## The Off-Site Source Recovery

# Project News

The months of June and July were very busy for the Off-Site Source Recovery (OSR) Project. In June, the OSR Project sent representatives to the 47th annual meeting of the Health Physics Society in Tampa Florida. This meeting, typically attended by several thousand radiation safety specialists and allied personnel, included a Radiological Security/Emergency Planning and Response session at which two papers related to the operation of the OSR Project were presented. The presentations and poster session were very well received and prompted many questions and concerns. The material and information presented also allowed the dissemination of information to individuals who are either impacted directly, or know others who are facing difficulties in disposing of unwanted, excess actinide-bearing sealed sources.

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The OSR Project also hosted a talk by Brian Dodd, International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Division Director of Radioactive and Waste Security. Dr. Dodd discussed incidents with radioactive sealed sources discovered in the republic of Georgia, part of the former Soviet Union.

Abandoned orphan sources were found in 1997 in Georgia. The IAEA was made aware of the first incident in October of 1997, when 11 servicemen developed radiation burns and were severely exposed. The first IAEA team sent to Georgia recovered 12 Cesium and 200 Radium sources. In November of 1997, radioisotope thermal-electric generator (RTG) sources were discovered due to lowering the water level in a Georgian river. The most recent discovery came in December 2001, when a group of woodcutters found two thermally hot objects in the forest and, unaware of the danger, used them to keep warm. Two of these men are still being treated for radiation burns, one at a hospital in Russia, the other at a hospital in France. The IAEA received notice of this incident on Christmas Eve and sent an emergency crew to Georgia to recover the sources.

After September 11, the IAEA changed from a single focus on safety, to more inclusive measures covering both security and safety. There are plans to now review the IAEA Code of Conduct in August of 2002.

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During the month of July, the OSR Project recovery team set off for planned recoveries at two different nuclear gauge manufacturing sites; one in Odessa, Texas and one in Austin, Texas. A total of 400 Am-241 and Pu-238 sources were packaged for shipment to Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) as part of the OSR Project's recovery of transuranic GTCC sources under Public Law 99-240.

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Any site having unwanted or excess radioactive sealed sources should register on the OSR Project web page at http://osrp.lanl.gov (click the "Online Source Registration" tab). A member of the OSR Project team will then contact you to refine the needs and determine the appropriate actions.

Need assistance, have questions regarding OSR Project plans or other issues, please call: 505-667-6701 or 1-877-676-1749