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**US Spent Fuel Team Daily Fax (2p.)**

**Thursday, May 2, 1996**

**TO: CHERIE FITZGERALD, US DOE NN-42 1 202 586 2323 FROM: KEN AMES, DOE SITE MONITOR 850 2 381 2473**

Today was an interesting mix of positive and negative. Early in the day, we apparently solved a serious problem. The air cylinders that push the rods against the cleaning brushes were getting harder and harder to operate. On work station #4, it was no longer possible to apply enough air pressure to clean rods, but the cylinder still retracted easily. We developed a number of theories on what was wrong and mentally prepared ourselves for the difficult job of pulling the brush units out of the water, but in the end it was only loose fittings. The fittings were tightened and we hope the problem is history. In the process of trying to understand the problem, we added an air filter and an air dryer to the air supply that goes to these cylinders, something that will make trouble less likely in the future.

Today the Chief Engineer informed us that, for the time being, broken rods will be set aside in one of the reject canisters so that his operators can get fully up to speed with 'normal' rods before learning the intricacies of the broken rod procedure.

We continue to have problems with knobs being turned. The evacuation of canister 71 at work station #4 was nearly complete when someone opened a valve which let air into the canister, significantly lengthening the conditioning process. It is frustrating to have things going well only to suffer needless delays because people can't resist fiddling with knobs.

**Daily Action Item List**

- Work station #4
  - Re-torque lid bolts on canister 71 and condition. - finished
  - Install new gridded canister in work station. - finished
  - Condition fuel in canister 71. - finished, our first real can!
- Work station #2
  - Finish loading canister 79 and attach lid. - finished; 22 rods were loaded. Because there was not enough time left at 3 pm when the can was filled, we left conditioning for tomorrow since we could not be certain that valves would not be opened or closed during the night.

● Work station #1  
We had not planned any work on #1 today, but early in the afternoon, everything else was going well and one of the Chief Engineer's crews wanted to start loading another can. As they were loading the first rod into the can, the top snapped off and the rod fell into the can, landing at an angle completely under the top grid plate. We have no tool at the site capable of removing this rod, but figured that such occurrences would be rare since there are many other steps in the handling process where the top fitting can break off. We knew we wouldn't be able to get 22 rods into the can, but thought we might be able to get 18 or so.

**JSP JMV GMJ JMN SKE MPM DFP LGH KRA**

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But the Chief Engineer referred to the broken rod as an 'accident' and decided that until we find ways to reduce the possibility of such occurrences in the future, he will allow rods to be canned only in open canisters. I replied that the U.S. could not accept such a position, since using only open canisters will greatly increase our costs and the time required to can the rods. After the discussion reached an impasse, we were told the use of only open canisters was a 'temporary' measure until ways to prevent having trapped broken rods in the can be found.

Afterward Jim, Mike and I discussed ways to prevent rods from breaking during the