

New Hope for Disused Sealed Source Disposal

Ever since the June 2008 closure of the Barnwell, S.C., low-level waste disposal facility to waste generators outside the Atlantic Compact, there have been concerns about the lack of disposal options for disused sealed sources in the United States. The EnergySolutions LLW disposal facility at Clive, Utah, which takes most forms of Class A LLW, has not been licensed to accept sealed sources. Until now.

In one of those rare but wonderful government/private-sector initiatives, the Clive facility will take Class A disused sealed sources for one year. The initiative involves EnergySolutions, the state of Utah, the National Nuclear Security Administration's Office of Global Threat Reduction (GTRI), and the Conference of Radiation Control Program Directors (CRCPD). To make matters even sweeter, the CRCPD is offering to pay for half of the disposal costs. The Texas Compact LLW disposal facility, operated by Waste Control Specialists, will take Class B and C sources, with the CRCPD also paying half the disposal costs. The year begins when EnergySolutions disposes of the first source.

As noted in a recent article by CRCPD Executive Director Ruth McBurney and others, "Radioactive sources are used widely by hospitals, clinics, academic institutions, industrial radiographers, well loggers, other industries, and government institutions." ("Unwanted and Orphan Sources: Disposition Efforts and Challenges," *Radwaste Solutions*, May-June 2011). If these sources are not recycled or sent for disposal, they inherently pose a level of risk of being lost, stolen, neglected, abandoned, or even used for malevolent purposes.

That is why this initiative is so urgently needed.

I learned about the latest development in this program at the recent Waste Management 2013 conference. Each year, at a Monday afternoon LLW session, the Southeast Radioactive Waste Compact Commission bestows its Hodes Award on a worthy member of the LLW community, and that person delivers the Hodes Award address at the conference. This year's award went to U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission staffer James Kennedy.

But this year, in a rare move, the Southeast Compact Commission awarded an "honorable mention" award in the Hodes competition, and allowed the winner to also make a presentation to the conference. This winner was Meaghan Jennison, with the NNSA GTRI, and her presentation was all about this initiative, part of the GTRI's Offsite Source Recovery Project. (See "Low-Level Waste at Waste Management 2013," this issue, page 23.) Collection of the sealed sources was to begin in late April, Jennison said.

At a later session during the conference, a representative from EnergySolutions noted that if this disposal initiative is successful, the company may petition the state of Utah for a permanent license amendment to allow the Clive site to accept Class A sealed sources.

With the EnergySolutions site able to take Class A sources, and the WCS facility able to take the Class B and C sources, the problems of lost, stolen, or strayed disused sealed sources in this country could come to an end. Kudos to all involved.—Nancy J. Zacha, Editor



A Government/ Private-Sector Initiative