



The National Organization of Test, Research and Training Reactors

Q2. May 27, 2026

A Field Promotion in Time of War.

TRTR Community,

As you will have already noticed I am not Dr. Cameron Goodwin. Cameron has taken a career opportunity and asked for me to take over as TRTR Chair a little early to allow her to focus on her new role as head of R&D for Project Omega. Please join me in congratulating her on this new endeavor and thank her for her service as TRTR Chair during an exciting period of growth and transition in training, research, and test reactors. I can't help but feel like this is a field promotion during a time of war. Startup companies and established corporations are stealing each other's atom wranglers as they race to design, license, and deploy advanced nuclear technology. It's a wild time to be in the field!

I've been a part of this community for many years. For those I haven't met yet, I'm the current Reactor Facility Director at the Armed Forces Radiobiology Research Institute (AFRRI), a 1 MW pulsing Mark F TRIGA, where I've worked for the last 4 years. Our mission is to defend the nation from nuclear and radiological threats through research, leadership, training, and education. We support the readiness of the warfighter to operate in a potential nuclear or radiological battlefield through radiobiology research into medical countermeasures for acute radiation syndrome, biodosimetry in support of medical triage, equipment reliability testing, and training. I previously spent 12 years at Idaho National Laboratory working with NRAD and TREAT, 5 years in the control room at the Kewaunee Nuclear Power Plant, 4 years testing submarine reactors for KAPL, and 3 years as an SRO at the University of Wisconsin as a student operator. I've been around many different types of reactors, and I hope to see many more variants constructed soon!

Cameron's early departure highlights the importance of RTR's work as training platforms for the talent pipeline that will drive the nuclear industry's expansion phase. The educational missions of many of our facilities will be essential in ensuring that the next generation of nuclear professionals carries forward the hard-earned lessons from the past as reactor designs evolve from PowerPoint slides into steel-and-concrete reality. The hands-on operational knowledge we develop and the safety culture we instill at our facilities will give our teams a solid foundation on which the next generation may build. The importance of this mission has been recognized by public and private entities. Renewed interest is being shown in building new research reactors at college campuses such as the recently announced Texas A&M partnership with Zettaloue, the University of Illinois with Nano Nuclear, and the work already underway at Abilene Christian University with Natura. Additionally, investment from the DOE in nuclear education shows in WSU's Reactor Ready Initiative and NC State's K-12 Outreach program.

We have witnessed substantial changes this quarter. The NRC has undergone a reorganization and a top to bottom review of Title 10 regulations in response to the ADVANCE Act and Executive Order 14300. There are currently 66 active rulemakings in progress with likely more to come. Kudos to Frances Pimental (Frankie) from NEI and their team helping organize reviews of the proposed regulation changes that affect RTRs. If you haven't been involved with NEI supporting these reviews, I encourage you to reach out and participate during the critical public comment periods. This may be one of the biggest opportunities in a generation to drive change in nuclear regulation.

I look forward to meeting with as many of you as I can at the 2026 annual conference on September 21-25 in Austin, TX. This year's meeting is being hosted by the Nuclear Engineering Teaching Laboratory (NETL) at UT-Austin. Registration is now open. See you there!



Andrew Smolinski

Armed Forces Radiobiology Research Institute

Quarterly Call Summary

- Reviewed the NRC Reorganization expected to take place in June
 - Research Reactor Regulation to remain separate from Power Reactor Regulation
 - Non-Power Utilization Facilities Branch will remain within NRR
 - Licensing and Oversight functions no longer split
 - Duane Hardesty will be Branch Chief
 - 16 people in branch
 - 4 Project Managers
 - 4 Examiners
- Inspection Procedure for NPUFs being revised
 - Procedures for Class I, Class II, and Class III facilities will be merged
 - No major changes in requirements expected for any facilities
 - Specific inspection area requirements now included as appendices
 - Inspection cycles will be based on calendar years, not rolling intervals
 - Should not increase the frequency of inspections
 - Very Low Safety Significance Issue Resolution Process added
 - Can be used to resolve some minor issues without a violation
 - Already used at power reactors
 - Security Inspection Procedures remain the same
- Change in format of 10 CFR Regulations online
 - The TRTR community raised the issue that the NRC hosted online version of 10 CFR has been replaced with eCFR which has made it more difficult to use
 - 10 CFR Part 20, Appendix B is particularly bad, with the readily sortable tables having been replaced with nearly illegible images of tables



Member Facilities in the News

WSU Reactor Celebrates 65th Anniversary

The Washington State University Nuclear Science Center celebrated its 65th anniversary amid a major expansion of the facility. WSU also received a \$1.4M DOE grant to expand its nuclear workforce training in support of a new "Reactor Ready" initiative.

NIST Reactor Reclassified

The NIST Center for Neutron Research reactor was granted a license amendment converting it from a Test Reactor to a Research Reactor with a non-expiring license.

UIUC Submits Construction Permit Application

University of Illinois-Urbana-Champaign, in partnership with Nano Nuclear Energy, submitted a construction permit application for a new high temperature gas research reactor to be built on their campus. The construction permit application is available here: [ML26090A463](#).

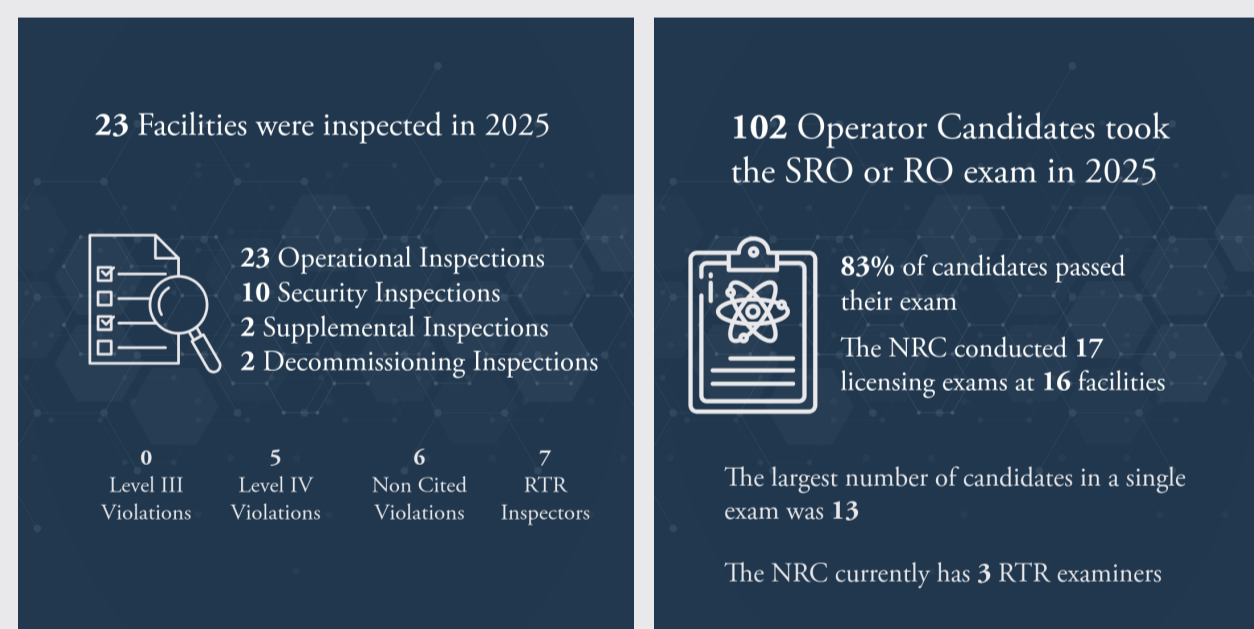
INL to Receive Used TRIGA Fuel

The DOE has completed some of the cleanup milestones required by the 1995 Idaho Settlement Agreement, and was granted a waiver to once again receive some used TRIGA from Penn State University for long term storage.

Underwater Drone Used to Study McMaster Reactor

Engineering physics students at McMaster University used a customized commercial ROV to measure dose rates within the reactor pool to support work underway to replace the reactor's thermal column with beam ports.

FY2025 Year in Review



Reportable Occurrences

Missouri University of Science and Technology Reactor

Event No 58240: Reactor was operated by a Reactor Operator with an expired physical. Follow up report: [ML26114A392](#)

University of Utah Training Reactor

Event No 58271: The Reactor Console was connected to a UPS which was not configured to scram the reactor upon loss of external power as required by the Technical Specifications.

Missouri University Research Reactor

Event No 58282: Ruptured firemain led to a loss of a source of water for the emergency pool fill system.

See our website for a table of reportable occurrences.

[Read More](#)

Inspection Reports

Ohio State University Research Reactor

No violations. [ML26096A093](#)

No violations. Security related. [ML26096A106](#)

University of California, Irvine Nuclear Reactor Facility

No violations. [ML26073A003](#)

Purdue University Reactor - 1

SL-IV violation: An experiment was performed following a procedure that was not approved by the Committee on Reactor Operations. [ML26188B366](#)

Washington State University Reactor

No violations. [ML26103A179](#)

Massachusetts Institute of Technology Reactor

2 Non-cited violations: Reportable Occurrences when Reactor Key was left in the console unattended and while containment was not maintained. Both occurred while the reactor was shutdown. [ML26121A000](#)

Rhode Island Nuclear Science Center

No violations. [ML26124A095](#)

See our website for a table of inspection reports.

[Read More](#)

Licensing Actions

None to report

See our website for a table of licensing actions.

[Read More](#)

EVENTS

- June 15-19: Technical Meeting on Operation, Maintenance and Ageing Management for Research Reactors
- July 12-16: 13th American Conference on Neutron Scattering (ACNS 2026)
- Aug 2-5: U.S. WTN 2026 Conference
- Sept 21-25: 2026 TRTR Annual Meeting
- Sept 28-Oct 1: Experience POWER
- Feb 22-25: Conference on Nuclear Training and Education: A Biennial International Forum (CONTE 2027)

ISOTOPIC TOPICS

Eden Radioisotopes Submits Construction Permit Application: Eden Radioisotopes has filed a construction permit application for a new 2 MW isotope production reactor.

South Africa Searches for New Research Reactor: South Africa aims to have a new 20-30 MW research reactor operational by 2032-2033; this reactor will operate alongside the SAFARI-1 reactor allowing its life to be extended.

BR2 Reactor to Convert to LEU in 2026: Belgium's BR2 research reactor will convert to LEU fuel in 2026 making it the world's first high performance research reactor to complete the conversion process.

UTR-Kinki Featured: Japan's UTR Kinki Research Reactor at Kindai University was featured in a Youtube video by Osama Baig.

Q1 Trivia: Which of these locations never had a nuclear reactor? Disney World

NYC: Manhattan University (low power) and NYU, Antarctica: PM-3A "Nukey-Poo" power for McMurdo Station, Outer Space: SNAP-10 (US) and TOPAZ (USSR)

Trivia Time

The US built 1 nuclear powered cargo and passenger ship. What is its name?

- N.S. Nucleon
- N.S. Enrico Fermi
- N.S. Savannah
- N.S. Gone Fission

[Submit Your Answer Here](#)