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Former N-workers get easier path to benefits

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WASHINGTON—A government panel Thursday recommended making it easier for some former workers at the Simonds Saw & Steel plant in Lockport to file for compensation under a program for workers who became ill after working on nuclear weapons programs during the Cold War.

In a meeting in Santa Fe, N. M., the Advisory Board on Radiation and Worker Health voted unanimously to recommend expediting matters for one group of Simonds Saw workers and surviving family members, said Shannon Bradford, a spokeswoman for the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health.

Earlier this week, the panel postponed action on two attempts to make the application process easier for former workers at the Linde Ceramics plant in the Town of Tonawanda.

But the board, backing a recommendation from NIOSH, voted to create a “special exposure cohort” for a group of the Simonds Saw workers.

Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius now has 30 days to accept or deny the recommendation. If she accepts it, those Simonds Saw workers will no longer have to go through the difficult process of trying to individually reconstruct their exposure to radiation.

Simonds Saw workers who spent at least 250 days at the Lockport facility between Jan. 1, 1948, and Dec. 31, 1957, and then contracted certain cancers would be able to apply under that program shortcut.

That was the period of time when Simonds Saw was involved in nuclear work for the government.

Simonds Saw workers from 1958 through 2006 had also sought that special status, arguing that there was residual radiation on the site. But the board turned down that request, said Antoinette Bonsignore, a lawyer for the Linde Ceramics workers.

The Simonds Saw workers have been among those with the greatest struggle to obtain \$150,000 in government payments after suffering health problems. Only 71 of the 235 Simonds Saw cases filed so far resulted in the benefits being paid, according to figures on the Web site of the U. S. Department of Labor.

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West Valley Demonstration Project restocks local food pantries
Date: Wednesday December 1, 2010



West Valley Demonstration Project employees and friends reached out this holiday season to assist more than 900 local families. Donating over 77,400 pounds of food including 330 turkeys, WVDP restocked eight local food pantries in Springville, West Valley, Little Valley, Franklinville, Cattaraugus, Ellicottville and Delevan. The students at West Valley Central School donated to support the West Valley Food Pantry.

The following organizations joined together to make this year's food drive an outstanding success: U.S. Department of Energy, New York State Energy Research and Development Authority, West Valley Environmental Services, I.A.M.A.W. Local 2401, Environmental Chemical Corporation, Inc., WSMS, SLR Construction, RJR Engineering, InTomes Technical Services, Frederick Machines, Cottage Industries, Butler Construction, Olean Wholesale and Salamanca Parkview.

The WVDP is an environmental cleanup and waste management project located about 35 miles south of Buffalo. The project is conducted by the U.S. Department of Energy in cooperation with the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority. WVES manages and operates the WVDP under contract to DOE. The WVES team is comprised of URS, Jacobs Engineering, Environmental Chemical Corporation and Parallax.