill Wilburn, spokesman for managing contractor BWXT.

Fortenberry refused to elaborate on the seismic weaknesses of Y-12, which were discovered during a new round of safety reviews at Y-12 and other nuclear weapons facilities.

He did say the board, an oversight group created by Congress, was monitoring the situation.

"BWXT concludes that it is not cost-beneficial to perform the seismic upgrades based on the total cost and schedule estimates and the expected remaining facility life (about 10 years)," the board's Oak Ridge staff members said in the memo to Fortenberry.

The safety board said the National Nuclear Security Administration, the Department of Energy office that manages the weapons program, was evaluating the seismic studies and the "risk implications."

Fortenberry said a compromise may be reached short of a full-fledged rehab program. The safety board will push for the "maximum safety benefit" within DOE's constraints, he said.

"If there is an unacceptable risk posed by the situation, the board will address that," Fortenberry said.

In 1989, contractor engineer Paul Nestel claimed he was fired for raising seismic concerns at the 9212 Building, saying the building's unreinforced walls would collapse during a serious earthquake.

Other seismic engineers later disputed some of Nestel's conclusions, but the concerns prompted a series of reviews and calls for more detailed studies of seismic weaknesses at Y-12 and other nuclear facilities.

Next Meeting

There will not be a monthly meeting in November. Our regular monthly meetings are usually held on the last Thursday of each month. However that would place November's meeting on Thanksgiving Day and we know everyone would rather be with their families so it is rescheduled for December 2nd. This meeting will also serve as December's meeting as the last Thursday is during the Christmas and New Years holidays.

We hope everyone has a safe and Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

We hope to make the coming year as productive and as interesting as the past year has been.

Christmas for Kids

Pam from the Sheriff's department has sent me a note to remind everyone that some of the ways we can participate in helping the Sheriff's Department this Christmas is to:

Donate Coats for Kids - They are needing Kids sizes

Angel Tree - Donation of good used toys or clothing

Or

You may purchase new toys and bring them to the Sheriff's Dept.

Or

Take an Angel off of the tree at Wal-Mart and purchase the kids Christmas.

Official says government looking at security options at Y-12 plant

The Associated Press

OAK RIDGE, Tenn. — Recent incidents at the Y-12 nuclear weapons plant have prompted the government to consider turning security over to the plant's operating contractor, a federal spokesman said.

"We expect to make a decision within the next few weeks," said Walter Perry of the U.S. Department of Energy's Oak Ridge office.

The National Nuclear Security Administration recently signed a six-month contract extension with Wackenhut Services, the company that has provided security at Y-12 since 2000. Wackenhut also has a contract with DOE for the remainder of the government's Oak Ridge facilities, including Oak Ridge National Laboratory and the Federal Office Building.

BWXT is the warhead plant's operating contractor.

Within the past year, there have been several negative reports about security at the complex.

In September, as six guards were practicing reload techniques with semiautomatic handguns — supposedly using inert ammunition that looks like real bullets — a live bullet was discharged and struck a refrigerator. No one was injured.

And in January, a federal inspector general's report accused Wackenhut's 400-plus contractor guard force of cheating on performance drills.

Perry said DOE plans to extend its security contract with Wackenhut for one year, through January 2006, and then seek bids for a new, long-term contract. The plan is to keep security services under a separate contract, he said, with the contractor reporting directly to the federal agency.

But with Y-12, Perry said NNSA is considering three options for security: seek bids on a new federal contract; offer the job as a subcontract, with the security company reporting to BWXT; or make security services a part of BWXT's management contract.

Proponents believe consolidating the Y-12 roles would help eliminate communication problems between the plant's overall management and the security team. But Wackenhut would like to keep security as a separate contract at Y-12. "We believe we have made dramatic improvements in the protective force," said Lee Brooks, Wackenhut's deputy general manager in Oak Ridge.

BWXT reportedly has been pushing the government to give it total responsibility for security operations at Y-12, but the company skirted that issue when asked about its preferences.

"It is well known that there are a number of options available to the government for security at Y-12," BWXT spokesman Mike Monnett said.

The Y-12 complex is a 4,700-employee, 811-acre compound of 700 mostly aging brick and cement block buildings 20 miles west of Knoxville. It's been described as the last full-scale nuclear weapons production facility in the United States.

The plant was created in the 1940s to enrich uranium for the first atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima, Japan, in World War II. Today, it makes parts for every warhead in the nuclear arsenal and is the country's primary repository for bomb-grade uranium.



"I hear a burglar downstairs, the poor fool."

Internet threats a bleak picture of human future

November 3, 2004, 2:35 PM PST

The current chaos of an Internet plagued by viruses, worms, spam and phishing could be a vision into the future of the human race and genetic warfare, especially given that a stem-cell research measure passed in California on Tuesday.

As researchers dig farther into the human genome and perfect the technology of targeting specific human genes, doctors have begun to argue that programmable biology could give rise to viruses that target ethnic groups or needed resources, such as food stocks. A report by the British Medical Association paints a future world where biological threats could be created by the irresponsible and malicious in the same way that digital threats are coded today.

Yet, the United States will likely embark on developing such technology over the next decade. California legalized stem-cell research in Tuesday's election, largely on the promise of programmable nature of the materials to fight a variety of ailments. The passage could indicate that people--more enamored of the potential benefits than the threats--will be likely to rush to develop technology that opens the field to such threats.

If the state of the Internet gives a view of what such technology could mean for people, it's vision of the solutions isn't very inspiring. Firewalled networks and antivirus software on every desktop translates to closed enclaves of people and artificially amped immune systems.

The open question is whether, in this case, forewarned will be forearmed.

--Robert Lemos

FUJI HUNT Preparedness Drill

On November 3rd The FUJI HUNT Company in Dayton invited local Emergency Responders, the Rhea County Sheriff's Department, Rhea Medical Center, Rhea County Emergency Management, Rhea County Homeland Security, Several County Officials and Representatives from area factories to watch a planned emergency exercise.

The scenario was that there was a spill and that two

workers were contaminated. Fuji's personnel quickly responded and went through all of the procedures to decontaminate the workers as well as to get them ready for transport to the hospital.

It was raining the morning of the drill and the kind folks from Fuji Hunt has us an observation tent set up on a hill just outside of their main office where we could watch all of the action. Both before and after the staged event we were taken to a conference room where we were introduced to some of the plants management and given a brief description of the plants operation and their emergency procedures.

At the end of the drill Fuji's Operations Manager ask if anyone had any input that might be figured into their plan and a couple that I can remember came from Bo Kaylor and Sheriff Neal, both of whom had some pretty good tips to keep in mind and to help us respond in a more timely manner.

Those attending from our Homeland Security Team were Jim Conner-Director, Bill Frazier-Alpha Team Leader, and Resource Officers- Don Hutchins and Myself -Tom Mize.

The Emergency Exercise was a good start at building a working relationship between Fuji Hunt and our community. It is good to see local industry taking steps to see that we are better prepared for possible events that could disrupt our daily lives and impact our community.



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Safer Holidays at Home

The winter holidays are a time for celebration, and that means more cooking, lots of entertaining, and an increased risk of fire. In recent years, nearly 600 fires per year have been started by ignition of Christmas trees in the US. (510 in homes), causing an average of 33 deaths (all in homes), 112 injuries, and \$21 million in direct property damage per year. Decorating with candles can also be a fire hazard. An annual average of 6,700 home fires are caused by candles every year, with 87 associated deaths and 587 injuries. Nearly \$59 million in property damage results from candle fires every year. Follow these fire prevention tips from the NFPA to help keep your family safer during the holidays:

- **Holiday Lighting** - Take care when burning candles. Be sure candles are placed in sturdy, non-combustible holders, and are kept well away from decorations and other combustible materials. Check candles frequently to make sure they don't burn down too far or drip hot wax. Don't leave children unattended in a room with lit candles, and always keep candles, as well as matches and lighters, up high, out of the reach of children (preferably stored in a locked cabinet). Don't display lighted candles in windows or near exits in case you need these to escape. Under no circumstances is it safe to use candles to decorate Christmas trees! Keep flashlights and fresh batteries on hand to use for lighting in the event of a power outage.
- **Holiday Entertaining** - Use caution with holiday decorations and whenever possible, choose those made with flame-retardant or non-combustible materials. When cooking for holiday visitors, remember to keep an eye on the range. Unattended cooking is the leading cause of home fires in the U.S., so "stand by your pan!" If there are smokers around your home, provide plenty of large, deep ashtrays and check them frequently. Cigarette butts can smolder and cause a trash fire, so completely douse cigarette butts with water before discarding or flush them

down the toilet. After a party, always check inside and under upholstery and cushions and inside trash cans for cigarette butts that may be smoldering. If you have children in your home, keep matches and lighters up high, out of their sight and reach (preferably in a locked cabinet). Ask visitors who are smokers to keep their smoking materials with them when they are visiting in your home.

- **Christmas Trees** - Choose a fresh Christmas tree, and put it in a stand designed not to tip over. Place the tree well away from heat sources and exits, and water it constantly. If you purchase an artificial tree, be sure it is labeled as fire-retardant. When decorating with lights, be sure to purchase only those that bear the mark of a testing laboratory. Replace any frayed or damaged cords. For outside decorations, use only those lights labeled for outdoor use. Bring outdoor lights inside following the holidays so they are not damaged by extended exposure to harsh weather conditions. Always unplug all lights before leaving home or going to sleep and don't overload electrical outlets. Use only battery-operated lights if you have a metal Christmas tree, or decorate without lighting.

**Next Meeting
December 2nd
6 PM
Civil Air Patrol
Complex**