BTMED news

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Volume 13, Issue 1 Spring 2018 www.btmed.org

Meet the team that reviewed your BTMed exam results

Every worker who participates in BTMed has received a little help from BTMed's medical staff in Oak Ridge, TN. Vicky DeForrest (RN), Sheri Burns (RN), and Terry Mosier (RN) are part of a team of nurses who review the exam results after a worker is screened.

(left to right) Terry Mosier RN, Vicky DeForrest RN, Sheri Burns RN

This means that when a BTMed doctor screens a worker, the BTMed nurses compile the exam results into an easily-understandable packet that is shared with the worker.

While it can take a few weeks for workers to get their results, the nurses review all of the blood work, beryllium tests, and chest x-ray reports as they become available. If there is an urgent finding they notify the worker right away. If the worker has questions about their exam, they can call the medical office and speak to one of the nurses. Their chief goal is to make the BTMed exam more understandable and user-friendly for the workers who are being screened.

All three nurses have expressed that the most rewarding part of their job is helping people, hearing workers' stories, and learning about them. "The work I do here has taught me a lot about job exposures at DOE sites and their possible effects on the worker," said Vicky DeForrest, who has been working with BTMed for 10 years.

If you have a question about your screening results or would like to speak to a BTMed nurse, you can call the medical office at 1-888-464-0009.

NEW BTMED MEDICAL FINDINGS PUBLISHED

The American Journal of Industrial Medicine published findings from BTMed's researchers, "Hearing Loss Among Older Workers: Updated Analyses". It looks at how different factors of construction work may contribute to hearing loss.

Visit www.btmed.org/publications.cfm and click on "Published Medical Findings" to read the full paper.

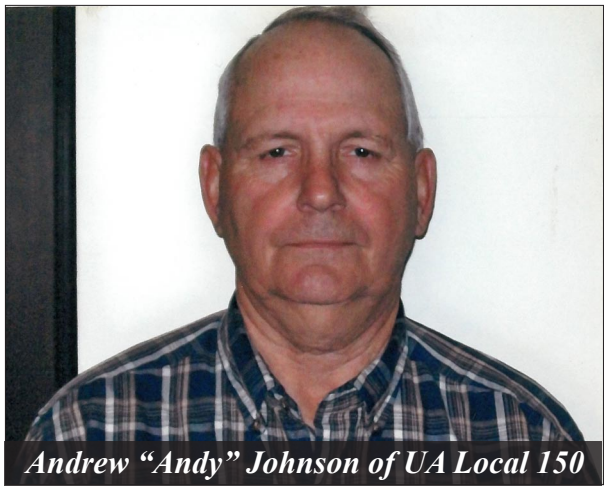
Former Savannah River Site worker stays fortunate by keeping on top of his health

Savannah River Site in Aiken, SC. Photo courtesy of DOE.

Andrew Johnson describes his life as blessed. He was able to raise four children while working for twenty years as a pipefitter at the Department of Energy's Savannah River Site, a job that paid better and felt more honest than his previous work selling insurance. But after being exposed to hazards like radiation and asbestos from his work at the cold-war era nuclear facility, Andrew knows that living a fortunate life means accepting the support of others, like the BTMed re-screens he signs up for every three years.

BTMed screens workers like Andrew for illnesses that may arise from the hazards that workers face while working construction jobs at DOE sites. Once you are in the program, you are invited back for re-screens every three years, to stay on top of illnesses with delayed effects. From his twenty years of experience at the Savannah River Site, Andrew knows as much as anyone how valuable that is.

"I worked in the 100 areas, I worked in the 200 areas, I worked as a fitter, I worked as a foreman," he recalls. "You name it, if it's in the pipe trades at the Savannah River Site, I was involved in it."



Andrew "Andy" Johnson of UA Local 150

The sprawling site, built to help in the nuclear weapons production effort during the cold war, has had its share of documented hazards. Andrew and his fellow workers were regularly monitored for radiation exposure, but often this wasn't enough to protect them. "Naturally, when they tell you to put on two plastic suits and two or three pair of coveralls and multiple shoe covers and multiple gloves, you knew that was not a perfect place to be," Andrew says.

Before even enrolling in BTMed, Andrew was experiencing health problems that he believes are connected to his time working at the site. But by visiting the doctors that partner with BTMed, and returning every three years for a re-screen, he receives detailed medical information that is specifically catered to his DOE construction work and how it might affect his health.

All too often, people who worked at Savannah River or other DOE sites wait too long to monitor their health, and can face problems down the road linked to asbestos, radiation, beryllium, or any number of other hazards.

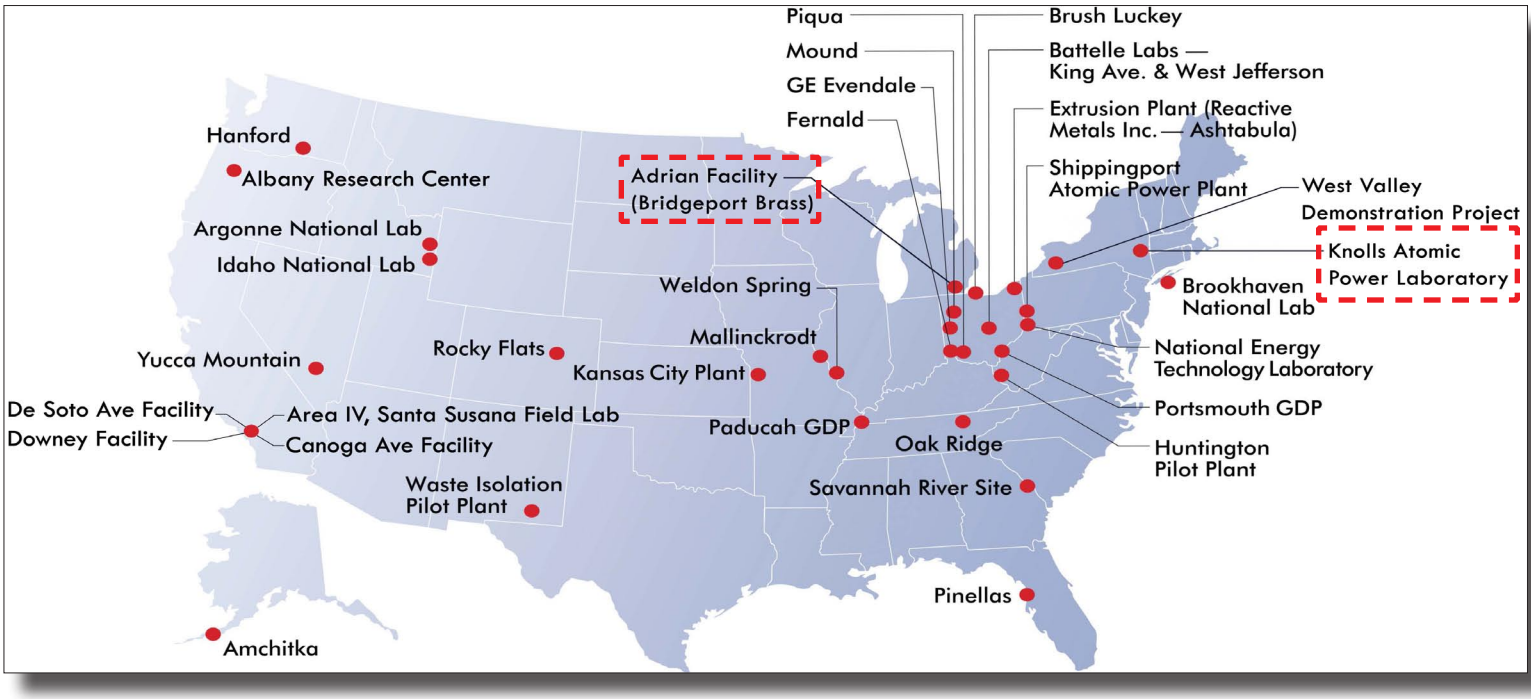
"I highly recommend that anyone who has been around any of these nuclear facilities go and get checked. You're not going to get a better physical, guaranteed. You don't want to go through what a lot of my friends went through," Andrew warns. "I was fortunate."

DID YOU WORK AT THE KANSAS CITY PLANT?

Are you looking to work a few hours a week? BTMed is searching for a former trades worker to help us spread the word about BTMed to other former KCP workers.

For more information contact Anna Chen
achen@zenith-american.com
1-800-866-9663

BTMED NOW COVERS 35 SITES NATIONWIDE



With the addition of the Adrian Facility (Bridgeport Brass) in Eastern Michigan, and the Knolls Atomic Power Laboratory in New York, BTMed now offers medical screenings for former workers of 35 different DOE sites nationwide.

Ever since it began serving just a few sites, BTMed has been constantly growing. Make sure to spread the word to anyone you know who has worked at a DOE site that they may be able to receive a free medical screening.

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Nonprofit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Washington, DC
Permit No. 5968

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This publication was produced by CPWR through funding from the Department of Energy (DE-FC01-06EH06004). The information provided here is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of DOE.

HAS IT BEEN THREE YEARS SINCE YOUR LAST BTMED SCREENING?

If your last BTMed screening was before April 2015, call 1-800-866-9663 ext. 2, or email btmed@zenith-american.com today to schedule your free re-screen exam!

"I'm thankful that BTMed checks us out every three years."

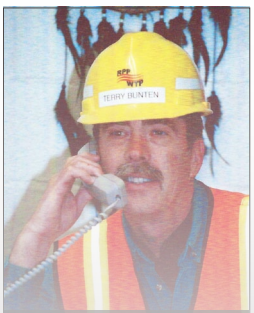
-Timothy DeBoy, Ironworkers Local 24
Former Rocky Flats worker
BTMed Participant

After 28 years at Hanford, worker gets "fresh set of eyes" to keep track of health

Terry Bunten figures it can take up to 40 minutes to drive from one end of the Department of Energy's Hanford site to the other. As a teamster, he spent much of his career transporting workers and supplies around the 580 square-mile site. But on the arid, rocky plateau where some of the first materials for the atomic bomb were produced, sometimes Terry found himself hauling extremely dangerous cargo.

From housing the world's first large-scale plutonium reactor, to developing a cleanup plan that may require dozens of years and billions of dollars, Hanford's story stretches far into the past and will stretch far into the future. While to some Hanford may represent a pinnacle of scientific progress, Terry and his coworkers believe they have been put at risk of serious illnesses from doing this dangerous work. Fortunately, the Building Trades National Medical Screening Program (BTMed) is looking out for workers like him by offering free medical screenings.

Terry first set foot on the site in 1977 to join his father, also a



Terry Bunten, Teamsters Local 690, uses BTMed's re-screens to check up on his health. Terry, his father and his daughter all worked at Hanford.

Along with hauling some of the most dangerous material in North America, Terry also transported a pump used to agitate the tank farm waste, worked in warehousing and on vehicles in the automotive department, and worked around the N reactor, the last reactor built at Hanford and the last to be shut down. Terry was at the site both during and after the reactor's production period, which ended in 1987. "When it was running, the N Reactor was kind of seen as a sister reactor to Chernobyl," he said. "And of course we all know what happened there."

After 28 years of working on the site, Terry believes he was exposed to a long list of hazards and contaminants. That's why, for DOE construction workers, participating in BTMed is so important.

Terry plans to continue monitoring his health with the information BTMed has given him. The doctors who work with BTMed are specifically looking for diseases that might come up from exposure to toxins on DOE sites, and each worker that goes through BTMed takes a work history interview to help get a clearer picture of what

WANT TO SEE YOUR STORY IN THE BTMED NEWSLETTER?

BTMed is always looking for workers who want to share their experiences working on DOE sites and going through our screening program.

If you want to see your story get printed in the BTMed newsletter, or just want to pass along a message about the program, call 1-800-866-9663 or email btmed@zenith-american.com.