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NEWS & COMMENTARY FOR WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA FREE

Low-level radioactive management attacked by citizens group

by Jeff Fobes

North Carolina's management of low-level nuclear waste was rejected by the Radioactive Waste Roundtable in a strongly worded statement made to the N.C. Low-Level Radioactive Waste Management, Oct. 25.

The Raleigh-based citizens group called for the resignation of Frederick Van Swearingen, the newest member of the Waste Management Authority. The group said that Van Swearingen was appointed just three days after the suspension of the operating license for a medical waste incinerator at Bowman Gray School of Medicine, at which he is Safety Officer.

But Van Swearingen said, when contacted by telephone, that the license for the incinerator had not been suspended. Rather, after the state found some radiation in the ash, it asked that the incineration operation be stopped until a study could be conducted. He said there had been no determination that radiation limits had been exceeded as the Roundtable claimed. Van Swearingen said, "I can understand how they could have a concern, but it was based on inaccurate information. All the items they cited were errors." He added that neither his employer nor the N.C. Dept. of Radiation Protection had lost confidence in his competence.

The Roundtable called for the immediate rescission of the Authority's contract with Chem-Nuclear Systems, Inc. (CNSI) because of "that company's untrustworthiness and lack of concern for the

"Portlandia" arrives in Portland, Ore., welcomed by a jubilant crowd. The 60-foot sculpture, by Raymond Kaskey, is an example of well-received art in a "public space." A public radio series will address the controversy over "Art in the Public's House." See page 5 for story.

Photo by Brian Foulkes



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Factions struggle over a sign ordinance for Asheville
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Pesticides in the schools

— Our children at risk

by Janet Orselli

The new school year has begun, but if you are a parent of school-aged children, don't relax quite yet. Our nation's schools can be a dangerous place for kids and others. Most school systems rely on toxic chemicals to control pests.

There are many areas within schools such as kitchens, dining rooms, garbage disposal facilities, and bathrooms where pest problems may develop. The type and frequency of pesticide use in schools varies according to the problem. In Macon County schools, the pesticide Dursban is applied every 30 days to cracks and crevices for control of cockroaches.

Unfortunately, most pesticides are also harmful to other living things besides pests, including people. Some have been found to cause acute and chronic health problems such as cancer, birth defects, genetic damage, and neurological disorders. Scientists have been learning more about the effects of pesticide exposure on our children. According to Beverly Paigen, research biochemist at Children's Hospital Medical Center in Oakland, Ca., children are more sensitive to toxic chemicals than adults. Because children are still growing and are more active than adults, they require more food and oxygen, and so receive a higher dose of toxins per pound of body

public." The statement noted that a Vice-President David Ebenhack of CNSI "had attempted to deliberately mislead the public" regarding sources of radioactive waste and dates of arrival of waste in an incident in Channahon, Ill.

Gail Rosenberg, Director of Communications and Community Relations for CNSI's N.C. project, when contacted by telephone said that the Authority had selected CNSI over other bidders and had confirmed CNSI's compliance history and capability of managing the project.

Ebenhack was unavailable for comment. Allan Stalvey, CNSI's Director of Public Affairs said that some mistakes had been made on the Channahon project in not notifying everyone they should have, but nothing was done on purpose. He denied that Ebenhack had deliberately misled anyone.

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