



Paducah Citizens Advisory Board

"working for the future"

Emerging Technology Center, Room 221
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Recommendation No 23-04: Suggestions to Increase Department of Energy (DOE) Environmental Management (EM) Worker Recruitment and Retention

Rev 6 November 18, 2022

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 everyone in the room that shares a commitment to advancing the EM cleanup mission, White identified the challenge of maintaining a high-quality and diverse workforce.

"The workforce of the future is a particularly daunting task," White said, pointing to figures showing approximately 25% of EM employees are eligible to retire presently, and almost half are eligible to retire in about five years. White further added that across the entire DOE complex, only 15 federal employees are under the age of 30.

This topic has been a discussion on the federal and contractor level for many years, with several presentations having been shared with local CABs and with the EM SSAB at National Chairs Meetings. While this is a complex-wide issue, the ramifications are most impactful at the local site level.

DOE PPPO and the Paducah Site have worked to improve the student outreach needed to engage a population that can create a future workforce for DOE and its contractors. A "homegrown" workforce provides stability and economic growth, with families staying "home" for their careers. This has long been a goal of the Paducah Area Chamber of Commerce, local economic developers, and elected officials.

RECOMMENDATION

To maximize this effort and to further establish clear and tangible goals for worker recruitment and retention, the Paducah CAB recommends DOE work with its contractors to:

- **Utilize the information with the project baseline to identify workforce requirements for future site work. This information should be shared with local economic**

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developers, colleges, and secondary schools to help begin discussions on preparing future workers.

- **DOE includes the link to the EM 101-Paducah video in future press releases and print media provided during site tours.**
- **Increase 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).**
- **Partner with pre-professional organizations at local colleges and secondary schools.**
- **Participate in trade school fairs and competitions to encourage local students to pursue careers in the areas that will be needed at the site in the future.**
- **Encourage a joint community task force on worker training and retention and offer input to its partner agencies on what is also needed by DOE.**

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 that 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 that often result 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 who are 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.