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The National Organization of Test, Research and Training Reactors

Q3. August 21, 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 ZettaJoule](#), 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

- Presented a summary of the proposed changes to the regulations and the impact on current RTRs. ([ML26223A453](#))
 - Reforming and Modernizing the NRC's Radiation Protection Framework
 - 10 CFR Parts 50, 61, 71, 72, and 53 are revised to remove references to ALARA
 - Concept has been misinterpreted to require continuous dose reduction.
 - Proposed replacement is a Graded Approach to Dose Management
 - an approach whereby progressively increasing radiation protection measures are required as prospective, or actual, radiation doses exceed determinate thresholds to provide reasonable assurance that the applicable regulatory limit is not exceeded.
 - To review in more detail, please visit the [Federal Register Notice](#)
- Suggestions for presentation topics for NRC Day at the TRTR Annual Meeting should be sent to Cindy Montgomery (Cindy.Montgomery@nrc.gov)

The banner features a dark, industrial background with metallic structures and pipes. At the top, a yellow rectangular box contains the text "NATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF TEST, RESEARCH & TRAINING REACTORS" in black. Below this, the main title "TRTR Annual Conference 2026" is displayed in large, bold, white and orange letters. Underneath the title, the dates "September 21-25" are written in white. A tagline in white text reads "Advancing the science and application of U.S. research and test reactors in service to science, industry, and the nation." At the bottom, a yellow line of text includes a location pin icon, "The University of Texas at Austin", "Austin, Texas", and "Fall 2026".

NATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF TEST, RESEARCH & TRAINING REACTORS

TRTR Annual Conference 2026

September 21-25

Advancing the science and application of U.S. research and test reactors in service to science, industry, and the nation.

 The University of Texas at Austin · Austin, Texas · Fall 2026

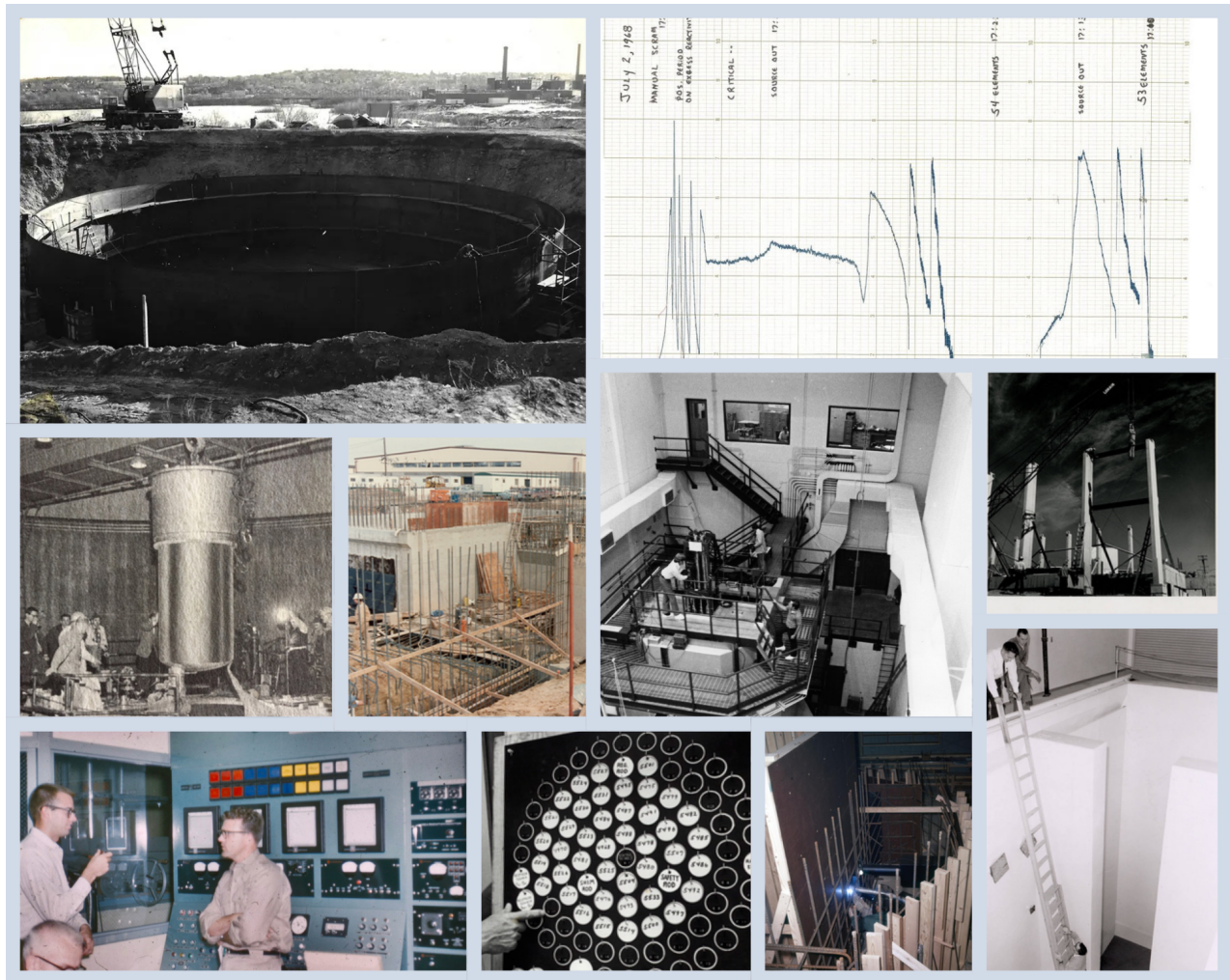
Member Facilities in the News

PUR-1 Reactor Remotely Controlled

The PUR-1 reactor at Purdue University was remotely controlled as part of an experiment with Idaho National Lab and University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

Jason Hou Named Director of NC State Reactor

Jason Hou, who had served in an interim capacity since August 2025, has been appointed director of the Nuclear Reactor Program at NC State University.



Construction to Criticality

- Longest – 3,544 days from [construction permit](#) to [criticality](#)! University of Massachusetts Lowell Research Reactor
- Shortest –121 days from [construction permit](#) to [criticality](#)! Maryland University Training Reactor
- First Research Reactor licensed by the [U.S. NRC](#) and not the AEC – University of Texas – Austin Nuclear Engineering Teaching Laboratory
- Highest power licensed by the U.S. NRC – the National Bureau of Standards Reactor at [20 MW](#)!

Reportable Occurrences

None to report.

See our website for a table of reportable occurrences.

[Read More](#)

Inspection Reports

Kansas State University TRIGA Reactor

No violations. Security related. [ML26155A392](#)

No violations. [ML26152A250](#)

Missouri University Research Reactor

Non-cited violation: Reportable Occurrence for experiments exceeding reactivity limits. [ML26181A028](#)

General Electric Vallecitos Nuclear Center

SL-IV violation: Decommissioning plan was not submitted within 2 years of permanently ceasing reactor operations. [ML26160A215](#)

University of Florida Training Reactor

No violations. Security related. [ML26153A198](#)

Oregon State TRIGA Reactor

No violations. [ML26131A077](#)

NC State University PULSTAR Reactor

No violations. Security related. [ML26211A233](#)

Events

- Sept 21-25: [2026 TRTR Annual Meeting](#)
- Sept 28-Oct 1: [Experience POWER](#)
- Nov 3-5: [Radiation Emergency Assistance Center/Training Site \(REAC/TS\)](#)
- Feb 22-25: [Conference on Nuclear Training and Education: A Biennial International Forum \(CONTE 2027\)](#)
- 2028: [IAEA International Conference on Research Reactors to Be Held in Almaty](#)

Results of NRC Investigation

University of Texas – Austin Nuclear Engineering Teaching Laboratory

No violation was issued as a result of an investigation into allegations that a Reactor Manager provided incomplete and/or inaccurate information to obtain an NRC operator license. [ML26210A370](#)

Penn State Breazeale Reactor

No violations. [ML26190A104](#)

Aerotest Research Reactor

4 SL-IV violations: Radiation Survey Meters not calibrated per Technical Specification Requirements, Neutron Survey Meters not present per Technical Specification Requirements, Buildings demolished without adequately documented surveys, Modifications made to reactor systems that did not meet the requirements of 10 CFR 50.59. [ML26152A173](#)

Dow Chemical TRIGA Reactor

No violations. [ML26156A082](#)

University of Wisconsin Nuclear Reactor

No violations. [ML26146A023](#)

Idaho State University AGN-201m

No violations. [ML26215A356](#)

See our website for a table of inspection reports.

[Read More](#)

Licensing Actions

University of Massachusetts Lowell Research Reactor

Change the organizational structure so that the Reactor Supervisor reports directly to the Chancellor's designee. [ML26188A240](#)

Texas A&M Nuclear Science Center AGN-201 Reactor

Transfer the reactor license from Texas A&M University to the Texas A&M Engineering Experiment Station. [ML26189A418](#)

University of Utah Training Reactor

Increase allowable pH range of pool water from 5.5-7.5 to 5.0-7.5. [ML26194A151](#)

Modify fuel element inspection requirements from annual to biannual. [ML26194A156](#)

General Electric Nuclear Test Reactor

Terminate the reactor license and approve the Interim Decommissioning Plan. [ML26196A395](#)

See our website for a table of licensing actions.

[Read More](#)

Trivia Time

NASA operated an earth based reactor to test the effects of radiation on materials. Where was this reactor located?

Plum Brook Station

Jet Propulsion Laboratory

Hawkins National Laboratory

Katherine Johnson IV&V Facility

Submit Your Answer Here

ISOTOPIC TOPICS

Canada Plans for New Reactors: Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd will present new plans for a new research reactor by 2029.

RA-10 Nears Completion: The RA-10 Reactor in Argentina is nearing completion, having received the heavy water for use in the reflector and begun testing of the primary cooling system.

JSI TRIGA Continues to Contribute to Science: The 250 kW TRIGA Reactor at the Jožef Stefan Institute in Slovenia has been an important research and training facility since 1966.

Summit on the Role of Research and Education Reactors (RERs) and Artificial Intelligence in the Development

Q2 Trivia: The US built 1 nuclear powered cargo and passenger ship. What is its name? N.S. Savannah

To learn more, please visit their [website](#).

