



From The Control Room

by Hank Kosmata

The best news of this year is the decision by the Department of Energy to adopt a new policy towards B Reactor with respect to its possible future preservation. Whereas there has been mixed and sometimes lukewarm support from DOE in the past with respect to the future of B, this new policy, described in more detail below by the Potter team, is now the formal official policy of DOE. It states that they will work on preservation and will withhold any action with respect to destruction (cocooning) until the Parks Service studies are complete. Further, the DOE will cooperate with these studies by developing information which will assist the analysis of various long term organizational arrangements that could be used to sustain B Reactor as a public site.

In other news, also covered in more detail below, the Department of Interior actions with respect to the Parks Service studies and the designation of B as an

Historic Landmark are both progressing in a positive direction, even if slower than we had hoped.

The summer tour season is ready to start and there is good news and bad news. The good news is that DOE is planning 48 tours with about 2000 participants who have already signed up for tours starting in April and going through September. The bad news is that while the total bus time for the tours has been extended to over five hours the time allowed in B Reactor is still an inadequate 70 minutes.

In other good news it looks like DOE and Washington Closure will finally take action to use money allocated two years ago to begin fixing the roof. The current promise is that as soon as the weather warms to the proper temperature the work will begin, probably in May.

New Department Of Energy Policy Preserves B Reactor Until Studies Are Complete

by Bob and Sally Ann Potter

On February 29, 2008, Deputy Secretary of Energy Clay Sell signed a new Department of Energy (DOE) policy that directed the Department to take no actions that will preclude the preservation of B Reactor and options for public access. This formal policy, the first of its kind for a Manhattan Project-era facility, is intended to apply only to the Hanford B Reactor. The policy specifically directs that:

- The Department maintain B Reactor in a state that preserves its historical significance;
- The Department take immediate steps to assist the Secretary of the Interior in the review of the designation of the B Reactor as a National Historic Landmark to facilitate a decision in the earliest possible timeframe;
- The DOE Office of History and Heritage Resources complete the Department's study of the Reactor by

May 1, 2008; and

The DOE Office of Environmental Management determine contractual modifications necessary for the B Reactor to be managed as a maintenance rather than a closure facility.

The significance of the policy is that B Reactor will be preserved while the studies to evaluate all the options for turning it into a museum are completed. In the DOE Richland Operations Office press release announcing the new policy, Jim Rispoli, Assistant Secretary of Energy for Environmental Management was quoted as saying, "The steps we are taking will ensure we give this remarkable facility every chance to be permanently preserved for the public to see."

National Historic Landmark Designation For B Reactor Moving Forward

by Bob and Sally Ann Potter

We may be seeing that proverbial “light at the end of the tunnel” in our pursuit of a National Historic Landmark designation for B Reactor. As reported in the last issue of the *Moderator*, the Landmarks Technical Committee of the National Park System Advisory Board met on December 5, 2007 and voted unanimously to recommend designating B Reactor as a National Historic Landmark. The next step in the nomination process is for the full National Park System Advisory Committee to act on the Technical Committee’s recommendation and then forward their recommendation on to the Secretary of Interior for his final approval. At issue, however, was that the

Advisory Committee had not been re-authorized/re-appointed by Congress and could not meet until that had occurred. With this being an election year, there was some serious concern that the re-authorization of the Advisory Committee would not be a priority in the current session of Congress.

Earlier this month, we received the good news from the National Park Service (NPS) Seattle Office that the Advisory Board has been reappointed and a late spring meeting is expected in either late May or early June. B Reactor’s National Historic Landmark nomination is expected to be on the action agenda for that Advisory Board meeting. A favorable recommendation by the Advisory Board will be sent to Secretary of Interior Richard Kempthorne for his final decision to designate B Reactor as a National Historic Landmark. Following Secretary Kempthorne’s designating B Reactor as a National Historic Landmark, an official bronze plaque will be commissioned and an official National Historic Landmark ceremony at B Reactor could be held in the early fall. This schedule would conveniently coincide with the public release of the draft of the Management Alternatives Assessment for B Reactor for the NPS Manhattan Project Study and subsequent public meetings (See accompanying article on Page 3). Hopefully, the designation of B Reactor as a National Historic Landmark will come to reality by the end of this summer!

Membership News

by Burt Pierard, Membership Chair

Our paid 2008 Membership stands at 100 Individual memberships and 2 Group memberships. Traditionally, I expect these numbers to increase after this issue of *The Moderator* is received. Additionally, we have received \$265, year to date, in personal donations along with the renewals.

Your 2008 Membership Cards have been printed but I apologize for the delay in distribution. Hopefully I will have all the mailings ready in time to include with this *Moderator* issue hard-copy mailing.

RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP NOW! Renewal Forms can be clipped from the hard-copy versions and you email recipients can simply print your own.

2008 Renewal and New Member Application

Name: _____ Date: _____
Address: _____ City: _____ State: ____ Zip: _____
Phone: (h): (____) _____ (w): (____) _____ MSIN address: _____
(current Hanford employees)
E-mail: _____

- Individual (\$20) or Senior (age 65+) or Student (\$10) and New or Renewal
 Group (\$25 up to 100 members; please add \$10 for each additional 100 members)

For Group Membership, Official Representative: _____

Additional tax deductible contribution: \$ _____ Total Enclosed: \$ _____
(Tax ID # 94-3142387) (Please make check out to BRMA)

Thank you; please mail this application with payment to:

B Reactor Museum Association
PO Box 1531
Richland, WA 99352

National Park Service “Manhattan Project Special Resources Study” - An Update

by Bob and Sally Ann Potter

On Wednesday, February 14th Keith Dunbar, Chief of Planning, and Dr. Stephanie Toothman Chief of Cultural Resources Program of the National Park Service (NPS) Seattle Office met with the Hanford Site Study Team for a status update on the NPS Manhattan Project Study. The NPS Seattle office is responsible for the study input and report preparation for the Hanford Site; i.e., B Reactor. The Hanford Site Study Team is an informal group of people representing various governmental agencies, organizations, and Native Americans interested in the preservation of B Reactor, including the U.S. Department of Energy, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agencies, the State of Washington Department of Ecology, Senators Murray and Cantwell and Representative Hastings offices, Hanford Communities, Tri-Cities Visitors and Conversion Bureau, Tri-City Development Council and local Native American tribes. The Hanford Study Team has met periodically with the NPS to provide input and responses to the NPS Study as it has progressed. Sally Ann and Bob Potter and Del Ballard represented BRMA at the February 14th meeting of the Hanford Site Study Team.

A summary of each of the management alternatives to be evaluated for B Reactor in a draft study report on management alternatives were discussed. These options include:

1. No Action - the current DOE decommissioning plan to cocoon B Reactor;
2. A Nationwide Manhattan Project Management Consortium – a private nationwide consortium that will 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) 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).

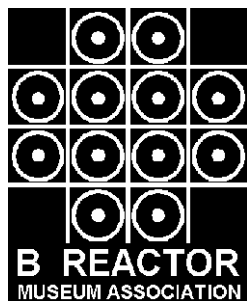
Under each of the management options, DOE would continue to maintain ownership responsibility for the Manhattan Project facilities at each site.

Two management options – a multiple-site Manhattan Project National Park Service Unit and a National Historic Site Affiliated Area of the NPS – are not being considered as viable management options in the NPS Study. These options will be identified in the upcoming draft study report under a section entitled “Management

Options Considered but Rejected”. These options are not being considered because the NPS does not feel the agency can accept radioactive facilities into the National Park System. The Atomic Heritage Foundation and Energy Communities Alliance are preparing a joint letter to Secretary of the Interior Richard Kempthorne that these two management options be fully evaluated as management options in the final study report. Individual and organizational input to further encourage the NPS to include these two management options can be made during public meetings and the public comment period on the draft study report scheduled for fall of 2008.

The current schedule for completing the Manhattan Project National Historic Park Special Resources Study recently reported by the NPS Seattle office:

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| September 2008 | Public distribution of the Draft Study Report on Management Options and Summary Newsletter issued. |
| October 2008 | Public meetings in Tri-Cities, Los Alamos, Oak Ridge, and Dayton and public comment period on the Draft Study Report. |
| November 2008 | NPS Denver Project Office incorporates public comments and determines the “most effective and efficient management approach” to be recommended in the final Manhattan Project National Historic Park Special Resources Study Report. |
| January 2009 | NPS Denver Project Office prepares the Congressional package – the final Study Report and recommendation letter from the Secretary of Interior to Congress. |
| March 2009 | Congressional package submitted to NPS Headquarters and Department of Interior in Washington, D.C. |
| April 2009 | Secretary of Interior submits the final Study Report and recommendation to Congress and final Study Report is made available to the public. |



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B Reactor Tours

by Maynard Plahuta, Tour Coordinator

As many of you may have heard the DOE has doubled the number of public tours this year. Thus, 48 tours plus the normal additional tours for various technical groups; conference attendees; local, state, and federal officials; and other dignitaries will keep our tour guides very busy this summer.

The public tours are scheduled for April 2, 3, 23, 24, 29, and 30; July 30 and 31; August 21, 22, 27, and 28; and September 2, 3, 24, and 25. Again, registration for these tours was filled rapidly---within 24 hours nearly 2,000 people signed up. This again demonstrates the popularity of the tours. Unfortunately none of these tours were scheduled for Saturdays when a lot of working people can not be available to take a tour.

The break between the April and July tours is the time in which the repair of the reactor roof will occur

and at which time tours can not be conducted for safety and other conflicting reasons.

BRMA is currently working with DOE and other interested parties in the Tri-Cities such as the Columbia River Exhibition of History, Science, & Technology; City of Richland; TRIDEC; and the Hanford Reach Interpretive Center on plans to expand and improve tours of B Reactor; and to demonstrate united community involvement and support to DOE, the Department of Interior, and congressional members to help ensure the reality of a B Reactor Museum.

As a reminder we are looking for more people interested in becoming a tour guide. The plan referenced above includes tour guide training so don't be shy or hesitant about volunteering