

Richland Operations Office Contributes to Energy Secretary's 'Openness Initiative'

RICHLAND, Wash., February 6, 1996 -- Since the announcement of Secretary of Energy Hazel R. O'Leary's Openness Initiative two years ago in December, the Richland Operations office has made available to the public more than 358,000 pages of Hanford-related documents, 300,000 of which were declassified, according to Ron Izatt, Deputy Manager, DOE, Richland Operations Office.

In December 1993, Secretary O'Leary initiated an openness policy to lift the veil of Cold War secrecy and move the department toward an era of government openness. At that time she released information about the nation's nuclear weapons program that had been secret for more than 50 years. O'Leary characterized that release as "the biggest delivery of declassified material in the history of this (DOE) department," and went on to say it was just the beginning.

In full support of the Secretary's Openness Initiative, the Richland Operations Office has, since December 1993, accomplished a wide range of activities. Examples are:

- o Made available 32,438 pages to the DOE Public Reading and three northwest libraries regarding human radiation experiments (HRE).
- o Provided Internet access to an additional 217,000 HRE pages.
- o Placed 8,024 declassified documents (bibliographic information) on "open net" database.
- o Accommodated 5,890 DOE Reading Room patrons, .. 31% of its total 11 year history.
- o Distributed 8,065 reports from the DOE Public Reading Room, ..24% of its total 11 year history distribution.
- o Processed more than 361 Freedom of Information Act requests with an average 20 day response time.
- o Currently scanning an additional 26,000 pages of historical documents for public access.

In May 1997, the new Consolidated Information Center will replace the Washington State University Library and will house all documents currently in the DOE Public Reading Room and the the Hanford Technical Library.

Referring to the total number of pages above, Wagoner said, "Placed end- to-end, those pages would reach from Richland to Yakima, or roughly 62 miles!"

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