BTMED news

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Building Trades National Medical Screening Program Expands to Include 15 DOE Sites

Starting in 1996, the Center to Protect Workers Rights (CPWR) began coordinating a national program that provides free medical screenings for the more than 700,000 building trades workers whose service to their country's nuclear weapons programs in World War II and afterward put them at risk for life-threatening ailments. CPWR is the research and development arm of the Building and Construction Trades Department, AFL-CIO. **The Building Trades National Medical Screening Program**–http://btmed.org–was formed in part by merging six site specific medical screening programs and adding nine new DOE sites to the covered population. With Department of Energy (DOE) funding mandated by Congress, the program has grown to 15 sites nationwide. More than 12,000 former workers have been screened. It is the largest medical study of older construction workers in the United States.

COVERED DOE SITES. **Hanford**, in Washington; **Oak Ridge**, Tennessee; **Savannah River**, in South Carolina; **Amchitka**, Alaska; the **Pinellas Plant**, in Florida; **INEEL**, in Idaho; **Paducah**, Kentucky; **Kansas City**, **Mallinckrodt**, and **Weldon Springs**, in Missouri; **Brookhaven**, in New York; **Rocky Flats**, in Colorado; and **Fernald**, **Mound**, and **Portsmouth**, in Ohio.

Local building trades unions reach out to inform members about the program. Each participant first completes a work history interview, which is conducted by a building trades worker who has received special training. The participant is then offered a free medical screening examination with tests for any exposures identified in the interview. Some participants are referred for further medical attention. Construction or maintenance workers in the weapons program who may have had significant exposures to asbestos, beryllium, cadmium, chromium, lead, mercury, noise, radiation, silica, solvents or other health hazards are eligible.

So far, the screenings have:

- Determined that construction workers are at significant risk for illnesses as a result of having been exposed to health hazards in DOE facilities. (This program was the first to document that construction workers are at risk for beryllium disease.) As a result, the Department of Energy is emphasizing health protection during such work, including maintenance, repair, renovation and demolition.
- Identified medical problems that were untreated or poorly treated and, as a result, has enabled thousands of workers to get better medical care.
- Provided part of the evidence that led Congress to enact the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act in 2000, and to include construction and maintenance workers in this program.

"The medical exam was very helpful and determined the amount of hearing loss I suffered. I am glad to hear they are offering re-screenings and I am sure going to make an appointment to go in for another test because even though you don't have anything today doesn't mean you won't have anything tomorrow."

Dennis Rocque, Electrician
Local 1579, Savannah River

"It's a thorough program—probably the most complete physical exam I've ever taken. And everybody I've talked to seems pleased with it. Very beneficial to working men and women who have been exposed on DOE sites."

Danny Hatfield, Asbestos Worker
Local 46, Oak Ridge

"All people who worked with nuclear energy should have a medical screening. It's a positive, very easy experience."

Paul Prince, Plumbers & Pipefitters
Local 521, Paducah, Fernald & Portsmouth

"I went in for a physical exam and a mass in my lungs was found. I also took a hemocult test which indicated that I needed a colonoscopy. If anything is found from the colonoscopy it will be at an early enough stage that it can be taken care of. I am very pleased that they are so quick."

Fred Dopp, Allied Painter
and Trades Local 764, INEEL

For more information on the program please call 1-800-866-9663 or check us out on line at http://www.btmed.org.

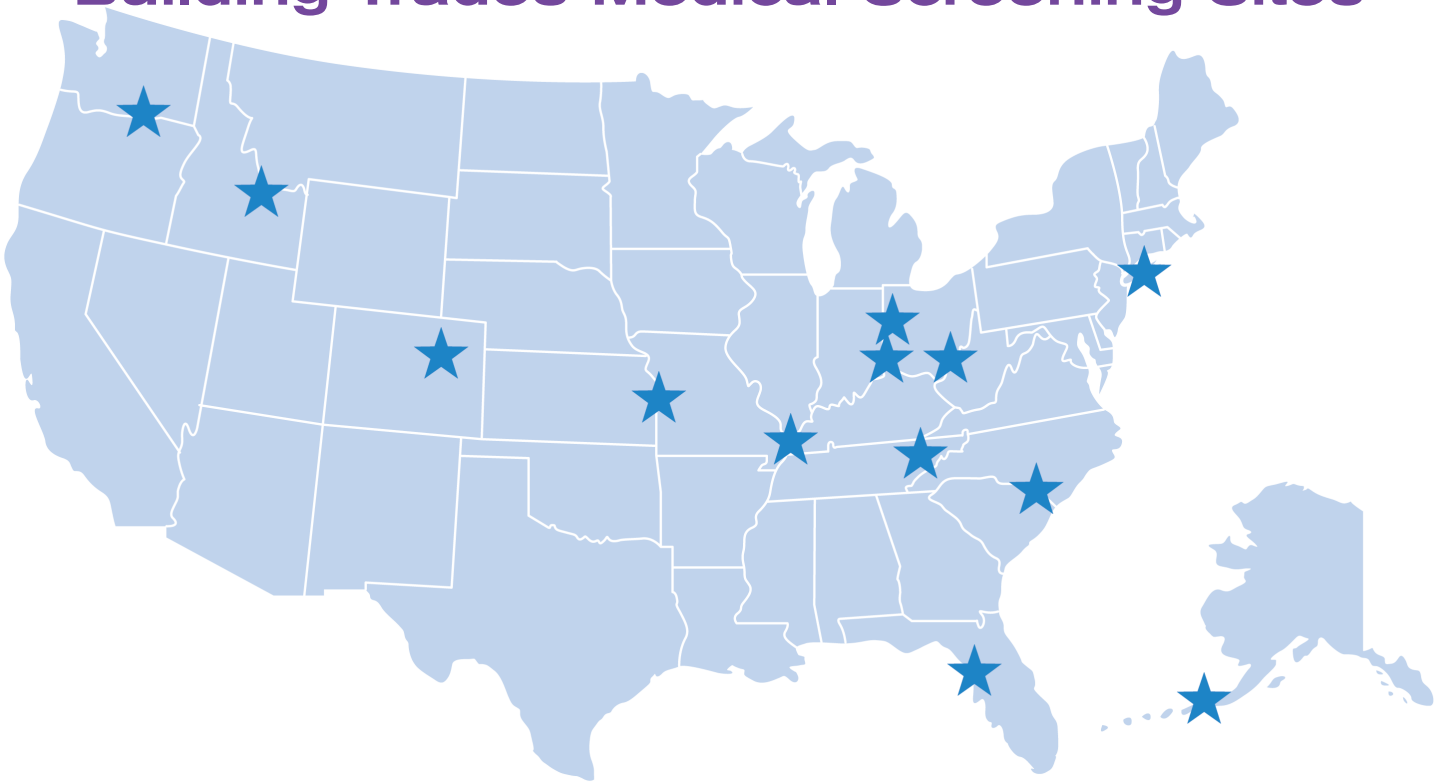
BTmed.org Facilitates Program Access

The Building Trades National Medical Screening Program maintains a comprehensive website—www.btmed.org—to inform DOE construction workers of the program's benefits and allow the workers to register for a free medical screening. The website provides information about the requirements for participation, how the program works and how to participate. Workers will also find information on the EEOICPA, a law passed to provide compensation to those diagnosed with an illness related to work performed on a DOE site, and whom to contact about filing a claim.

B.T. National Offers Free Re-Screening

Former DOE construction workers who have already been screened for possible work-related illnesses by the Building Trades National Medical Screening Program may be eligible to receive a free re-screening. The re-examination will be offered to participants three years from the date of their initial screening exam as part of Hanford, Savannah River, Oak Ridge, and Amchitka construction workers' screening programs. The objective of the re-screenings is to detect possible health problems that may have developed since the first medical screening. If you are a former construction worker who has participated in a medical screening at one of the four previously mentioned DOE sites, please contact 1-800-866-9663 about the free medical re-screening.

Building Trades Medical Screening Sites



Building Trades Outreach Office Locations and Staff

Amchitka Contact: Don Weber Phone: 1-888-827-6772	**Brookhaven** Contact: Angela De Vito Phone: 631-813-2725	**Fernald** Contact: Lou Doll Phone: 513-681-0864	**Hanford** Contact: Elaine Monlux Phone: 509-542-9347	**Idaho National Laboratory (INEEL)** Contact: Dan Obrey Phone: 208-233-4611	**Kansas City Plant** Contact: J.J. Jones Phone: 816-333-3020
Mound Contact: Bud Lipinski Phone: 937-222-8920	**Oak Ridge** Contact: Kim Cranford Phone: 1-888-464-0009	**Paducah** Contact: Joe Hudson Phone: 270-443-2850	**Portsmouth** Contact: Ron Bush Phone: 740-353-8808	**Rocky Flats** Contact: Dwayne Adkins Phone: 303-744-6169 ext. 11	**Savannah River Site** Contact: Charles Jernigan Phone: 706-722-7272

For Pinellas, Mallinckrodt and Weldon Springs Call Toll Free 1-800-866-9663

DOE Assistant Secretary John Shaw Participates in Grand Opening for Kansas City Construction Workers

Assistant Secretary of Energy for Environment, Safety and Heath John Shaw participated in a ceremony on October 25, 2005 commemorating the opening of a new medical screening program for former U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) construction workers at the Kansas City Plant. The new program, part of the Building Trades National Medical Screening Program, will offer an estimated 20,000 former Kansas City Plant construction workers free medical examinations to determine if possible exposure to harmful substances during their employment resulted in subsequent illness.

"Secretary Bodman feels a deep commitment to the former workers who led America to victory in the Cold War," Shaw said. "These screenings are the first step in improving the quality of life for our former workers. By accessing these services, former workers may be eligible for additional benefits, including medical care, through the Department of Labor's Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program (EEOICP)."

For more information, former construction workers should call 1-800-866-9663 or visit www.btmed.org.

John Shaw with J.J. Jones, Interviewer, and Garry Kemp of the GKCBCTC at Kansas City Grand Opening.

The Kansas City Screening Center is funded by the Department of Energy, directed by the Greater Kansas City Building and Construction Trades Council, and managed by a consortium led by The Center to Protect Workers' Rights (CPWR).

U.S. Department of Labor News on EEOICPA

Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act (EEOICPA)

Part B of the EEOICPA (enacted July 31, 2001) provides benefits to eligible current or former employees of the Department of Energy (DOE), and certain of its vendors, contractors and subcontractors, and to certain survivors of such individuals as provided in the Act. To be eligible, an employee must have sustained **a radiogenic cancer, chronic silicosis, beryllium sensitivity, or chronic beryllium disease** while in the performance of duty at a covered DOE facility, atomic weapons employer facility or a beryllium vendor facility during a specified period of time. Part B provides benefits in the amount of $150,000 and covers medical expenses related to the accepted condition. Part B also provides for payment of a smaller lump-sum of $50,000 to individuals (who also receive medical benefits) or their eligible survivors, who were determined to be eligible for compensation under section 5 of RECA.

Part E of the EEOICPA (enacted October 28, 2004) provides compensation and medical benefits to DOE contractor and subcontractor employees and to certain uranium workers who developed a covered illness as a result of exposure to **any toxic substance** (including the three covered by Part B) at a DOE facility or RECA Section 5 facility, as appropriate. It grants covered employees a federal payment based on the level of impairment and/or years of qualifying wage-loss if they developed a covered illness as a result of exposure to toxic substances. Certain survivors of deceased workers are also eligible to receive compensation, if the covered illness caused, aggravated or contributed to the employee's death. The maximum compensation under Part E is $250,000 for all claims relating to any individual.

Resource Centers

Eleven resource centers help employees and families file for benefits under the EEOICPA. A list of resource centers can be located at the U.S. Department of Labor's web site at http://www.dol.gov/esa/regs/compliance/owcp/eeoicp/main.htm or you may contact a center by dialing a number provided below:

Livermore, California
(866) 606-6302

Westminster, Colorado
(866) 540-4977

Idaho Falls, Idaho
(800) 861-8608

Paducah, Kentucky
(866) 534-0599

Las Vegas, Nevada
(866) 697-0841

Espanola, NM
(866) 272-3622

Amherst, New York
(800) 941-3943

Portsmouth, Ohio
(866) 363-6993

North Augusta, South Carolina
(866) 666-4606

Oak Ridge, Tennessee
(866) 481-0411

Richland, Washington
(888) 654-0014

Construction Worker Cancer Caught in Time By Building Trades National Medical Screening

After defending his country overseas, Robert Peardon returned from World War II, dedicating his career to building his country for future generations. Although he was fortunate enough to survive five major battles in Europe including the Battle of the Bulge, Robert would face another potentially fatal time in his life decades later when he would be diagnosed with colon cancer, possibly a result of working for years in unsafe conditions.

Robert Peardon with his wife, Frances, and great-grandchild.

Working as a steamfitter out of the Plumbers' & Pipefitters' Local 102, Robert contributed to jobs ranging from small community-based projects to those of a much larger scale, including the nuclear facility in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. Well-known for its role in developing the history's first atomic weapons, Oak Ridge was a Department of Energy (DOE) site consisting of three plants: X-10, K-25, and Y-12. Robert split his time in each of these buildings over a total of 12 years.

During his work at the site he saw many workers come and go. None of them, however, knew just how unsafe the working conditions were or how the conditions could affect their health in the future. After 40 years of hard work, Robert decided to retire in 1987. He and his wife, Frances, decided to remain in Tennessee, which Robert has called home since his family moved there from Alabama so his father could work at Oak Ridge. Retirement meant Robert could spend more time with his family, including his daughter, Carolyn, and his two grandchildren.

Sixteen years after retiring from Oak Ridge, Robert was informed of the service offered by the Building Trades National Medical Screening Program to former construction workers. He decided to participate in the program and contacted Kim Cranford, at the Building Trades outreach office in Oak Ridge, to set up a work history interview. After completing an interview with Johnny Ballinger, a retired asbestos worker at Oak Ridge, Robert was scheduled for a long-overdue medical exam.

"He hadn't had a physical in a long time," said Frances. On August 28, 2003, Robert completed his exam which led to the discovery of colon cancer, although he hadn't shown any symptoms. Fortunately, the cancer was detected at an early stage. If Robert had waited until symptoms appeared, the outcome could have been different.

"We would've never known," said Frances. "It probably would've been worse that it was."

Upon recovery, Robert filed a compensation claim under the EEOICPA, a law created for former workers on DOE sites who have been diagnosed with certain work-related illnesses. With help from the Center to Protect Workers' Rights to verify his past employment, Robert awaits a decision from the U.S. Department of Labor. If it is determined that Robert's past work at DOE sites caused his cancer, he could be entitled to a one-time compensation payment of $150,000 plus full medical coverage for future treatment of any work-related illness and reimbursement for any associated medical expenses since the date the claim was filed.

Although Robert is enormously appreciative of the Medical Screening Program's service and his decision to participate, Robert is even more grateful that he has been blessed with the opportunity to experience being a great-grandfather.

Every former worker on a DOE site is encouraged to participate in the Building Trades National Medical Screening Program, even if there appear to be no health problems. To participate in the free screenings, please call toll-free: 1-800-866-9663 or 1-888-464-0009.

Call Toll Free 1-800-866-9663 or visit us at http://www.btmed.org.

Building Trades National Medical Screening Program
c/o The Center to Protect Workers' Rights
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Silver Spring, MD 20910

Edward C. Sullivan, President
Sean McGarvey, Secretary-Treasurer

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