

***Abstract submitted and accepted by the 13<sup>th</sup> International Congress of the International Radiation Protection Association (IRPA 13)***

***(Poster to be presented May 13-18, 2012, in Glasgow, Scotland)***

**Public Training on Radiation: Changing Perceptions**

*“This is preeminently the time to speak the truth, the whole truth, frankly and boldly... So, first of all, let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself – nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance.”* Franklin Delano Roosevelt spoke those words in 1933 in his Inaugural Address to a nation suffering through what we now refer to as The Great Depression. However, these same words ring true today in every nation where ever-expanding populations rely on the nuclear industry to provide electricity from nuclear power plants, nuclear medicine from hospitals and a multitude of other benefits in industry. Unfortunately, there exists an irrational fear of radiation throughout much of the general public that may unnecessarily hamper or even completely derail any hopes of a nuclear renaissance unless we act now to educate the masses.

For too many years negative images of the nuclear industry as a whole have been fostered by misinformation and sensationalism dispersed by the mass media – especially through the cinema, the internet and the news outlets. At the same time most experts in the field, while watching such portrayals in disgust, have been just as guilty of effectively misguiding the misinformed because we have withheld what we know about radiation and the nuclear industry: The truth, the whole truth, frankly and boldly.

The East Tennessee Chapter of the Health Physics Society (ETCHPS) has taken the initial steps to fill the massive void that exists in the area of health physics training for the public. Beginning in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, home of the ETCHPS, the public will be invited to attend presentations provided by local Health Physicists, Nuclear Engineers and Scientists. Training will be provided on topics such as: The basics of radioactivity, units of measurement and natural sources of radioactivity including radon in homes; how radioactive material is used in nuclear medicine, nuclear power plants and industry; regulation of the nuclear industry, including risk associated with exposure to ionizing radiation; and, an update to the ongoing situation in Japan. Air samples will be taken and counted along with showing the natural radioactivity associated with everyday products such as KCl, glassware, etc. Also, after the presentations, opportunities to talk directly with the experts will be provided as a vital part of each training session.

The hope is that each attendee will have a better understanding of the naturally radioactive world in which they live and at least a basic familiarity with the controls in place for the use of radioactive material for the advancement of mankind. While neither promoting nor condemning the nuclear industry, we are committed to helping establish a rational understanding of it. We may not necessarily erase all fears, but we will attempt to cleanse the lens through which they view our world by providing them reliable, sound information.

The lessons learned from the efforts spearheaded by the ETCHPS will be presented to the attendees with the hope that they will accept the challenge and do likewise to educate citizens around the globe. Hopefully, our efforts will be the dawn of a new era of engaging with society to foster truth and understanding as it relates to radiation.

## Proposed Public Training Schedule

- Dec 8, 2011: Request support at ETCHPS Annual Vendors' Meeting
- Dec 15, 2011: All members supporting effort e-mail [henrylynn@comcast.net](mailto:henrylynn@comcast.net)
- Dec 22, 2011: Establish responsibilities for effort
- Jan, 2012: Secure venue in Oak Ridge, TN  
Begin advertising in local newspapers  
Review/revise all slide presentations  
Prepare instruments/training aids to be used
- Feb/March, 2012: First Public Training in Oak Ridge, TN
- March/April, 2012: Second Public Training in Chattanooga, TN
- April, 2012: Third Public Training in Erwin, TN

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