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DOE Releases Draft Requests for Proposals to Establish A World Class Nuclear Technology Lab in Idaho & Dramatically Accelerate Site Cleanup

WASHINGTON, DC -- The U.S. Department of Energy today released two draft Requests for Proposals (RFP) for missions related to the new Idaho National Laboratory (INL) in Idaho Falls. The first draft RFP focuses on DOE's establishment of the nation's premier laboratory for nuclear energy research, development, demonstration, and education within a decade. The second draft RFP, termed the Idaho Clean-up Project (ICP), establishes a scope of work for accelerating the environmental remediation activities at the Idaho site.

"The new Idaho National Laboratory will be the epicenter of our efforts to expand the use of nuclear energy as a reliable, affordable and clean energy source for our Nation's energy future and establish opportunities for Idaho businesses, its people and universities," said Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham. "The technologies that will be born at this lab will help us realize our far-reaching energy and environmental goals of reducing our dependency on foreign sources of energy, while still allowing for vibrant economic growth."

"At the same time, environmental cleanup remains a priority for us in Idaho. The importance of advanced, safe nuclear energy for the future demands that we return the Idaho lab to its core mission of nuclear technology research, development and demonstration."

Consistent with current Department regulations for management and operating contracts, the draft RFP for the laboratory contract anticipates a five-year base term with options for up to an additional five years. However, the Department also is reviewing the recommendations of a recent Blue Ribbon Commission on competing the contracts for the management of DOE laboratories which suggests a framework for retaining an incumbent contractor for as long as 20 years, so long as its performance meets or exceeds DOE expectations. The Idaho Clean-up Project contract has a target completion date of September 30, 2012.

Details of INL Nuclear Mission draft RFP –

The draft RFP for the new lab mission on nuclear energy outlines DOE's requirements and goals for the management of the INL after contracts to manage the Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory (INEEL) and Argonne National Laboratory West (ANL-West) expire. Combining these facilities under one lab will help build a multi-program laboratory with world-class nuclear research and development capabilities. The new laboratory will begin operation on January 31, 2005. DOE expects that the laboratory will be the world's leading nuclear energy technology center within 10 years.

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A key element of the draft INL RFP is for the successful contractor to assume a prominent role in the research, development, design, and exploration of *Next Generation Nuclear Plant (NGNP)* technologies at the INL site. Should a prototype facility be built at the INL site, such a facility would bring together the best expertise from all over the U.S. and from other interested nations to demonstrate the use of ultra-safe, proliferation-resistant Generation IV nuclear energy technologies to produce clean and efficient electricity while producing large quantities of hydrogen for transportation and other industrial uses.

The Department believes that it is important that any technology selection for an NGNP be made in an impartial manner. It will therefore take the steps necessary to ensure impartiality in the technology selection, design and construction process. Therefore, should a NGNP demonstration prototype decision be made, the Department intends to consider a separate action for the planning, design and construction of the NGNP. DOE contemplates that the laboratory contractor will have significant involvement with the NGNP within appropriate conflict of interest constraints.

Other important work of the laboratory that is outlined in the draft INL RFP includes:

- Building on its current capabilities, the INL will become a leader in science and technology for nuclear nonproliferation and in protecting U.S. critical infrastructure systems;
- The Idaho laboratory will build on its lead role in the *Generation IV Nuclear Systems Initiative*, an international effort to develop next generation nuclear energy technologies;
- The Idaho laboratory will also build on its role as the center for assuring readiness of DOE spent fuel shipments to the repository for the Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management;
- In partnership with local universities, the INL will become a world center for nuclear technology education. The draft RFP highlights meaningful interactions with universities, on both the national and local level, as a major mission activity for the laboratory;
- The INL will play a leading role in the *Advanced Fuel Cycle Initiative*, a research initiative to develop a better, more efficient and proliferation-resistant nuclear fuel cycle while reducing the amount and toxicity of nuclear waste requiring geologic disposal.

The successful INL offeror will be responsible for the safe, efficient operations of the INL; reduce the overhead cost of running the laboratory through greater efficiency; manage the revitalization of laboratory infrastructure; and ensure the lab has the world-class scientific and technical talent necessary to sustain its missions.

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In the course of establishing the INL, new opportunities for small and regional businesses are being pursued. These include:

- In advance of the selection of the INL contractor, the Department intends to award a separate safeguards and security contract to be managed by a qualified small business. This contract will unify the safeguards and security activities at the INEEL and ANL-West and assure continuity of security operations during the formation of the INL.
- The draft RFP requires the new INL contractor to maximize opportunities for small and regional businesses. The INL solicitation intends to maximize opportunities for small business including veteran-owned small businesses, small disadvantaged businesses, and women-owned small businesses. Small businesses have the opportunity and are encouraged to participate as a potential prime contractor, teaming member, or subcontractor as practical. DOE will require and approve a small business plan under the contract that establishes specific goals for total planned subcontracting dollars to be awarded to small business concerns by the prime contractor. The prime contractor will be expected to meet or exceed its small business goals throughout the term of the contract. Part of the evaluation criteria for award of the contract will also be based on the offeror's commitment to small business and how small business will participate in meaningful prime contract performance.
- DOE will proceed to explore a new concession contract for all of the laboratory's cafeteria operations; and
- DOE will launch the privatization of the operation of the INEEL bus fleet to transport staff efficiently to the laboratory's various work areas from surrounding communities.

DOE will offer tours of the INL facilities to prospective laboratory offerors beginning in mid-February. Comments on the draft RFP will be accepted until March 3, 2004. DOE anticipates issuing a final RFP in early April.

The draft INL RFP, No. DE-RP07-031D14517, may be found at the solicitation web site, www.INL-RFP.gov. Additional information on the Department's nuclear energy program, including its research programs and the Idaho site, may be found on www.nuclear.gov.

Details on the Idaho Cleanup Project Draft RFP –

In addition, the Department is issuing a separate draft RFP to provide for a dramatic acceleration of its ongoing environmental cleanup work at the Idaho site. The Idaho Cleanup Project (ICP) will focus on safely accelerating cleanup while reducing risk to the workers, public and environment and fully protecting the Snake River Plain Aquifer.

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This contract will be a performance-based acceleration of risk reduction and cleanup. It meets the Administration's commitment to expedite completion of the cleanup mission and will be focused on accelerated risk reduction and closure of as many geographic areas and demolition of as many nuclear facilities on the site as possible before the contract end date of September 30, 2012.

Contract activities will include treatment and disposal of various radioactive waste streams, management of spent nuclear fuel, and disposition of excess nuclear materials, deactivation and/or demolition of reactor and non-reactor nuclear facilities, and environmental remediation activities currently funded through the DOE's Office of Environmental Management. The draft RFP for the Idaho Cleanup Project is focused on accelerating cleanup of past contamination, removing waste and excess nuclear material from the state, safely managing spent nuclear fuel, and keeping the Department's commitments to protect the Snake River Plain Aquifer. The draft RFP for that effort, RFP No. DE -RP07-03ID14516, can be found at the solicitation web site <http://www.id.doe.gov/>.

These efforts are closely coordinated and the Department views the success of both as essential to its major mission goals.

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