

From The Control Room

by Hank Kosmata

The last several months have been very positive with respect to a continuing life for the B Reactor. An action initiated several years ago and relentlessly pursued by BRMA saw fruition on August 21st when the reactor received an official designation as a National Historic Landmark in ceremonies at the reactor by deputy secretaries from both Energy and Interior. Full details of this very important event are covered in the article by Sally Ann and Bob Potter.

At the same time DOE announced that they will support a significant addition to visitation to the reactor by opening access from Vernita and making the reactor accessible on a drop-in basis three times a week during the summer of 2009. Again, further details are given below by the Potters.

In the third major issue discussed below by the Potter team, the National Park Service has planned hearings

in the spring for an expanded list of alternatives in which the NPS could be involved in the preservation program for the reactor.

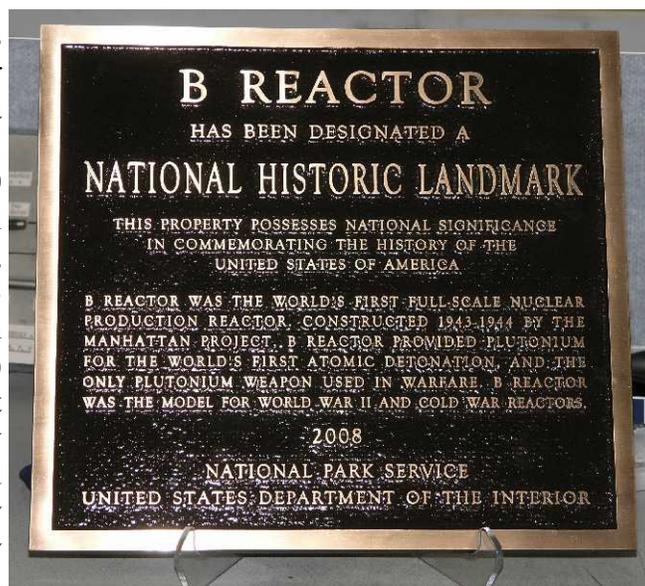
Finally, the article by tour chairman Plahuta notes that despite the reactor being unavailable for several summer months due to the long delayed but much appreciated roof repair, our BRMA tour guides were on hand to provide their services to over 2200 visitors so far in 2008.

All of these issues are certainly positive and in all of them we see and welcome the strong support of DOE headquarters and sincerely hope that this will continue into the new administration. While it is still not certain that B will escape the dreaded cocoon, all of the actions of this year so far have been very positive towards the goal of preservation and open visitation.

A “Landmark Day” For B Reactor

by Bob and Sally Ann Potter

Monday, August 25th was truly a “landmark day” for Hanford’s B Reactor! At a ceremony at B Reactor, attended by more than 100 federal, state and local government officials, community leaders, and B Reactor Museum Association (BRMA) members, U.S. Department of Interior Deputy Secretary Lynn Scarlett and Department of Energy Acting Deputy Secretary Jeffery Kupfer unveiled a plaque designating B Reactor as a National Historic



Landmark. Following a long application and approval process that began in 2002 with a draft application prepared and submitted by BRMA, the official designation was signed by Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne in mid-August.

B Reactor had been placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1992 by the National Park Service, but on August 25, 2008, B Reactor joined some rare

company – just 3 percent of sites listed on the

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National Park Service Manhattan Project Special Resources Study Update Schedule

By Sally Ann & Bob Potter

The National Park Service (NPS) “Manhattan Project Special Resources Study,” begun in March 2006 to evaluate the creation of a Multi-site Unit of the National Park System at Manhattan Project Sites at Oak Ridge TN, Dayton OH, Los Alamos NM, and Hanford is continuing.

To date, the Study Project Office in Denver, in conjunction with the NPS Regional Offices in Atlanta, Albuquerque, and Seattle, have completed the evaluation of the significance, suitability, and feasibility of the facilities at Oak Ridge, Los Alamos, Dayton, and Hanford, and are continuing to proceed with the final phase of the study - the evaluation of various management options for those facilities that have been deemed significant, suitable, and feasible for inclusion in the National Park System, including B Reactor. As reported in the Spring 2008 *Moderator*, the NPS Study Project Team has been evaluating the following three alternatives for management of B Reactor to be included in the Draft Study Report:

1. *No Action* – continue with the current Department of Energy (DOE) decommissioning plan to cocoon B Reactor;
2. *A Nationwide Manhattan Project Management Consortium* – a private nationwide consortium that would coordinate management activities by local and state historical groups at each Manhattan Project site; and
3. *A Manhattan Project National Heritage Area* – a congressionally authorized designation with funding provided through a designated national non-profit 501 (c)(3) organization in cooperation with the National Park Service, the Department of Energy, and local heritage organizations. Two possible national organizations are the Atomic Heritage Foundation (AHF) and the Energy Communities Alliance (ECA).

We have been advised that the schedule for the public distribution of the Draft Study Report that will include their evaluation of the various management options, along with public meetings and the period for public comment

on the Draft Study Report are being delayed from the fall of 2008 until the spring of 2009. On a positive note, however, part of the delay is the result of the NPS reversing an earlier decision and to evaluate one of the two management options that the Study Project Team initially “Considered but Rejected.” The Study Project Team is now including the evaluation of *A National Historic Site Affiliated Area of the NPS*. This management option would not result in a Multi-site Manhattan Project National Park System Unit managed by the National Park Service (the other management option “Considered but Rejected”), but would provide annual NPS funding for education and interpretive support at each of the Manhattan Project sites. As with the other management options being evaluated, the DOE would continue to maintain ownership responsibility for the facilities, and the management of the facilities as museums or interpreted historical exhibits would be conducted by organizations other than the NPS.

While the *Multi-site National Park System Unit* management option, with the NPS being responsible for managing the Manhattan Project facilities, will be included in the Draft Study Report as “Considered but Rejected,” we expect that this *Multi-site National Park Systems Unit* management option, together with a possible joint DOE-NPS management option, will be openly discussed further during the public meetings and public comment period next spring. Speaking at the National Historic Landmark ceremony at B Reactor on August 25th, Deputy Secretary of the Interior Lynn Scarlett stated that while most National Historic Landmarks do not become national parks, “park affiliation takes many forms.” While the National Park Service does not always take ownership of properties, the National Park Service does help by providing interpretation of them. “Our watchword is partnership,” she said. “It is an unfolding story.”

B Reactor Tours

by Maynard Plahuta, Tour Coordinator

BRMA tour guides had another busy and fruitful year conducting full “museum flavor” tours at B with our cutaway model of B, vignettes, DVDs, and our experienced tour guides. There have been more than 2200 visitors since the beginning of 2008. This was achieved by the fact that DOE elected to double the number of Hanford Site public tours this year. As you know, the B Reactor tour is the big draw for the large number of people who sign up for the public site tours. It is certain the total number of tours would have been

greater had B been open for the three summer months during which it was closed for roof repair. These summer months are when many technical, professional, and other specific groups and officials tour B.

The highlight of the tours was the big Landmark Celebration reported elsewhere in this issue of *The Moderator*. Hats off to Paul Vinther and Norm Miller for the great job they did in conducting the tour for the dignitaries and press at the event. Deputy Secretary Lynn

A “Landmark Day” For B Reactor (continued)



Participants at the Aug. 25 ceremony at B Reactor included, from left, Jeffrey Kupfer, acting deputy secretary, DOE; Larry Denton, Dee McCullough, Bill McCullough, Norm Miller, and Paul Vinther, all BRMA; Stephanie Toothman, Cultural Program Chief, National Park Service Seattle Office; Michelle Gerber, Hanford Historian; Lynn Scarlett, deputy secretary, U.S. Dept of Interior; and David Brockman, Director, DOE Richland Operations Office.

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National Register of Historic Places ever get elevated to landmark status. It is much to the credit of BRMA members that the B Reactor application did not get derailed in the political and administrative processes and B Reactor was rightfully designated as a National Historic Landmark.

Prior to the ceremony, the two cabinet-level officials were given a tour of the reactor by our own distinguished BRMA members and B Reactor veterans Dee and Bill McCullough, Norm Miller, and Paul Vinther.

During her prepared remarks at the ceremony in front of the reactor’s front face, Deputy Secretary Scarlett offered

B Reactor Tours

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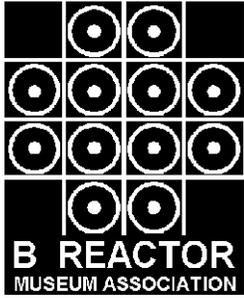
Scarlett of the Interior Department commended these gentlemen several times and in several ways about the very professional and informative tour they conducted. And I second that. Thanks, fellows, for again coming through with an A+.

As you all know, we will be conducting tours under very different arrangements next year as a result of the announcement at the Landmark Event that open tours will be established beginning next spring. Many details remain to be worked and hopefully in a future *Moderator* we will have more information to pass on. This breakthrough certainly goes a long way toward achieving what we have been striving for so long.

these encouraging remarks, “I think we can be assured B Reactor will be permanently protected and preserved.” When properties are designated as landmarks, it attracts not only money and grants for preservation, but it also anchors the property in the public’s mind as a place that deserves significant recognition, she stated.

Acting Deputy Secretary Kupfer also offered some very positive remarks as part of the ceremony on the Department of Energy’s position regarding B Reactor. “We at the department are very committed to preserving the significance of the reactor and making it more accessible,” he said. “We want to ensure as many people as possible have the opportunity to learn about this important period of history.” (See related article on new DOE public access program for B Reactor for 2009)

Following the ceremony at the reactor, the Hanford Reach Interpretive Center hosted a reception at Anthony’s Event Center on Columbia Point. In 2007, the Hanford Reach National Monument Interpretive Center Board of Directors adopted a resolution committing the center “to operate tours of the B Reactor and fulfill our related coordination and management duties.” The new Reach Interpretive Center to be built at south Columbia Point is currently scheduled to be opened in the spring of 2011. This commitment by the Interpretive Center Board could be very significant as the National Park Service (NPS) proceeds with the evaluation of various management options for B Reactor as part of the NPS “Manhattan Project Special Resources Study” that is now under way.



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New B Reactor Visitor Access Program For 2009 Unveiled By DOE **by Bob and Sally Ann Potter**

As part of the National Historic Landmark ceremony at B Reactor on August 25th, Acting Deputy Secretary of Energy Jeffery Kupfer announced a new visitor program for B Reactor in 2009 and possibly into 2010.

Kupfer announced that during March to October 2009, DOE is planning to open B Reactor to the public at least three days a week, including Saturday, with no advance registration required for “drive-up” visits. Visitors will be able to drive out to the State of Washington rest area at the Vernita Bridge and board a Department of Energy (DOE)-provided shuttle bus for the short drive along the Columbia River on a portion of the long unused Route 6 to the reactor.

DOE has committed to provide the additional funding needed to implement this new access plan, including: the cost of opening the reactor; the installation of a new entry gate onto the site from Route 24 at the Vernita Bridge and

temporary restroom facilities; and minor road repairs on the road to the reactor.

Many of the details of the new access program still need to be worked out, including the number and scheduling of the necessary tour guides during the days and hours B Reactor will be open next year. Visitors will still have to be U.S. citizens and provide photo identification, but DOE is investigating how to lower the age limit for visitors from the current 16 years of age.

While this is an exciting new public access program for 2009, DOE is planning to use this expanded visitor schedule to track visitor interest. A decision on continuing the program for future years will be based on demonstrated on-going public interest, including the number of actual visitors during next year’s tourism season.