

UNR receives more research funding

by robert danner
staff writer

Like a duststorm in the Mohave Desert, clouds of controversy continue to swirl around the proposed nuclear waste repository at Yucca Mountain 100 miles north of Las Vegas. Dr. William G. Culbreth, UNLV Associate Professor of Mechanical Engineering, said the Department of Energy gives more funding to UNR than UNLV for studies relating to "handling, transportation, and storage of high-level nuclear wastes," even

thought the faculty at UNLV "has the necessary expertise and a vested interest in any potential adverse effects of the placement of a repository in Southern Nevada."

Culbreth noted the Nevada Agency for Nuclear Projects, established approximately two years ago by Nevada Governor Richard Bryan, distributes funds to UNR, UNLV and Desert Research Institute and the University of Nevada Systems for feasibility studies relating to the proposed repository. The

DOE must approve all expenditures.

He explained that this agency got 7.5 million during its first year from DOE. "We did a break-down of where some of that money went," he said.

"Some of the funding went to the Desert Research Institute, UNR, UNLV, out-of-state consulting firms, and some of the funding also found its way into the hands of groups who are trying to keep the repository out of Nevada."

Culbreth noted that research expenditures increased to \$16 million dur-

ing the 1987-88 fiscal year and that the proposed disbursement for 1988-89 will be \$23 million.

His contention is that the rapidly growing UNLV campus is not getting a fair share of the money from the study.

"Carson City is 450 miles from Las Vegas. They are roughly 350 miles from the proposed repository, whereas UNLV and Clark County are 100 miles away. Because we are the closest metropolitan area to the repository, one would think that a significant amount of the state's fun-

ding on research would go to UNLV," he said.

Culbreth said a large amount of funding has not yet reached UNLV.

"In the fiscal year of 1987, out of the 7.5 million spent, a large amount went to the D.R.I. which is predominantly based in Reno and to the Mackay School of Mines at UNR. On the other hand UNLV got approximately \$50,000, considerably less than the \$2 million which UNR received," he said. Culbreth added that hopefully the imbalance of funding between UNR, the D.R.I. and UNLV would

change.

He said that a study was recently done for the Nevada Agency for Nuclear Projects by the UNR College of Engineering. The purpose of the study was to see whether a nuclear waste transportation research center should go to UNR or UNLV.

"Does it make sense for UNR to be making a report on whether something should go to them or us," he said. "The proposed transportation routes would go down I-15 to Highway 95 which are
see Funding, ss7

Politicians, DOE disagree on repository

by steven kapellas
managing editor

The Department of Energy says they are following the will of Congress in examining Yucca Mountain as the site of the nation's first high-level nuclear waste repository. Governor Richard Bryan and other Nevada politicians disagree. They accuse the DOE of lying to the state.

The DOE was a "willing co-conspirator" in the selection of Yucca Mountain as the only site to be studied, Bryan said.

"The DOE did not try and stop the Johnston Amendment to the Nuclear Waste Policy Act," the governor said.

Congress passed the NWPA in 1982; President Reagan signed the law on January 7, 1983. The act directed the DOE to "develop, schedule, construct and operate deep-

mined geologic waste repositories. It also called for the DOE to perform research, development and demonstration of the disposal of spent fuel and high-level waste." The act directed the DOE to select three sites for site

characterization to determine the suitability of a possible location. The original three choices were Hanford, Washington, Deaf Smith County, Texas and Yucca Mountain, Nevada.

In 1987 Sen. Bennett Johnston, D-La. pushed through an amendment to the waste policy act which redefined the site selection process. The revision eliminated Hanford and Deaf Smith County and directed all research and geological studies to the Yucca Mountain site.

"Congress rammed through the Johnston Bill," Bryan said.

"Congress selected Yucca Mountain," said Carl Gertz, project manager for the Yucca Mountain repository. Gertz said the Energy Department is just following what congress decided.

Governor Bryan disagrees.

"The DOE is an advocate for the nuclear power industry," he said. Bryan said the nuclear power industry pressured the DOE to select a site. "They [the nuclear power industry] focused in on

Nevada," he added.

Bryan accused the DOE of downplaying reports which suggest Yucca Mountain may not be the

best site. "They [the DOE] have a track record for not cooperating," he said.

"I believe we have been fair and open," the DOE's Gertz said. "We have provided them with

thousands of documents about Yucca Mountain," he said.

Sen. Harry Reid D-Nev., said he has always oppos-

ed the repository being placed in the Silver State and he criticized members of Congress and the DOE for the site selection process.

"The site selection process never took place, there was a process flaw," the freshman senator said. He said the original intent of the waste policy act was never carried out because of the Johnston Amendment which eliminated the other two sites.

"The DOE can't look at other sites" because of what Congress did, he said.

Governor Bryan had one theory on why Congress passed the NWPA amendment. He said it was because of the divided congressional delegation. Bryan is referring to Sen. Chic Hecht R-Nev., his opponent in this year's senatorial race. He said if the entire delegation had been opposed to the repository Congress may have changed its mind on the amendment. "That hurt us," he said, "only Harry Reid hung in their with us."

However, Rep. Barbara Vucanovich R-Nev., accused Governor Bryan of also sending mixed signals to Congress. She pointed to Bryan's signing of legislation which created a new county, known as Bullfrog County,

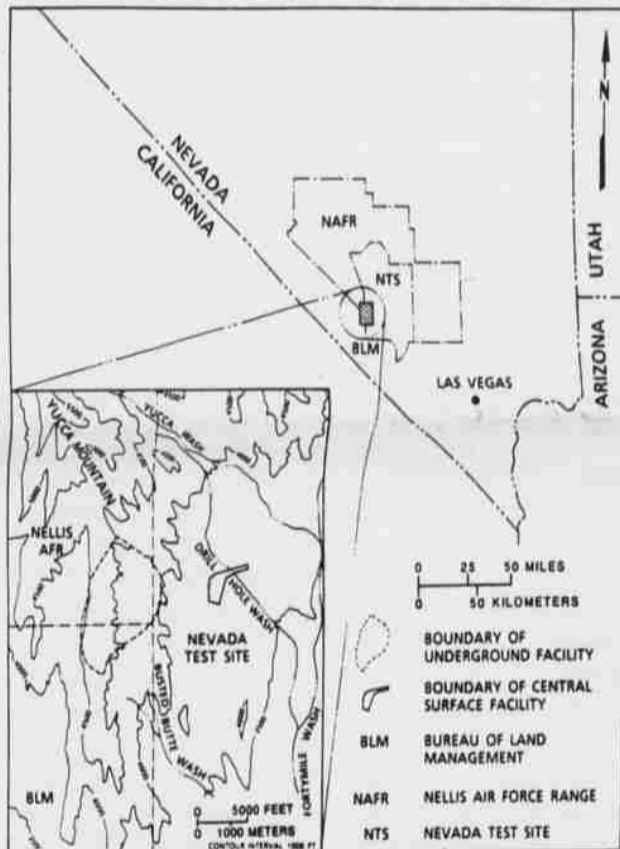
if the repository were to eventually be located in Nevada.

Bryan said he is also worried about the manner in which the material would be transported to the repository. "The waste would be routed through Vegas; it would heighten our concern. There is a potential for an accident," he said.

As for the future, the DOE's Gertz said his agency is conducting a site characterization of the area as directed in the Johnston Amendment. The site characterization will cost between one and two billion dollars and will take approximately seven years to complete, he said.

Asked what will happen if at the end of the study Nevada is found to be unsuitable to contain a nuclear repository, Gertz had this to say: "If at anytime we find the site is not suitable we won't want to build it there."

Gertz said the Department of Energy will then go back to Congress to redirect the site selection process on another site.



YUCCA MOUNTAIN LOCATION
IN NEVADA

best site. "They [the DOE] have a track record for not cooperating," he said.

"I believe we have been fair and open," the DOE's Gertz said. "We have provided them with

thousands of documents about Yucca Mountain," he said.

"The site selection process