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**ARKANSAS MONITORING CALL SUMMARY
AUGUST 7, 2012**

NRC Attendees	Arkansas Attendees
Randy Erickson, RSAO	Renee Mallory, Branch Chief
Vivian Campbell, Deputy Director	Bernard Bevill, Section Chief
Lisa Dimmick, FSME	Jared Thompson, Program Manager
Michelle Beardsley, FSME	Tammy Kriesel, Health Physicist
Stephen Poy, FSME	Kayla Avery, Health Physicist
	Angie Hill, Health Physicist
	Layne Pemberton, Health Physicist

Background:

During the week of April 4-8, 2011, an IMPEP review team performed a follow-up review of the Arkansas Radiation Control Program (the Program), in part, to determine if the Program had successfully completed the actions necessary to close the four recommendations noted during a review conducted in October 2009, and to further determine if the period of Heightened Oversight initially imposed on the Program in 2007 could be relaxed.

The review team noted several significant improvements in the program and closed the four open recommendations, but did not feel as though the Program had sufficient time to demonstrate a period of sustained performance. The review team recommended and the MRB agreed that the period of Heightened Oversight should be terminated, and that a period of Monitoring be initiated.

Status of the Recommendation from the 2011 IMPEP Review:

1. *The review team recommends that the State develop and implement a method for tracking the status of license action reviews to ensure timely completion.*

September 20, 2011 status:

On September 20, 2011, the Program reported they have continued to make progress in reducing the license renewal backlog. At the time of the October 2009 IMPEP review, the Program had approximately 130 license renewals in the backlog. As of June 30, 2011, the Program had reduced that number by 58 and had 81 total licensing renewals backlogged. Of the 81 remaining renewals, 23 were being worked by the staff and included all nine renewals with renewal dates prior to 2008.

During the last monitoring call, the Program reported they had developed a plan to eventually eliminate the backlog. They pulled all Priority 1-3 inspections forward approximately three months and were performing those inspections. They reported that in October 2011, they will cease performing routine inspections and instead will focus the staff on licensing. Amendment requests would continue to be processed as they come in; however, five staff members as well as two contractors would be actively working on the licensing backlog. Each reviewer was expected to be working on at least four renewals at all times. The Program had a goal of completing at least 40 additional renewals by the time of their next Periodic Meeting, which is scheduled for October 2012.

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January 18, 2012 status:

On January 18, 2012, the Program reported they have made additional progress in reducing the license renewal backlog. After pulling inspections forward and creating an approximate three month window to concentrate on licensing actions, they began to focus almost solely on the licensing backlog.

During the quarter beginning October 1, 2011, the Program issued nine license renewals and reported that all license renewals prior to 2008 are currently being worked. The Program has six renewals that go back beyond 2008, with the oldest one dating back to 1999. Overall the Program indicated that there are now a total of 70 licenses in renewal, of which 40 are currently being worked, and approximately 30 still awaiting action. These other 30 renewals date from the 2009/2010 time frame. The Program has also resumed performing inspections.

May 1, 2012 status:

On May 1, 2012, the Program reported they continue to make progress on the licensing backlog. Since the January 2012 call with the Program, they reported they are now down to 65 licenses in the backlog (anything greater than 30 days), 46 are currently being worked and only 19 backlogged licenses are yet to be started. The Program still believes that they can achieve their goal of 40 backlogged licenses completed by October 2012.

The Program also noted two additional items, the first being their long awaited fee increase that has recently been approved by the Board of Health and which should become effective in November 2012. The approved increase puts the program's fees at 15 percent of NRC's fees and should not require another increase for at least 5 years. The second item noted was in the area of backlogged regulations. The Program reported that they have completed and received approval from the Board of Health to take all backlogged regulations out for public comment. A hearing will be held on June 12, 2012. They expect the regulations to become effective on or near October 1, 2012.

August 7, 2012 status:

On August 7, 2011, the Program again reported they continue to make progress on the licensing backlog even with several new renewals coming due and being added to the overdue list. Since the May 2012 call, the Program reported they now have 47 total licenses in the backlog, down from 65 noted during the previous call. Of those, 20 are currently being worked, two are terminating and 21 are yet to be started. The two most overdue renewals are held over from 2004. The Program reports that these are difficult licensees and because of that the renewal process has been slowed. The next most overdue renewals are from 2008. The Program originally had a goal of completing 40 backlogged licenses prior to their October 2012 Periodic Meeting, but reported that as of June 30, 2012, they had completed 41 renewals.

The Program also noted two additional items during the May 2012 call. The first being a fee increase scheduled for implementation in November 2012. The Program reported that this increase will go into effect as planned in November. The second item noted involved overdue amendments to the Arkansas regulations. The Program reported that a package containing all current overdue amendments was presented at a public hearing on June 12, 2012. They are now awaiting signature by the Commissioner of Health. They still anticipate that the regulations should become effective on or near October 1, 2012.

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The next Monitoring call meeting will occur during the Arkansas Periodic Meeting, currently scheduled for October 30, 2012.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Randy Erickson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Randy" being more prominent than the last name "Erickson".

Randy Erickson
Regional State Agreements Officer
Region IV

Internal distribution via e-mail:

- Anton Vogel, DNMS
- Vivian Campbell, DNMS
- Brian McDermott, FSME
- Duncan White, FSME
- Randy Erickson, SAO
- Lisa Dimmick, FSME
- Kathleen Schneider, FSME
- Stephen Poy, FSME
- Karen Meyer, FSME
- Michelle Beardsley, FSME

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