

Jan 20 -83

I said "MAY I HAVE YOUR
ATTENTION, PLEASE?"

Sir -

I'm writing to you because you're in a position to draw national - or state - attention to a miserably inadequate program called "radiological emergency planning". Also because you're in a position to do something about it.

In times past, Great Thinkers pondered the problem of how many angels could dance on the head of a pin. Today, the conclusions of the Experts at the NRC and FEMA are just about as silly and unreal.

With all our computers, satellites, lasers and what-have-you, our weather forecasters still have trouble making accurate predictions.

Yet the NRC and FEMA are able to predict that the most severe accident at an atomic reactor would be contained within a 10-mile radius of the plant.

Of course, they have to ignore such details as - How much radiation is being released? And which way is the wind blowing?

Result: The 10-mile evacuation zone is now set in concrete, as a matter of national policy. Oh, almost as an afterthought, they do allow there may be an "ingestion pathway" zone out to 50 miles from the reactor. This is where the crops, livestock, water and milk may be contaminated. But nothing's said about getting people out of this area. Apparently, that's to be left to last-minute improvisation.

Following these "guidelines", the Penna Emergency Management Agency has thrown together plans for the region around Penna Power & Light's Susquehanna "Steam Electric" Station (a pair of 1000 MW reactors) near Berwick PA.

Here are a few details of the plan - which ignore or conflict with a number of real-life, human concerns:

- 1 - Penna is the only state, we're told, that has chosen to evacuate people from the 10-mile area in a 360° pattern.

COMMENT: PEMA has been told more than once that this scheme will put some evacuees directly under the radioactive plume. If it rained, they'd be drenched with liquid fallout. To date, no comment from PEMA.

- 2 - Only residents within the 10-mile radius will be notified by sirens (inaudible in some locations) in event of a General Emergency at the plant.

COMMENT: If you want to create mass confusion and panic, there's no better way to do it than keep people in the dark until the last minute, then spring this little surprise on them.

- 3 - School children are to be kept in school until a General Emergency is declared - by which time the entire area could be bathed in radiation - then bussed to outlying "pick-up points" where their parents may go to find them.

COMMENT: Please see enclosed letter from a Berwick mother. If you'd like to see instant hysteria, and possible violence, just try to stop parents from going to schools to get their children.

- 4 - The plan assumes that in a General Emergency, 4 or 5 outlying school districts will send their buses to Berwick to pick up children and take them to pick-up points between 11 and 40 miles away.

COMMENT: While this is a nice, altruistic notion, see enclosed news clips for the reactions of a couple of the school districts involved.

- 5 - Finally, the only protection being offered for emergency workers will be an issue of three radiation-reading dosimeters, and some potassium iodide tablets.

COMMENT: These workers (police, volunteer firemen, National Guard etc) would be expected to spend hours in a radioactive area - directing traffic, warning residents, fighting fires etc. While dosimeters would show how much radiation they've absorbed, they don't prevent workers from inhaling the stuff, or being contaminated by it. Still, there's no provision in the plan for filtered respirators or special protective clothing!

What's more, the plan calmly assumes the workers may absorb a once-in-a-lifetime dose of 25,000 millirems in property-saving operations, and three times that much in life-saving operations!

Can you imagine yourself in their shoes? Would you be eager to do emergency work under these conditions?

PP&L has already had one real-life Alert. Every few weeks, we're informed of plant shut-downs due to sticking valves, one radioactive spill so far, and faulty pressure readings. People around here are getting a little nervous - especially since we don't have a realistic emergency plan.

Would you agree we have some serious, legitimate concerns?
AND ARE YOU WILLING TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT? May I hear from you?

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"OVERBROOK"

R.D.1-BOX 176A

CATAWISSA 17820

Siren at 2nd stage

According to the radiological emergency plan the public is to be alerted by the siren system when a nuclear incident has reached the general emergency stage.

I wonder how many people understand what the general emergency stage is? For those who don't, I would like to quote from the emergency information pamphlet received in the mail recently: "Events are in process or have occurred which involve actual or imminent substantial core degradation or melting with potential loss of containment integrity. Releases can be reasonably expected to exceed EPA exposure levels offsite for more than the immediate plant area."

On Dec. 8 I discussed this with at least 15 active firemen in the Berwick area. Thirteen of them said they would not respond at the general emergency stage. One said he would, but he worked out of town. The other said he would respond. The Berwick Ambulance Association also says it will not respond to a nuclear accident.

I find it hard to believe that buses and ambulances contracted with to come in from outside will be able to come because they too will find themselves without adequate personnel. Most people realize this and they know chaos will result if the sirens are not blown until the general emergency stage.

That is why every parent I've discussed this with say they will go directly to the schools to pick up their children. Well, parents, just how do you expect to do this when you're not going to know of a nuclear incident until the 4th stage has been reached? And, according to the pamphlet we received, events are already in process or have occurred before we, the citizens, are even going to know anything is wrong. Don't you think that is a bit late?

By not blowing the sirens until the general emergency stage has been reached PEMA is adding problems to the evacuation process. They aren't giving the citizens enough warning to act in an orderly and helpful fashion. PEMA's plan is creating chaos should a nuclear accident occur. Who are they really trying to protect? It certainly doesn't seem it is those of us who live around the power plant.

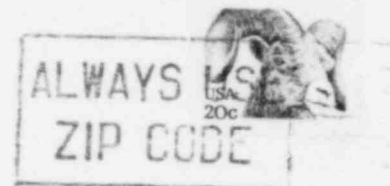
Parents and citizens — please — should take three or four minutes of their time and let the commissioners know they do not want the evacuation plans adopted as proposed by PEMA. We want the sirens blown at the 2nd stage. We want our children sent home then! We, the parents, want to know of a problem so we can be home with our children. This will allow us sufficient time to prepare should the situation worsen and the general emergency stage be reached.

What person stays in a burning building when it is on fire, waiting for the fire to reach the room they're in? They get out at the first sign of smoke!

ELIZABETH EDWARDS
Berwick R.D.4

Morning Press 1/4/83

"OVERBROOK"
R.D. 1-BOX 176A
CATAWISSA 17-20



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Central debates evac plan

'We owe community our pledge to get these kids home'

By KIM McNALLY
Press-Enterprise Staff

Confusion is the only thing area residents can be sure of right now in case of an emergency at the nuclear power plant north of Berwick, directors on the Central Columbia school board agreed last night.

"Somebody should do something," said district resident Kirk Miller during a discussion on Columbia County's unfinished emergency plan and Central school district's part in it. "Somebody should tell the commissioners 'Here's what we want to do, now you tell us yes or no.'"

The Central board members decided to do just that, voting to write the county commissioners and suggest that all Central students — including those who live within the 10-mile evacuation zone established by the Nuclear Regulatory Committee — be bused to their homes at the first sign of trouble at the nuclear plant.

Existing district plans call for all students at the Mifflinville Elementary School (which is within the 10-mile zone), to be bused to the Central Columbia Middle School, which is just outside the 10-mile limit.

According to this plan, all Central students who live within the zone would then stay at the school, waiting for their parents to pick them up. All students who live outside the zone would be taken home as soon as buses became available.

The problem, as made evident by superintendent Horace B. "Jim" Reynolds last night, is that according to the current county plan, most of the district's buses would be pressed into service evacuating Berwick students to Danville, leaving at most eight buses to take Central students home.

"What is the correct thing to do?" asked middle school principal Robert Thomas. "We owe the community our pledge to get these kids home."

Reynolds agreed, reasoning that if all students are taken home at the first sign of trouble, parents would be certain where their children were, and could make their own arrangements for evacuation. The immediate action would mean Central students would all get home and the buses would be free to evacuate Berwick students, if necessary.

The board agreed, however, that the problems of emergency planning are far from being settled.

Among the board's questions

which remain unanswered:

—What if bus drivers refuse to drive or are unavailable during a nuclear emergency?

—What about younger students getting on the wrong bus during the confusion, and what about drivers who may have to drive unfamiliar children on unfamiliar routes?

—What if there is no first warning, and what if an immediate evacuation is ordered that includes residents outside the 10-mile limit?

The directors, in suggesting the new plan to the county, agreed it would answer parents' first concern about their children, which would be "Where are they?"

The board will also suggest to the county that all area school districts be represented at all future discussions of the county's emergency plan.

One obstacle, as pointed out by board president John D. Klingerman, is that school districts were asked to come up with their own emergency plan before the commissioners had established a county-wide plan.

"What should have been done," Klingerman noted, "is to have a county plan first, then have us work around it. As it is now, any plan we have could be completely changed."

ergy, evacuation

new state law that will change the number of board members to be elected in a municipal election. Under the former system, six members were chosen in one election, and three in the election two years later. The new law will change the numbers to five members elected one year and four elected two years later.

To implement the law, one of the six board members to be elected this year will serve a two-year term rather than the standard four-year term. The Millville board approved that one-time, two-year term.

In "the continuing saga of the art room floor in the new elementary building," Ottey reported that "bubbles" in the floor's surface are the result of a problem in the surface itself. Tests made by drilling have shown there is no wet concrete or problem with water beneath the floor, he said. The flooring contractor, Yorle Tile & Terrazzo Inc., Shepperton, will install a new surface.

board president Wallace Derr, referring to the committee to which all the energy-related topics were directed. The board took no action on any of the ideas. The concept of permanently closing up some windows as a way to save fuel — apparently an old topic — was also discussed briefly, but no action was taken.

The board addressed a letter from Columbia County Commissioner George H. Gensemer, who asked for reactions to the report of the Advisory Committee on Radiological Emergency Plan — a committee appointed by the county commissioners to study the evacuation plan proposed for use in case of an emergency at PPL's Bell Bend plant.

Ottey noted that the Berwick School District evacuation plan calls for five buses from the Millville to help evacuate children from Berwick in time of emergency. Several board members made it clear, however, that buses would be sent to Berwick only after Millville children are taken home.

Board members also made these responses: Millville schools will be available as an evacuation center if an emergency occurs; county officials should consider developing a Civil Defense plan and make emergency procedures clear to all county residents; and the board is willing to discuss the plans with the county commissioners if that trio wants to meet.

Turning to election matters, the board took steps to comply with a