BTMED news

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BTMed Celebrates 20 Years of Service

The Building Trades National Medical Screening Program (BTMed) is celebrating its 20th anniversary of service to former DOE construction workers. Now covering 28 DOE sites, the program has completed over 33,200 medical screenings and 2,400 CT Scans since it began. BTMed offers initial screens and follow-up rescreens that are available every three years, as well as CT Scans for those at high risk for lung cancer.

BTMed Team

Even though BTMed started screening workers in 1996, the fight to get the program off the ground began years earlier. BTMed wouldn't exist without collaboration between medical professionals concerned about safety and health and DOE construction workers who knew a program like this was necessary. Since 1943, over 600,000 people have worked construction at DOE sites, and all deserve to have someone looking out for their health.

After all these years, BTMed is still growing. Most recently, medical screenings became available to subcontractor/construction workers who worked at the Reactive Metals Extrusion Plant in Ashtabula, Ohio, and the West Valley Demonstration Project in New York. If you worked at either of these two sites, please call 1-800-866-9663 or visit www.btmed.org to learn more about the free medical screening available to you.

BTMED'S HANFORD OUTREACH OFFICE HAS MOVED

New Address:
(Laborers' Local 348 Building)
2505 Duportail Street, Suite E
Richland, WA 99352

New phone number:
509-946-1036

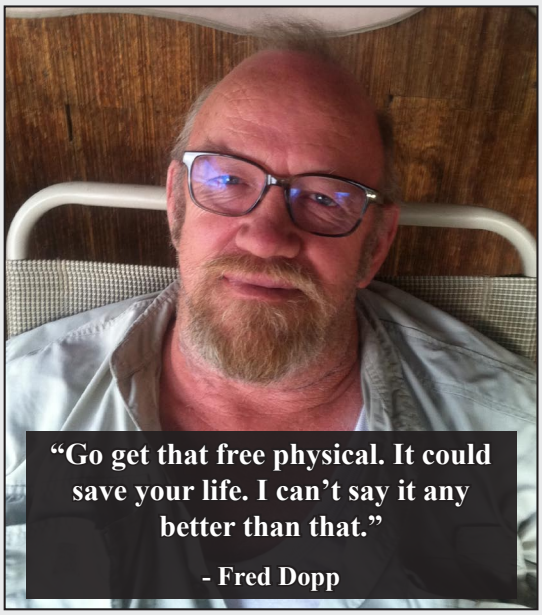
Former INL worker gets life-saving advice from friend

Fred Dopp, IUPAT Local 764, didn't know he had cancer until he checked out BTMed

When it came to getting sick from working at the DOE's Idaho National Laboratory, Fred Dopp always thought it was the kind of thing that happened to other people. "I think everybody had an idea that, you know, there's something out there that might be able to get to you," he says, remembering his time working on-and-off at the site from the early 90's to the early 2000's. "But it was nothing you really worried about."

That is, until he found out about BTMed. As a painter with IUPAT Local 764, Fred knew that he was regularly breathing in chemicals from the paints he was using. He was having some breathing problems, but the news to come was far more shocking.

In Fred's words, despite having "no inkling at all" that it was happening, he developed colon cancer within just a few years of leaving his work at INL. And if it weren't for some advice from Dan Obray, BTMed's INL Outreach Coordinator, he may never have known until it was too late.



"Go get that free physical. It could save your life. I can't say it any better than that."

- Fred Dopp

"Dan told me that the Building Trades is offering free physicals, and asked if I wanted one," Fred recalls. These free exams are available to anyone who has worked construction at a DOE site.

Like Fred, these workers often spend time in and around buildings where dangerous materials have been building up inside the walls, ceilings, floors, and vents for years. Hidden hazards like these can shorten a construction worker's life.

BTMed looks out for workers by screening them for exposures they may have come in contact with while working on DOE sites. Everyone who goes through a BTMed screening first gets a work-history interview, to help get a sense of what kinds of hazards they may have worked around. One of these work-history interviewers is Dan Obray, who is a former painter at INL himself. "I have an easy time relating to workers on the site because I worked there, too," he explains.

After the work-history interview, participants go through the free medical exam to test for work-related illnesses. "It is a total physical," Fred says, thinking back to his first exam with BTMed. "And in a total physical they do a whole lot of blood work." In Fred's case, his doctor didn't even have to wait for the blood tests to come back to be suspicious of colon cancer. "That's how bad I was," Fred remembers.

But before that free physical, Fred had no idea that he had cancer. "That medical screening I think pretty much saved my life," he says earnestly.

Today, Fred has more time to spend with his family, enjoying life, instead of letting the cancer go unchecked. He was even eligible for benefits under the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act (EEOICPA), which grants compensation to DOE workers who have become sick from worksite exposures.

When asked what advice he could give other DOE workers, Fred says, "Go get that free physical. It could save your life. I can't say it any better than that."

DID YOU WORK AT IDAHO NATIONAL LAB?

The agencies that provide services to DOE workers are hosting informational meetings on the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program and the Former Worker Programs. The same information is repeated at all meetings:

Tuesday, June 28th 10:00 am & 7:00 pm

Red Lion Pocatello
1555 Pocatello Creek Road
Pocatello, ID 83201

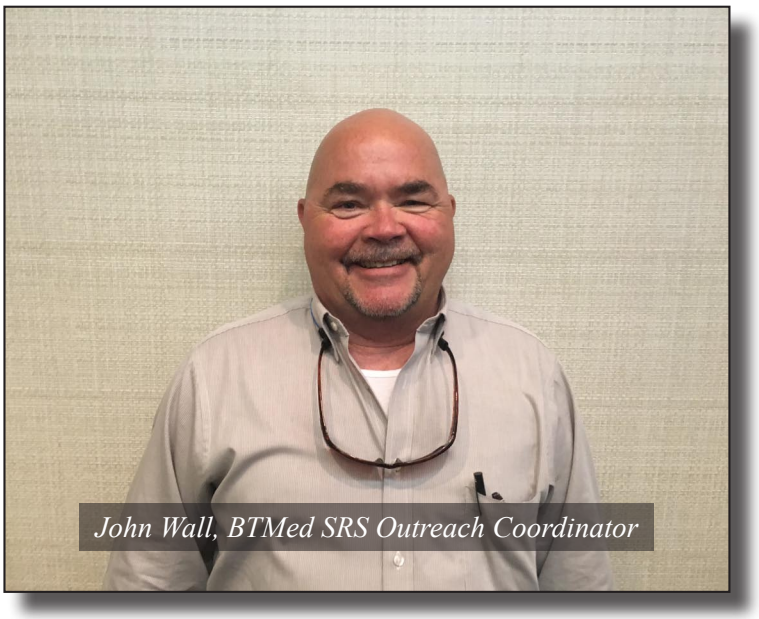
Wednesday, June 29th 10:00 am & 7:00 pm

Idaho Falls Civic Auditorium
501 S. Holmes Ave
Idaho Falls, ID 83401

To learn more about these meetings, call the Idaho Resource Center at 1-800-861-8608.

BTMed welcomes new outreach staff member

Our newest outreach interviewer, John Wall, will now be performing work history interviews for former Savannah River Site workers. While he may be new to BTMed, he is no stranger to the Savannah River Site. Working at the site as a longtime member of Insulators Local 92, John spent eight years as his local's business manager before becoming president of the Augusta Building and Construction Trades Council.



John Wall, BTMed SRS Outreach Coordinator

What was your work experience at the Savannah River Site?

I started there in 1978. I grew up right outside of the gate, and my dad worked there in operations for 30-something years. I worked in the reactor buildings, in the separations buildings, in the labs. We did all the mechanical, industrial type insulation work. We worked in the red areas, in the contaminated areas. We did a little bit of all of it.

What do you like about working for the BTMed Program?

It's an opportunity to help people. Being a business manager, that's kind of what you do, you help your members. Now, I help people that need to go through this program, go through the physicals and get started in the right direction if something's wrong with them.

How does your knowledge of the site help you with your work at BTMed?

I'm pretty familiar with most of the facilities out there because I probably worked on just about every facility on that site. So when folks come in, I can help them understand what hazards they may have been around.

BTMed wishes a fond farewell to the retiring Savannah River Site outreach staff, Gordon Rowe (left) and Charles Jernigan.

What would you say to an eligible worker who has not gone to BTMed yet?

For working at that site, you deserve an opportunity to get a physical. That's why this program was set up. I have been at the bedside when a couple of my retirees have passed away. I've seen what some of these diseases that people get from working out at that site can do to them. I've seen the suffering that some of them have went through. If you can get folks to take advantage of this free physical early enough, to have that peace of mind, then they'll be okay.

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Medical Screening Program
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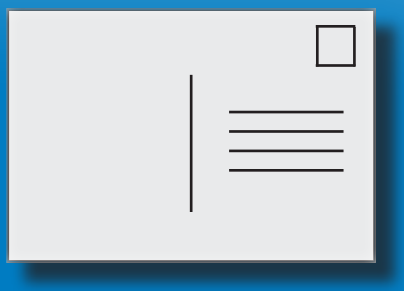
"I'd like to thank everyone involved that made this exam possible, start to finish. You've shown you care. Job well done!"

Clark Mann, Ironworkers Local 17
Ashtabula Extrusion Plant
BTMed Participant

Has It Been Three Years Since Your BTMed Exam?

BTMed offers free re-screenings every three years to stay on top of illnesses with delayed symptoms.



Stay connected with Email!

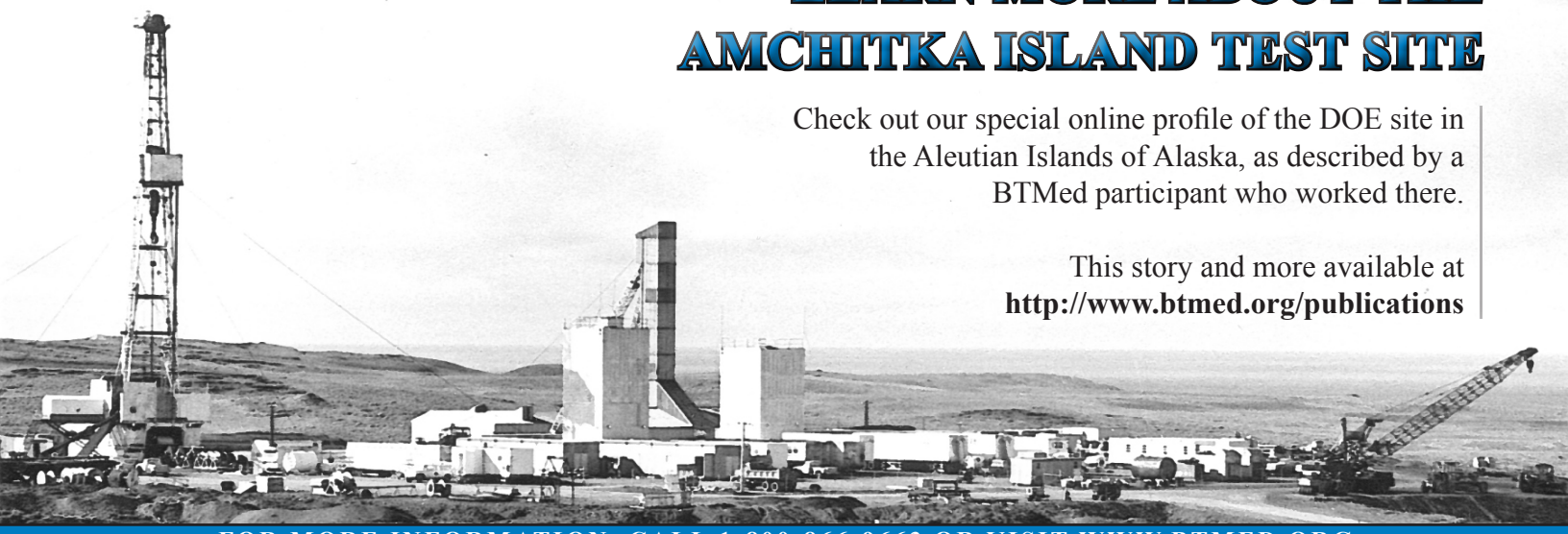
Email is a great way for us to keep you up-to-date about BTMed.
If we don't have your email address, please take a minute to share it with us.

Call 1-800-866-9663
or email btmed@zenith-american.com.

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE AMCHITKA ISLAND TEST SITE

Check out our special online profile of the DOE site in the Aleutian Islands of Alaska, as described by a BTMed participant who worked there.

This story and more available at
http://www.btmed.org/publications



FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL 1-800-866-9663 OR VISIT WWW.BTMED.ORG