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Quality of COMSEC shows through during audit

The INEL COMSEC accounts, which are communications security accounts that deal with classified information, have been maintained in excellent condition by the Message Center Operations staff, according to a recent audit conducted by the Department of Energy Headquarters Office in Washington D.C.

The audit, conducted by the DOE-HQ Office of Computer Services and Telecommunications Management, found that the COMSEC files, records, plans and procedures were all in excellent condition, and that no recommendations, not even minor ones, were needed.

The findings of the audit led to a letter of commendation from DOE-ID Manager Charles Williams to Frances Hall, Message Center Operations supervisor, and Bernice Poliski, COMSEC custodian, and other members of the staff.

Loren Webb, manager of EG&G Idaho's Telecommunications Section, also commended the personnel of the Message Center Operations. "We've never had a security violation in the years that EG&G has operated the message center," Webb said. "I think that's quite a record considering the volume handled there."

Because of the excellent condition of the accounts, another audit will not have to be conducted until 1983. Audits of this type are typically conducted each year, but can be waived if accounts are kept in tip-top condition.

BRENDA BERGENER IS more than lucky—she's safety conscious, and that means a lot. Bergener, an EG&G Idaho storekeeper at CPP, was helping unload a 400 pound sheet of carbon steel metal when her end slipped, striking her foot. Fortunately the sneakers she was wearing were safety shoes. Her foot was saved, and little damage was done to the shoe. (Photo by Ron Paarmann, EG&G Idaho.)

Semiscale tests measurement system

by Rita Scott, EG&G Idaho

A liquid level measurement system for reactors that would have made a considerable difference at the Three Mile Island accident, is currently being tested in a series of experiments at the Department of Energy's Semiscale facility at the INEL.

The device, designed by Westinghouse, is intended to be used in commercial reactors to meet a post-TMI Nuclear Regulatory Commission requirement for all utilities to install an "unambiguous indicator of coolant level" in commercial reactors. The system's performance evaluation, when reported to NRC, the test requestor, will have direct implication for any determination by that agency that the users are in compliance with its regulation.

According to Gary Johnsen, branch manager, Experiment Planning and Analysis, the Westinghouse reactor vessel level indicating system (WRVLIS) was installed in Semiscale this spring.

"This may be the first time a production grade system that will actually be used on a commercial reactor has been tested at INEL," Johnsen says.

Walter Lyman, advisory engineer in the Nuclear Technology Division for Westinghouse, says the NRC offered his company the use of any of its test facilities and it was jointly concluded that Semiscale, with its full-height steam generators and non-nuclear core, was the best test facility available for the experiments needed.

The device is being exercised in conjunction with simulated loss-of-coolant accident experiments being conducted at the facility and the data compared with that from Semiscale's own extensive instrumentation.

As a result of these tests, some minor problems with the system have been uncovered and corrected.

Lyman says the device, which will make use of existing penetrations in the commercial reactors, is based on a simple concept. "Before TMI no one believed it was needed."

During that accident, the plant's operators believed, incorrectly, that there was more coolant in the reactor core than there actually was because they were monitoring the pressurizer water level, the primary method then used to gauge fluid in the reactor.

"The WRVLIS testing has been very useful," Johnsen says. "It has provided the vendor, Westinghouse, with valuable information which will help assure that the device will operate accurately and reliably.

Employees win paintings

Four INEL employees received unexpected, though hoped-for, Christmas surprises Wed., Dec. 23. Their names were drawn from more than 700 site employees who bought chances on four Fred Ochi paintings.

The lucky employees, and the paintings they won, are Debbie Chaffee, ENICO with finance and administration, "Macys Barn"; Cmdr. Clint Coneway, U.S. Navy with NRF, "Sun Valley"; Rusty Broughton, EG&G with Medical, "Sheep Camp"; and Peter Isaksen, EG&G with TRF, "Skier".

A total of $774 was collected in ticket sales from INEL employees taking a chance on winning one of the paintings. The money all goes to the United Way campaign.

Universities offering technology degree

The University of Idaho/Idaho Falls Center is now offering the Bachelor of Technology degree in reactor operation. The degree is part of the University of Idaho College of Education, Industrial Education Department.

The Bachelor of Technology program was developed in Idaho Falls to meet the needs of individuals, without formal college training, who are employed locally in technological fields. In addition to reactor operation, persons may attain this degree in the fields of quality, safety, mechanical design, industrial electronics, fire protection and industrial supervision.

The reactor operation/specialization was developed to meet the critical national need for college training for reactor operations personnel. All courses for this degree are college credited courses; the program fulfills the training requirements for reactor operators and supervisors as defined in the American National Standard 3.1 "Draft Standard for Qualification and Training of Personnel for Nuclear Power Plants." The Bachelor of Technology program includes procedures for challenging, by examination, courses where previous training or experience developed skills equivalent to those expected in the challenged course. The program also includes procedures for obtaining college credit for relevant work experience.

All required classes for this degree are held in the evening and are available either from the University of Idaho or Idaho State University, with support classes from BYU-Ricks.