

GPU Nuclear Initiates

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community during the incident remains contested.

GPU officials said there are about 2,300 lawsuits filed against GPU Nuclear relating to the incident and there are currently efforts underway to deal with them — the U.S. District Court Judge Sylvia Rambo has selected 12 test cases which are to be heard starting next July, and then the outcome of those cases is to be applied in settling the remainder of the cases, in an effort to expedite the judicial process.

However, the event continues to be remembered with some detail by a number of people.

"I was out in the field sowing oats with a helper. My wife heard (about the accident and advisory) on the radio and came out to tell me," Byers said.

"You know, no one will believe me, but (just before his wife told him of the incident) we got a coating over our lips (while in the fields) and nobody will believe that.

"I told the fella to go home. He lived eight miles away. But we didn't know what to do. We were thinking about shipping the cattle out of the area," he said.

"Our daughter went to work and said, 'If you leave, call me so I know where you are at.'"

At the time, GPU Nuclear Corp., headquartered in New Jersey, had only a part-time public relations person working at Three Mile Island. That person quickly became overwhelmed by inquiries from media around the world.

In addition, the media was relatively unused to dealing with nuclear energy, and a great deal of speculation and conjecture was disseminated.

GPU was in no position to quickly educate a public with a limited knowledge of fission.

And yet, even a visit by then-President Jimmy Carter to the crippled reactor didn't seem to put to rest public fear or conjecture.

Last week, for the very first time, the GPU Nuclear Corp. specifically sought out farmers to discuss the presence of the accident and the existing nuclear reactor.

During a previous meeting between GPU Corp. and county agricultural agency leaders, it became apparent that farmers would be interested in learning more about the facility, according to officials.

Tom Kauffman, spokesman for GPU, had contacted Dauphin County Extension agent Jim Welshans and county ASCS director Ruth Hagy to get together a small

group of county farmers who would be interested in understanding more about the island in the Susquehanna River where nuclear energy is made.

"The whole reason for having this forum is because the local farming community is a large community that we haven't communicated with well in the past," Kauffman said, adding that he and no one else really knows why there had been no effort to reach out and specifically address the agricultural community.

Kauffman said that perhaps the reason has been that most people at GPU Nuclear are intensely concerned with making electricity using nuclear energy and, while knowledgeable about how to run a power plant, have not been as knowledgeable or aware of how to conduct good public relations as they should have been.

That is changing, he said. GPU Nuclear Corp. is attempting to be more responsive to the fears and questions of the surrounding community.

He said that currently, there are 13 people employed by GPU who are concerned with public relations in several different forms.

And, Kauffman said, the recent effort to "be good neighbors" is completely unrelated to the plethora of lawsuits the corporation faces. The Unit 1 reactor is scheduled to be online for years to come and a number of issues need to be addressed.

Nationally, Kauffman said the federal government's failure to site a national high-level radioactive waste facility is a big industry concern. According to Kauffman, the facility was supposed to be built by 1986, but a site is still pending.

In the meantime, he said the more than 100 nuclear power plants operating in the United States are on a timetable and all should be decommissioned by 2050, requiring an adequate policy and facility to handle the waste.

Kauffman's own background is heavy with actual hands-on operation of TMI. He's been employed for 15 years.

Prior to that, for two years at a southcentral Pennsylvania school, he was a teacher. However, his interests were elsewhere.

In his years with TMI, Kauffman has been an operator — eight years as a reactor operator and, for a portion of that time, a senior operator. That means he was, at times, solely responsible for the control of the process of atomic splitting, also called fission.

More than three years ago, he



At a round table discussion, members of the Dauphin County agricultural community discuss with GPU Nuclear Corp. officials their feelings and attitudes about the company and the use of nuclear energy.

was given an opportunity to switch over into public relations within the company and he said he enjoys it, teaching again.

And while he has had school groups and civic groups and political groups and entities through the facility, he said he finally recognized that farming groups, as one group, had been ignored all along.

The day consisted of a logical introductory briefing of GPU Nuclear Corp. — a meeting and overview discussion in a large conference briefing room located south and across from the actual island, then entering a simulated plant operations room accompanied by a discussion of the hours of ongoing training the operators receive, followed by a bus tour of the island reactor facility and wildlife preserve, and a return to the conference room for a round-table discussion on GPU Nuclear, TMI, nuclear energy, and any fears or concerns that the farm community representatives may have held.

Kauffman also detailed the recent attempt by a Berks County man to break into the island facility, while on the bus tour, pointing to the specific place where events occurred and explaining the path of the driver's automobile.

According to Kauffman, the driver went past the main gate guard, past the open fence gate, into the compound, left onto what appeared to be a work vehicle access road, and then crashed into a large access door to a building adjacent to the reactor building.

According to Kauffman, there was never any danger to the reactor, but the corporation has intensified security for the facility as a result of the unexpected action.

During the round-table discussion, which followed a lunch, several of the guest farmers expressed concern about the attempt to break into the facility, especially in light of reports of the close proximity of an alleged firing range and possibly training grounds used by Moslem international terrorists.

The effectiveness of security against such types of terrorism were questioned.

However, officials said that the difficult-to-understand break-in may have actually been a blessing in getting security awareness increased before any problems could occur.

In addition, Hoffman said that the blast used to rock the World Trade Center would not have damaged the reactor, nor would a direct impact of a Boeing 747, nor an earthquake of less than 6.7 on the Richter scale (a logarithmic scale for measuring earthquake disturbances).

During the tour of the wildlife preserve, several species of heron were visible on a wetlands, and twin fawns were spotted along the roadway.

Kauffman also mentioned the facility's four environmental monitoring gardens and how, when he was working as an operator, people would bring bags of fresh vegetables from the garden into the operators to eat.

Related to that, during the round-table discussion, the farmer-group was introduced to Tim Bradley, GPU's environmental scientist who produces an annual Radiological Environmental

Monitoring Report. However, Kauffman said that many of those farmers present may have known of Bradley, because he selects certain farms in the surrounding area to test for possible radiological changes.

Bradley has been checking for the possibility of radiation problems emanating from the nuclear facility for years and issues an annual report of his findings.

During the round-table discussion, among a number of issues, suggestions were made that GPU Nuclear Corp. use some of its stable of public speakers to address people attending agricultural meetings and events, and to target more farmer-specific publications for news releases and information updates.

The result of the first meeting was a success for both parties, according to Byers, whose farm is located between Middletown and Hummelstown.

"I thought the meeting was very informative. I thought it was good. I can see that they want to work with the community and I can also see they didn't know how to do it," Byers said.

The dairyman said that when the accident occurred, "I said, 'Man made that and I don't know if he knows how to handle it,' and I don't know if he did at that time either."

But he said his opinion has changed.

"Current has to be made somehow and this is a good ... I believe they can handle it now. Today has helped me to feel that way."

NDB Study Shows Potential For Whey, Lactose Exports

WATSONTOWN (Sun Area) — This is your SUN area Dairy Princess, Michelle Dugan, to tell you some ways to budget fat in your diet.

A diet high in fat is linked to the development of several chronic diseases, including heart disease and cancer. Health professionals recommend that adults consume no more than 30% of daily calories from dietary fat, and no more than 10% from saturated fat. Unfortunately, translating this recommendation into daily food choices is easier said than done.

How does fat budgeting work? It involves four concepts:

1. Calculate your daily fat budget. The fat budget is determined by how many calories you eat. Multiply your calorie intake by 30%, or 0.30. Then divide the total by 9. The result is the total number of grams of fat you can eat in a day to meet current dietary recommendations for fat. For

example, if you eat 2000 calories a day, you can allot 600 calories for your fat budget. Divide this number by 9; the result is a daily fat budget of approximately 67 grams.

2. Determine the fat content of foods you eat. Some people mistakenly eliminate entire food groups, with the belief that those foods are all too high in fat. However, there are low fat options in each food group. Read food labels of packaged foods.

3. Understand serving sizes. Serving sizes play an important role in controlling fat intake. For food that contains fat, the larger the serving size, the higher the fat. Try measuring portions for a short time to familiarize yourself with standard serving sizes.

4. Make food trade-offs. For example, you can substitute turkey on whole wheat bread for ham on a croissant, and have a scoop of ice cream for dessert.



Dauphin County farmers look over an aerial photograph of Three Mile Island and the surrounding farmland.