

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SITE-SPECIFIC ADVISORY BOARD

Hanford Idaho Nevada Northern New Mexico
Oak Ridge Paducah Portsmouth Savannah River

June 30, 2022

Mr. William “Ike” White
Senior Advisor for the Office of Environmental Management (EM)
U.S. Department of Energy (DOE)
1000 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20585

Dear Mr. White:

On October 7, 2021, the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the EM Site-Specific Advisory Board (SSAB) passed the following recommendation concerning community engagement at EM sites. This recommendation was subsequently approved by all eight local boards of the EM SSAB.

Background

The EM SSAB understands that successful completion of the DOE-EM mission must include a significant community, public and stakeholder outreach. While DOE-EM has been engaging in public outreach from the beginning we believe that the effectiveness can be improved by any of several different approaches described in this document taking into consideration the complexity and uniqueness of each of the cleanup sites managed by DOE-EM.

Because of the challenges represented by the complexity and variety of sites with correspondingly different cleanup schedules, we are presenting a suite of potential activities that can be implemented by DOE EM and the SSABs at each of the sites but are applicable to all sites in some form. Individual site-specific advisory boards are in the perfect position to help develop and recommend implementation strategies because of our inherent connections within our respective communities. Advisory board involvement on DOE EM outreach would help by providing advice related to specific targeted areas based on feedback from actual communities and individuals who live near or are potentially impacted by site activities.

Below are observations from the SSABs developed during public outreach committee meetings. These are followed by specific recommendations from this committee.

Observations:

- Some SSABs feel that the relationship between DOE and their communities is top-notch, while others feel that the public stakeholders need greater involvement in the cleanup conversation as decisions are being made.
- SSABs tend to agree that DOE sites are most successful when they host and encourage frank,

transparent conversations with the public and regulators regarding the decisions that are being made and the challenges they face. These are often difficult and complex topics that the public is eager to understand and need to have the opportunity to ask questions and see their concerns addressed.

- Sites are most successful when they get in the “trust zone” with their local and regional stakeholders and partners.
- Frequent sharing of information about cleanup, schedules, and funding with local Chambers of Commerce and economic development organizations as well as city and county governments has been found to be very advantageous for one SSAB.
- Public involvement in shaping decisions is important to project success. In order to accomplish this overarching goal, several areas of the public involvement relationship could be improved. What is legally required is just the start.
- Public stakeholders appreciate when we see their values reflected in the activities, agreements, and products of site managers and regulators. Examples include DOE’s solicitation of board values and incorporation of those values in Federal Facility Agreement Public Involvement Plans, soliciting and incorporating board input on informational materials and effective public meeting designs.
- In-depth informational outreach is highly valued by the different SSABs.
 - This can take the form of monthly newsletters for those who cannot attend meetings, to virtual meetings that give the public access to SMEs on specific topics of interest, to regional in-person “dialogues” that promote a two-way communication between interested stakeholders and site managers from both DOE and the regulatory agencies.
 - Access to information digitally and in an approachable format are also highly valued in order to reach and inform the widest audience.
- Beyond virtual access, the ability to take in-person tours is deemed fundamental to the openness and transparency the public is seeking.
- In general, the SSAB boards are interested and willing to consult with DOE on how meetings and outreach materials are designed and distributed, and we encourage DOE to make use of this resource. New media such as videos, animations, virtual tours, regular newsletters, and digital histories are excellent tools for site outreach and education, and their continued development should be supported.
- Many sites like Paducah have a book on the history of the site.
 - These could be placed in the community, university, and local school libraries, city and county offices, tourism, and Chambers of Commerce offices.
 - These could also be presented to state and federal officials, Congressional delegation, state legislators and others.
- Exhibits on the history of the site and cleanup process placed in appropriate locations, such as area universities and colleges, city and county offices; public meetings regarding the site and cleanup and other appropriate locations.

Recommendation

We recommend that the individual site managers/designees and their advisory boards work together to discuss and determine which activities best suit their circumstances and respond to public needs. The detail, depth, and implementation plan should result from this collaborative effort. The following thematic areas of improvement were agreed upon by the Chair Public Outreach Committee and are offered as recommendations to DOE EM, as well as some specific recommendations within each thematic area. Site-by-site recommendations may be found in the attachments to this letter.

1. Develop an optimal design and platform for virtual and hybrid meetings and make the most of

virtual opportunities. Not only does this allow us to make the most of the change that COVID-19 brought to the world but allows access by members of the public that might not be able to travel to SSAB meetings.

- Utilize social media to quickly disseminate important information to the public, State and local governments, and stakeholders.
2. Maintain efforts for in-person outreach.
 - Make site tours for board members a requisite, and include the public, stakeholder groups, and the media whenever possible.
 - Utilize local museums to house displays for preserving site history or virtual museums to tell the story of the site using online format that can be accessed at any time.
 3. Outreach should be a mechanism for effective two-way communication between DOE-EM and the general public. DOE-EM outreach should seek to increase (1) the general public's awareness and understanding of DOE-EM activities as well as (2) actionable feedback from the general public regarding past, current, and future DOE-EM activities.
 - Engage the public early and often. Have interactive conversations with the public that allow the public to ask questions and get answers about complex subjects.
 - Share how public input has shaped or influenced cleanup decisions.
 - Ensure open and transparent decision making.
 - Promote success and planning ahead by incorporating and educating the public on strategic vision plans that cover at least the next 10 years.
 4. Continue to support and improve informational outreach products to engage the public.
 - Utilize existing digital media outlets (i.e., YouTube channels, papers, blogs, and newsletters) to broadcast timely information about current events and upcoming activities at a site. [NOTE: Nevada has their own YouTube channel.]
 - Create videos, animations, and diagrams to use at public presentations or posted on websites to present engaging content the public would be interested in.
 - Create a listing of historical articles and books relevant to each site that could be accessed through each site's website. Consider providing hyperlinks for the public to view these documents. EM sites provide databases or libraries of the technical reports produced for EM cleanup actions. The aforementioned historical articles and books would not duplicate the EM libraries but rather provide information that is less scientifically complex and technical for interested but perhaps less informed members of the public.
 - Messaging regarding the cleanup of environmental impacts from nuclear development and research at the sites should be prioritized and increased relative to other, non-cleanup messaging.
 5. Continue seeking ways to support and improve the impact of DOE's Site Specific Advisory Boards
 - Educate/inform the public, stakeholders, local and state officials and other appropriate entities on the purpose and responsibilities of the SSAB/CAB Boards in each community, including the current leadership and membership, through news releases, speaker presentations, social media, newsletters and other communication methods. When new leadership has been selected or new members have joined the Board, also announce the changes using similar methods as previously mentioned.
 - When DOE/EM officials visit EM sites, plan an opportunity to visit informally with local SSAB / CAB Board members in order to develop a relationship with its membership and to show that they are valued.
 6. Facilitate and support cross-site sharing of activities and public outreach resources.

Outreach efforts should be informed and motivated by relevant professional expertise and

related quantitative and qualitative metrics. To ensure ongoing progress, outreach efforts should be reviewed periodically by recognized experts in the field of government public outreach, and the outreach efforts should be adjusted as appropriate.

Additional Information

In preparation for this recommendation, the EM SSAB prepared the following three attachments that it believes represents viable activities and opportunities for effective public outreach that EM sites should consider in preparing public outreach plans.

- Attachment #1, *Outreach Activities for DOE EM, contractor, or SSAB*, is a compilation of outreach activities that have been used by SSABs with varying degrees of success. This can be used to develop approaches at Sites.
- Attachment #2, *Improvement Opportunities*, collates public outreach best practices submitted by the SSAB chairs at the Spring 2021 Virtual Chairs Meeting.
- Attachment #3, *Charge Responses Compiled*, contains the PowerPoint slides provided by each SSAB Chair at the Spring 2021 Virtual Chairs Meeting. The slides provide a detailed listing of the improvement opportunities offered by each of the SSAB chairs.

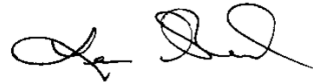
These observations and recommendations are respectfully submitted by the below signed chairs of the respective SSABs.



Steve Wiegman, Chair
Hanford Advisory Board



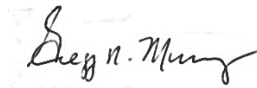
Frank Bonesteel, Chair
Nevada SSAB



Leon Shields, Chair
Oak Ridge SSAB



Don Barger, Chair
Paducah CAB



Gregg Murray, Chair
Savannah River Site CAB



Cheryl Atcitty, Chair
Northern New Mexico CAB



Jody Crabtree, Chair
Portsmouth SSAB



Teri Ehresman, Chair
Idaho Cleanup Project CAB

cc: Kelly Snyder, EM-4.32

References

1. Attachment #1, *Outreach Activities for DOE EM, contractor, or SSAB*
2. Attachment #2, *Improvement Opportunities*
3. Attachment #3, *Charge Responses Compiled*

Outreach Activities for DOE EM, contractor, or SSAB

1. Live, Virtual, or Hybrid Meetings – Annual or quarterly
 - a. State and local governments
 - i. Hazardous Waste Boards
 - ii. Water Councils or Boards
 - iii. Community Planning Boards
 - b. Civic organizations
 - i. Rotary
 - ii. Kiwanis
 - iii. Etc.
2. Public Releases
 - a. State and local newspaper articles
 - i. Digital
 - ii. Circulation
 - b. Federal Register Notices
 - c. Local TV newscasts
 - d. Podcasts
3. Social Media Posts
 - a. Facebook
 - b. Instagram
4. Website(s)
 - a. Local and national DOE EM
 - b. SSAB
 - c. State Environment Department
5. Public Involvement Calendars
 - a. DOE EM
 - b. SSAB
 - c. Digital News Media
6. Recorded Videos (available online and presented at meetings)
 - a. Environmental Cleanup Operations
 - b. Waste Disposal Sites
 - c. SSAB Organization and activities
 - d. Etc.
7. Training Opportunities – STEM and others
 - a. Presentations to K-12 school classes
 - b. Trade Schools
 - c. University training programs
 - d. Short courses (w/professional education credits)
 - e. Support of local non-profits for STEM education
8. Participation in Symposia/Conferences/Workshops
 - a. National Waste Symposia
 - b. DOE EM Cleanup
 - c. Etc.

IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

SLIDE 2 NSSAB	SLIDE 4 HANFORD ADV. BOARD	SLIDE 6 Northern New Mexico Citizen's Adv. Board	SLIDE 7 OAK RIDGE SSAB	SLIDE 8 PORTSMOUTH	SLIDE 9 PADUCAH	SLIDE 11 Idaho Cleanup Project Citizens Adv. Board
Recommend that additional ways be considered for outreach to communities, including schools; an example would be to develop a short video presentation available to the public on EM activities on the Nevada National Security Site (NNSS) and its path to closure.	What is legally required is just the start - public involvement in shaping decisions is important to project success	Re-institute NNM CAB monthly newsletter	Proactively extend outreach to a variety of community groups particularly in underserved areas; increase publicity of availability of DOE speakers.	While DOE and the SSAB have worked cooperatively on a plan, there is still a need to educate the local stakeholders on risk, environmental monitoring and health and safety protections provided by DOE and regulatory oversight.	The largest issue facing DOE is the need to be willing to promote its success in cleanup and educating the community. This was evident when DOE shared the Charge #1 Spreadsheet and CAB members were unaware of the extent of DOE's outreach.	Social media
Establish liaison with the school systems of nearby counties, including the NV System of Higher Education.	Increase efforts to engage and educate a wider and more diverse public	Combined Committee meetings should be held on at least alternate months of full NNM CAB meetings	Provide a central location for ongoing coverage of major projects, both DOE and external (media, etc.)			Cross-site sharing of activities that affect more than one site & public outreach resources
Examine status of completion of the recommendations in the FY 2018 Community Analysis - Work Plan Item #7 per the September 25, 2018 response from the EM Nevada Program, and expanding the virtual reality tour to that of the NNSS. (in progress)	Create space for collaborative problem solving	Allow use of hybrid virtual/in-person meeting format for full NNM CAB meetings, with restrictions	Develop simple, complete timeline of local EM projects/schedule and update regularly			
Handling of Board members could be enhanced by having better introduction to the community and improved exit. For example, it would have been most helpful for the administrators to prepare a letter to the respective city or community announcing the new board member and explaining the position, the rigorous selection and approval process, approval in Washington, DC, and their value to the community. At the end of a 6-year term, provide more than a photo, if that, to Board Members. (In NV, there is a gubernatorial volunteer recognition certificate for 200 hours/year of volunteer work that may be applied for).	Share how public input has shaped or influenced cleanup decisions					
Seek added funds to better support and provide recognition for Board Members.	Improve communication in intent and outcome of HAB advice					
	Embrace and practice the principles of public involvement in HAB Advice a. Engage the public early and often b. Ensure open and transparent decision making c. Prepare future generations for informed engagement					
Have a formal Public Affairs milestone plan prepared for the period 2021-2030 that lists the key news releases to be issued.						
The National Atomic Testing Museum (NATM), a Smithsonian affiliate, currently includes EM exhibits; coordinate with NATM to add EM exhibits as there is available space; University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) has an active public history program and experience with installing exhibits and can assist with coordination.						
Interface with NNSA/Nevada Field Office to explore potential for increasing the # of public tours; need to be aware that there will be a surge in interest and consider increasing frequency after the pandemic is over.						

Charge #1 - Advisory Board and Site Outreach

- Develop a best practices white paper that the Department could use as a guide to augment existing outreach programs and set expectations for future outreach activities
 - Each Board shall identify existing outreach practices performed at their site by both the SSAB and DOE (a template will be provided)
 - Outreach data should include, but not limited to, STEM, budget prioritization, and events
 - Determine if there are any gaps or need for additional outreach
 - Each Board will present their results during the Spring 2021 Chairs meeting
 - The Chairs will collaboratively discuss the individual Board results and develop the requested white paper. (Spring 2021 – Fall 2021)

Best practices:

- **NSSAB**
 - Partnership and mutual cooperation between the DOE EM Nevada Program, Nevada State Regulator, and the NSSAB
 - Wide representation of members and liaisons with a diversity of talents, insights, and community voices from a large geographic area surrounding the Nevada National Security Site
 - Notable that NSSAB's make-up consists of stakeholders from the community, as well as professionals, in contrast to a strictly technical membership
- **YouTube Channel**
 - Historical, informational, and educational videos easily accessible to the public

Improvement Opportunities:

- Recommend that additional ways be considered for outreach to communities, including schools; an example would be to develop a short video presentation available to the public on EM activities on the Nevada National Security Site (NNSS) and its path to closure.
- Establish liaison with the school systems of nearby counties, including the NV System of Higher Education.
- Examine status of completion of the recommendations in the FY 2018 Community Analysis - Work Plan Item #7 per the September 25, 2018 response from the EM Nevada Program, and expanding the virtual reality tour to that of the NNSS. (in progress)
- Handling of Board members could be enhanced by having better introduction to the community and improved exit. For example, it would have been most helpful for the administrators to prepare a letter to the respective city or community announcing the new board member and explaining the position, the rigorous selection and approval process, approval in Washington, DC, and their value to the community.
- At the end of a 6-year term, provide more than a photo, if that, to Board Members. (In NV, there is a gubernatorial volunteer recognition certificate for 200 hours/year of volunteer work that may be applied for).
- Seek added funds to better support and provide recognition for Board Members.
- Have a formal Public Affairs milestone plan prepared for the period 2021-2030 that lists the key news releases to be issued.
- The National Atomic Testing Museum (NATM), a Smithsonian affiliate, currently includes EM exhibits; coordinate with NATM to add EM exhibits as there is available space; University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) has an active public history program and experience with installing exhibits and can assist with coordination.
- Interface with NNSA/Nevada Field Office to explore potential for increasing the # of public tours; need to be aware that there will be a surge in interest and consider increasing frequency after the pandemic is over.

Charge 1: Outreach Best Practices

- 1. Topic-specific briefings involving all three TPA agencies, HAB and agency initiated**
- 2. Opportunities for the public to talk with Hanford decision makers**
- 3. Soliciting input from the HAB re: meeting design, timing, and location**
- 4. HAB input on public materials**
- 5. HAB values in TPA Public Involvement Plan**
- 6. Public interactions with DOE and NRC**

Charge 1: Hanford Improvement Opportunities

- 1. What is legally required is just the start - public involvement in shaping decisions is important to project success**
- 2. Increase efforts to engage and educate a wider and more diverse public**
- 3. Create space for collaborative problem solving**
- 4. Share how public input has shaped or influenced cleanup decisions**
- 5. Improve communication in intent and outcome of HAB advice**
- 6. Embrace and practice the principles of public involvement in HAB Advice**
 - a. Engage the public early and often**
 - b. Ensure open and transparent decision making**
 - c. Prepare future generations for informed engagement**

Best practices:

- 1. Site tours of EM cleanup operations**
- 2. Effective use of digital newspapers**
- 3. Quarterly contractor cleanup forums around northern New Mexico**

Improvement Opportunities:

- 1. Re-institute NNM CAB monthly newsletter**
- 2. Combined Committee meetings should be held on at least alternate months of full NNM CAB meetings**
- 3. Allow use of hybrid virtual/in-person meeting format for full NNM CAB meetings, with restrictions**

Best practices:

- **Social media outreach and participation**
- **Use of video for project updates and education**
- **Regular presentations by leaders to solicit input from the community (ie Budget Workshop) and to provide education to stakeholders (schools, local organizations, community groups)**

Improvement Opportunities

- **Proactively extend outreach to a variety of community groups particularly in underserved areas; increase publicity of availability of DOE speakers.**
- **Provide a central location for ongoing coverage of major projects, both DOE and external (media, etc.)**
- **Develop simple, complete timeline of local EM projects/schedule and update regularly**

Best practices:

The Community Commitment Plan along with the contractual provisions for community engagement have made tremendous impacts to economic development in our impacted area. Quite literally millions of dollars have been donated that have turned into hundreds of jobs that would not be available without the CCP.

Improvement Opportunities:

While DOE and the SSAB have worked cooperatively on a plan, there is still a need to educate the local stakeholders on risk, environmental monitoring and health and safety protections provided by DOE and regulatory oversight.

Best practices:

DOE's relationship with the local community is top notch. Paducah embraces being a host community and this partnership between DOE and local leaders/elected officials is seen in events like the Chamber's DC Fly-In, the interactions between intergovernmental groups, and the local community's desire to celebrate DOE's successes.

Improvement Opportunities:

The largest issue facing DOE is the need to be willing to promote its success in cleanup and educating the community. This was evident when DOE shared the Charge #1 Spreadsheet and CAB members were unaware of the extent of DOE's outreach.

SRS Citizens Advisory Board

Charge #1 - Advisory Board and Site Outreach

Outreach Activity	Purpose/Driver of Outreach Activity	Level of Interest/Participation from Community	Notes/Comments
Public Tours	Information/Awareness of SRS	Tours are filled quickly once released to the public	SRNS produced a virtual tour for the public post-COVID that was released in early 2021
Mission-Related Tours	Information/Awareness of SRS	Tours are conducted for HQ staff, community stakeholders, educational groups and business partners based on a valid business need	Tours have been limited due to COVID restrictions but continue to be an excellent way for stakeholders and partners to learn about SRS first-hand
Meetings with Chambers of Commerce/ Economic Development	Information/Awareness of SRS, Update of activities	Attend organization events and meetings, regular phone calls and one-on-one meetings with directors (virtually during COVID), provide updates on SRS activities/missions, Members at-large for 5 local Chambers: Augusta Metro, Columbia County, North Augusta, Aiken, Southern Palmetto (Barnwell & Allendale Counties)	Many chamber hosted events and one-on-one meetings were held virtually in 2020. SRNS is also a member of the two largest regional economic groups in the CSRA: SouthernCarolina Alliance (Barnwell, Bamberg, Hampton, Allendale, Colleton, Jasper, Beaufort), Economic Development Partnership (Edgefield, Aiken)
Public Meetings	Information/Awareness, Supportive Attitude	A group of 80 local stakeholders are typically invited to attend	SRNS assists in hosting an annual update to community stakeholders via public meeting with all landlords and contractors in attendance. Updates on current/future missions at SRS were provided to stakeholders during one-on-one meetings post-COVID
Organizational Presentations	Information/Awareness, Supportive Attitude	Create standard SRS Overview to be used for presentations to civic organizations and other public settings; market speaker/presentation to community groups via a prioritized list of stakeholders and partners. Overview videos are also utilized in these presentations	Some overviews were conducted virtually post-COVID
Informal Meetings	Understanding, Supportive Attitude	State and federal representatives are briefed, status update at stand-alone meeting or is included in general SRS update meeting -Provide Site tours when requested, coordinate scheduling and content with DOE External Affairs	
News Releases	Information/Awareness	For each key milestone. DOE concurrence will be obtained on news release topic, followed by review/approval of specific news release. Examples include: - Significant visitors - Operational Achievements - Outreach Activities - Employee recognition	

The board approved the Excel template provided and did not address areas for improvement. Our board has not met since this slide was provided.

Best practices:

- Videos/animations/diagrams
- Frequent contribution of feature articles in EM Update Newsletters
- Press releases

Improvement Opportunities:

- Social media
- Cross-site sharing of activities that affect more than one site & public outreach resources