



Paducah Citizens Advisory Board

"working for the future"

Emerging Technology Center, Room 221
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Recommendation No 24-01: Suggestions to Enhance Department of Energy (DOE) Environmental Management (EM) Internship Program at Paducah Site.

Background

In August 2022, DOE-EM Senior Advisor Ike White addressed a roomful of industry leaders, contractors, and elected officials. During his keynote address, Mr. White identified several challenges looming in his organization's near-term and distant future. First and foremost, in a list of challenges directed to those in the room committed to advancing the EM cleanup mission, White identified the challenge of maintaining a high-quality and diverse workforce.

White shared figures showing approximately 25% of EM employees are eligible to retire presently, and almost half are eligible to retire in about five years. White added that only 15% of federal employees are under 30 across the entire DOE complex.

A "homegrown" workforce provides stability and economic growth, with families staying "home" for their careers, which has long been a goal of the Paducah Area Chamber of Commerce, local economic developers, and elected officials.

DOE PPPO and the Paducah Site have internship opportunities that have the potential to create a future workforce for DOE and its contractors. These internships provide students with opportunities to apply classroom learning to practical tasks and project activities. Potential internships available in 2024 include Business Services, Engineering (Mechanical, Chemical, Electrical, Industrial, Environmental, Structural, Civil), Environmental Science & Environmental Compliance, Finance & Accounting, Human Resources, Hydrology and Geology, Industrial Safety, Information Technology, Occupational Safety and Health and Industrial Safety, Procurement & Subcontracts, Project Management (Construction, Project Controls), Public Affairs, Regulatory Affairs, Supply Chain, Property and Fleet Management, and Waste Management.

RECOMMENDATION

To enhance the current DOE Internship program, the CAB recommends:

- a) Offering multi-year internships for those interns who show excellent skills and would fit well within the Paducah complex. Offering the ability to become versed in various positions will assist the intern in choosing their career path and DOE with a knowledgeable potential employee.**

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- b) Increasing the number of internships offered for 2024. The increase in 2023 was so successful an increase for 2024 should be equally successful.**
- c) Increasing outreach with local colleges to help identify potential career paths/DOE needs that have historically been difficult to recruit (i.e., estimators or baselining specialists) and offer internships in these areas.**
- d) Increasing advertising of internships to high school students pursuing trade fields.**
- e) Increasing advertising of internship opportunities for underrepresented student groups.**
- f) Participating in trade school fairs and competitions to educate local students about DOE internships available. Focus on the benefits and advantages for the students staying in their home area for summer internships.**
- g) Beginning the application process earlier in the academic year. Starting the application process in the fall semester can benefit the students by knowing where they would be interning earlier in the year and DOE by increasing the time needed to plan future interns' projects and prepare the space and equipment needed to support them.**

Who We Are

The EM SSAB is the DOE EM's most effective vehicle for fostering two-way communication between DOE-EM and the communities it serves. The EM program is the world's largest environmental cleanup program and the EM SSAB its only citizen advisory board. For more than 20 years, the volunteer citizens of the EM SSAB have partnered with EM officials at both the local and national levels to ensure the public has a meaningful voice in cleanup decisions.

Public participation is required/recommended as part of a number of environmental regulations. It is also good business practice, resulting in better decisions often resulting in improved cleanup. Over the past two decades, EM SSAB members have volunteered over 48,000 hours of their time and submitted to EM officials over 1500 recommendations, 88% of which have been fully or partially implemented, resulting in improved cleanup decisions.

The EM SSAB comprises approximately 200 people from communities in Georgia, Idaho, Kentucky, Illinois, Nevada, New Mexico, Ohio, Oregon, South Carolina, Tennessee and Washington. The Board is cumulatively representative of a stakeholder population totaling millions of people affected by generator sites, transportation routes and disposal sites. As we move forward, the EM SSAB welcomes the opportunity to highlight the value of this unique volunteer board and discuss its priorities during the months and years ahead.