

Local 9-288 President Wins Safety Award

Health and safety is Billy Edington's passion.

For 28 years the USW Local 9-288 president has trained and mentored thousands of people and made significant contributions to local, regional, national and international health and safety. He also writes safety curriculum, investigates incidents, and conducts safety audits and inspections.

"I don't want to see anyone get hurt or killed," he said, when asked what motivated him to become a health and safety activist.

An instrumentation technician, Edington said he has always worked for nuclear contractors who participated in the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Voluntary Protection Program (VPP). He also has worked with the USW Tony Mazzocchi

Center for more than 15 years.

USW District 9 Director Daniel Flippo acknowledged Edington's commitment to health and safety: "His work ethic, attention to detail and desire to spread the knowledge of safety and health is a benefit to all who receive his instruction and guidance."

Edington's extensive work with VPP and the TMC also caught the attention of his employer, UCOR, in Oak Ridge, Tenn. The cleanup contractor's VPP health and safety coordinator, Michelle Keever, nominated him for a national safety award.

In July, the 2019 Voluntary Protection Programs Participants Association (VPPPA) announced Edington had won, and at the end of August, he will travel to New Orleans to accept the VPPPA Safety and Health Outreach Award at the National VPPPA Safety & Health Conference.

"While much of Billy's dedication to safety can be seen through the legacy of his safety and health training efforts, he ultimately demonstrates the traits of an exemplary safety leader through his everyday actions and words. He is a deliberate and effective communicator who actively cares for the health and safety of others," Keever wrote in the award application.

UCOR is the prime cleanup contractor at the Department of Energy's (DOE) East Tennessee Technology Park (former K-25 site).

"Billy has been a strong leader in our union when it comes to health and safety issues," said retired International Vice President Carol Landry. "We are very proud of his work over the years. It is nice to see him get this recognition."

(Continued on page 2)



USW Local 9-288 President Billy Edington teaches a group of students from the Tennessee School for the Deaf. Photo courtesy of DOE.

(Continued from page 1)

Safety Audit

Last March, Edington participated as a Special Government Employee (SGE) in the evaluation of the Sherwin-Williams Company's Atlanta Distribution Center in Buford, Ga., to determine if it should be re-certified for VPP Star status. It was his first time conducting a VPP audit.

"I asked a lot of questions and tried to participate as much as I could," he said. "I went in there with a student's attitude."

His dedication and hard work impressed the OSHA administrator overseeing the project, who noted his performance in a letter to UCOR's president and project manager.

Enacting USW Systems of Safety

Though Edington is involved in VPP through his employer, he understands and applies the USW's Systems of Safety to his work as a trainer for the USW's Tony Mazzocchi Center (TMC).

"I like the USW's philosophy on the Systems of Safety because you identify the failed systems instead of blaming somebody. That way, you fix

the problem in the first place instead of disciplining somebody who has been exposed to the hazard," he said.

Edington has served as a TMC trainer for more than 15 years, spending much time selecting, mentoring, coaching and training USW worker-trainers. He is also a key member of the TMC curriculum development team.

Through National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) grants and the support of the USW and UCOR, he conducts health and safety training at DOE sites around the country and at other industrial sites throughout USW District 9.

He also applies his teaching skills as a TMC Specialized Emergency Response Trainer (SERT), traveling to natural and manmade disaster areas to show people how to use health and safety techniques during recovery activity.

Preparing Next Generation

Since 2016, Edington has been conducting OSHA 10-hour General Industry and 40-hour HAZWOPER outreach classes at east Tennessee high schools and vocational schools

through a NIEHS grant in cooperation with the USW and UCOR.

Last year, he said he trained about 400 students to prepare a new generation of environmental cleanup workers. "With high school students, I tell them war stories, my experience, and it really opens their eyes," he said.

In early March 2019, Edington taught the OSHA General Industry class to a group of students from the Tennessee School for the Deaf. He said the class required two oral interpreters—one to translate his southern accent to the New York interpreter, who signed to the students.

"These students were very enthusiastic about the training, which made it easier for me to do my job," he said. "All of them got a big kick out of the chemical protection clothing and personal respirator."

"Having that OSHA certification will add to their resume, and help them go into any general industry work environment."

Edington said the best part of teaching is the "interaction with people. I learn as much from them as they learn from me. If I can save one person from getting hurt, it's all worth it."

USW Participates in Global Union Nuclear Meeting to Address Energy Policy

Climate change is forcing many countries to rethink their energy policies, with ramifications for employment and labor relations in the nuclear sector on a global scale.

To discuss the changing energy mix and other developments within the industry, IndustriALL's Inter-

national Nuclear Workers' Union Network (INWUN) met the end of June in Ankara, Turkey.

Jim Key, president of the USW's Atomic Energy Workers Council, attended the two-day meeting. "There is much value to our council in reaching out to help other unionized workers in our communities, states and countries," he said. "The cooperation between unions in the network is critical for exchanging information and sharing experiences."

(Continued on page 3)





Delegates to IndustriALL's International Nuclear Workers' Union Network. Photo courtesy of IndustriALL

(Continued from page 2)

IndustriALL, a global federation formed in 2012, represents 50 million workers in 140 countries through its affiliates, including the USW. It creates international networks so unions in a particular sector or company can exchange information, mobilize and support one another.

The Turkish union— Energy, Water and Gas Workers Union (Tes-İş)—hosted the recent INWUN meeting. The union is working to increase its presence in the sector, as Turkey added nuclear power to its energy portfolio and will start operating its first nuclear power plant in 2023.

Besides the USW and Tes-İş, the meeting drew union participants from Belgium, France, Japan, Malawi, Russia, South Africa, Ukraine and the United Kingdom.

Country Reports

Various government and academic representatives joined a Russian labor leader and a company representative from the Russian State Atomic Energy Corporation (ROSATOM) in a panel discussion about Turkey's nuclear energy future. ROSATOM is building the Turkish nuclear power plant.

The Ukrainian delegation discussed the fallout and entombment of Chernobyl since this year marked the 33rd anniversary of the nuclear reactor core meltdown. What the Ukrainians said impacted Key.

“One of the mind-provoking items discussed was that 1,600 workers who were sent into the Chernobyl

reactor core are no longer with us. These workers did not have any medical or life insurance coverage.

“Valeriy Matov, co-chair of IndustriALL's energy section for nuclear power and president of Ukrainian union Atomprofspilka, said that workers who bought medical and life insurance were taxed so highly by their government that it was cost prohibitive for them to own these policies,” Key said.

Delegates addressed occupational health and safety through a discussion on the differences between radioactive substances and particles, and how they penetrate the body. They also reaffirmed the importance of the right to know workplace hazards, the right to refuse or shut down unsafe work, and the right to participate fully in decision-making through joint health and safety committees.

Long-Term Policy Needed

The network concluded on the need for long-term energy policies that provide a balanced energy mix and do not change with every new government.

“Energy policies should serve the general interest through legislative and regulatory framework supporting social cohesion, equal treatment, environmental protection and better access to energy for the world,” said IndustriALL Assistant General Secretary Kemal Özkan. “IndustriALL fully supports our affiliates worldwide in their fight against further liberalization and deregulation of energy markets.”

The INWUN unanimously approved a statement

(Continued on page 4)



(Continued from page 3)

about the future of the nuclear sector. It focused on developing a balanced energy mix through democratic participation, consideration of nuclear energy in a low carbon mix, and more research for new technologies and reactors.

The statement also emphasized that sustainable industrial employment is needed so that changes in the energy sector are done with fairness and justice to workers, their families and their communities.

After the meeting ended, the delegates visited the Sarayköy nuclear research and training center in Ankara.

Link to INWUN statement:

http://www.industrial-union.org/sites/default/files/uploads/documents/2019/TURKEY/inwun_statement.pdf

Link to IndustriALL article:

<http://www.industrial-union.org/nuclear-workers-building-union-power>

Health and Safety Reps Receive Training to Improve Working Conditions

USW members in the union's atomic sector understand they face unique health and safety risks in their workplaces. So when they requested sector-specific information at the Atomic Energy Workers Council (AEWC) meeting last March, the Health, Safety and Environment (HSE) Department and the Tony Mazzocchi Center (TMC) teamed up to plan a weeklong training to help them stay safe and healthy on the job.

In early June, sixteen health and safety representatives from seven different worksites traveled to Pittsburgh to learn essential skills to help them in dealing with U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) health and safety regulations.

The training also featured basic health and safety, communication mapping, the Systems of Safety, and the logic tree for incident and near-miss investigation. The instructors and representatives analyzed and discussed the DOE's safety culture, and they strategized about how to get health and safety issues resolved at their facilities.

The health and safety representatives also learned about the resources available to them from the USW HSE Department and the USW Emergency Response Team. Plus, they heard presentations on the medical monitoring program and pertinent legislation.

Participants came from the former Portsmouth Gaseous Diffusion Plant, the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP), the Hanford Nuclear Reservation, Idaho National Laboratory (INL), Bettis Atomic Power Laboratory and Holtec Manufacturing.

Diane Stein, TMC staff, said there was a good mix of new and experienced representatives who provoked a healthy exchange of ideas and discussion. This was important, she said, because the participants were able to learn about each other's sites and how their work impacted the other facilities.

"This training helped them gain a better understanding of the big picture, and they will likely stay in touch with each other," Stein said. "It was a really fun week, and it will be good to do it again."



Nuclear health and safety reps. and TMC personnel. Photo courtesy of TMC.



How the DOE Funds Your Paycheck: Part One

If you are an atomic worker, your paycheck is dependent on federal government funding for the Department of Energy (DOE) and the agency's allocations for clean-up activities.

Of course, your paycheck directly comes from the DOE contractor, but the contractor gets its funding for cleanup and other projects from the agency.

The funding process is like a maze and subject to administrative and congressional policies, priorities and politics. Now that Congress and President Trump have signed a two-year budget deal, they have until October 1—the beginning of the federal government's fiscal year—to pass 12 funding bills. Whether that happens depends on the political and policy roadblocks along the way.

House Passes Energy Funding Bill

The U.S. House of Representatives took the first step by passing 10 of the 12 funding bills. This included on June 19 a package of four appropriations bills that will fund federal departments, including the DOE, from October 1, 2019 to September 30, 2020.

Under the House bill the DOE's Office of Environmental Management (EM) would receive \$7.175 billion in funding for nuclear waste cleanup at 16 sites—an amount equal to money received for fiscal year 2019, but an increase of \$706 million above President Trump's budget request.

Uranium enrichment Decontamination and Decommissioning (D&D) work

would receive \$873 million, an increase of \$32 million above the fiscal year 2019 level and \$158 million above the President's budget request.

Funding Process

Ten of the 12 funding bills contain provisions Republicans oppose, so it may be unlikely these bills will pass the Republican-controlled Senate. The Senate Appropriations Committee has not taken action on any of the 12 funding bills, and with the House and Senate recessed for August, there will only be three weeks after Congress returns to



resolve funding issues.

This is a short timeframe considering the appropriations process. The House and Senate appropriations committees divide the budget resolution allocations among 12 appropriations subcommittees in each chamber. These subcommittees hold public hearings and prepare appropriations bills.

Next, the Appropriations Committees in the House and Senate vote on

each subcommittee's funding bill. Then, the full House and Senate vote on each appropriations bill.

A House-Senate conference committee would resolve any differences between the House and Senate appropriations bills. Then, they would go to the President to sign or veto.

If Congress and the President cannot reach a formal funding agreement, Congress will have to pass and the President will sign a Continuing Resolution (CR) or an omnibus bill containing any unfinished funding bills to prevent a government shutdown. The CR funds the government at 2019 levels to give negotiators more time to get a funding deal. It usually goes into early or mid-December, setting up another funding deadline before the holidays.

Next Steps

The media reported that Senate Republicans are thinking of merging three appropriations bills—defense; labor, health and human services; and energy and water development—during Senate debate in September. If this happens and the Senate passes the bills, a large chunk of the federal government would be immune to a shutdown.

At the 2019 National Cleanup Workshop on Sept. 10-12 in Alexandria, Va., Congressional leadership and staff will discuss current and future funding for DOE's Environmental Management program.

The DOE then determines how much money to allocate to each cleanup site, and its budget gives an idea of its priorities. Read about the DOE's budget and factors influencing the money allocated to each site in Part Two of "It is Time to Fund Your Paycheck" next month.