Jobs for waste?

Until just before New Year's Eve, Hardy and others had hoped that the government might save TASCC as part of the solution to an independent problem: low-level radioactive waste disposal. Their hope was that in exchange for establishing a disposal site in the town of Deep River—in whose jurisdiction the Chalk River labs lie—the government would guarantee jobs at the labs, including TASCC.

Canada has over a million cubic meters of historic low-level waste in temporary storage, for which the federal government is responsible. (The bulk is from uranium ore processing begun in the 1930s.) And the town of Deep River is the sole surviving candidate (of more than 800) from an eight-year, $20 million search for a community that would accept the waste voluntarily. The town—many of whose residents work at the labs—was willing to take the waste: "People here feel that they know how to deal with radioactivity, and that since they would have their own safety to think about, they would do the job well," explains Deep River mayor John Murphy.

In the summer of 1995, the town signed an agreement-in-principle with a government-appointed task force. But the deal fell through when the government let the agreement's 30 December 1996 deadline slip quietly by. The stalling point was jobs. The government went back on its promise to maintain employment levels at Chalk River labs as part of the compensation package for taking the waste. Or so says Murphy. David Hill, chief negotiator for the federal government says, "Nobody gives employment guarantees anymore. It's unrealistic to expect it." Moreover, says Hill, "the task force had recommendation powers only." He adds that "the federal government very much wants the project to go ahead."

Before the town, weary and wary from the dealings to date, will agree to start new negotiations, it wants some things clarified. On 8 January, the Deep River council wrote to Natural Resources minister Anne McLellan asking, among other things, exactly who would be authorized to sign a binding contract ("We won't go down *that* road again," says Murphy) and whether the government is still committed to a cooperative siting process. And, says Murphy, "we would ask for far more financial compensation now."

Preparing to close

But at this point, with TASCC's funding expiring soon, it's probably too late to link these issues to save the lab.

"More than half of my time is now taken up with overseeing the disbanding of the lab and dismantling of equipment," says Hardy. The lab had over 70 people—scientists and technical staff—and is now down to just over 50. "Everyone's sent résumés out," says Hardy.

Two major pieces of TASCC equipment, the Canadian Penning Trap mass spectrometer and the 8π spectrometer, will probably end up at TRIUMF in Vancouver. (The 8π spectrometer was the best instrument of its kind until it was superseded recently by Gammasphere at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory and EUROGAM in Europe—from which a newer model, EUROBALL, is now being built.) "We have begun dismantling and packing the 8π in boxes, though nothing irreversible has been done," says David Ward, who leads the 8π spectrometer group. Probably, he continues, "it will first be loaned to Berkeley, with the understanding that it be moved to TRIUMF in around 2000."

The government has yet to issue termination notices to TASCC employees. While no news may be good news, those at TASCC are already preparing to shut the facility down. The hope, says Ward, "is that the government will provide some bridging funds to establish new jobs" so that scientists can move with the equipment. "As much as possible, things should stay in Canada. TASCC was paid for by Canadian tax dollars," adds Hardy.

To meet the 31 March shutdown deadline, "we have to warm up the cyclotron," says Hardy. And, he explains, there is no guarantee that this process, which takes about a month, will be reversible. "Things may shift and crack, and leaks may form." Moreover, says Hardy, "I am not going to initiate the destruction of a $70 million facility—a destruction I don't agree with anyway—without a written directive from the government." The *Toronto Globe and Mail* and other Canadian newspapers reported again in early January about the imminent closure of TASCC. "I am hoping that this press coverage prompts the government, which has typically dragged its feet, to act," says Hardy. "Frankly, I'm not optimistic." **TONI FEDER**

Codding Is New Vice President of ACA

On 1 January, Penelope W. Codding of the University of Victoria became vice president of the American Crystallographic Association. Elected last fall, she succeeds Jon Clardy, who is now ACA president.

PENELOPE CODDING

Codding received her BS in chemistry and PhD in physical chemistry in 1968 and 1971, respectively, from Michigan State University. After working as a postdoc at the University of Alberta, she moved in 1976 to the University of Calgary, where she was first a research associate, then a scholar of the Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research and later a professor in and head of the department of chemistry. She recently became the vice president academic and provost at the University of Victoria.

Codding's research has involved crystallographic and molecular modeling for structure-based drug design. In particular, she has studied the pharmacophores of the benzodiazepine receptor, the excitatory amino acid receptor and the sodium channel.

In other results of the ACA elections, Virginia Pett of Wooster College was elected to a three-year term as secretary.

More Physics PhDs Find Permanent Jobs

According to a recent report from the American Institute of Physics, a smaller proportion of physicists who earned their PhDs in 1994–95 took postdocs compared to the previous year's graduates (53% versus 60%), while a greater share found permanent positions (37% versus 26%). The percentage of 1994–95 PhDs who were unemployed in the winter following their graduation was 4%; the comparable figure for the previous year was 5%.

The report is based on a survey conducted in the winter of 1996 to determine how recent physics degree recipients had fared in the job market following graduation. Among other things, the survey found that PhD un-

employment dropped significantly between the summer and winter—from 19% to 4%; temporary employment also fell, from 8% to 6%. Nearly a quarter of the employed PhD respondents reported that they were working in fields other than physics. Median annual salaries varied widely—among the PhDs in permanent positions, for example, those employed outside of physics drew salaries of $60 000, while those in physics earned $50 000.

The *1996 Initial Employment Report* also includes some data on master's degree and bachelor's degree recipients. (Other findings from the survey will be discussed in an expanded version of the report, to be issued in several months.) Single copies of the report are available free of charge by contacting AIP, Education and Employment Statistics Division, One Physics Ellipse, College Park, MD 20740-3843; phone 301-209-3070, e-mail stats@aip.org.

IN BRIEF

The National Science Foundation and the Department of Energy have created a joint program to fund basic plasma science and engineering. The program's aim is to address "fundamental issues in plasma science and engineering which can have impact in other areas or disciplines." Proposals related to fusion studies are not eligible. The two agencies plan to award a total of about $13 million, pooled from existing plasma research funds within NSF and DOE's Office of Energy Research, to cover 25–30 grants. The deadline for abstracts is 28 February; the proposal deadline is 21 March. The program announcement can be found on the World Wide Web at http://www.nsf.gov/nsf/nsfpubs/nsf9739.htm.

A set of guidelines for conducting international research in geophysics has been issued by geophysical societies, including the American Geophysical Union, in 22 countries. The guidelines outline obligations that researchers have when conducting field work in foreign countries. For example, they stress the need to obtain legal authorization before importing or exporting equipment or specimens. They also encourage collaborations and the sharing of data and results with scientists in the host country. ■

Web Watch: Jobs On-Line

Web Watch is a new PHYSICS TODAY feature that will highlight World Wide Web sites of interest to physicists. All links mentioned here are included on PHYSICS TODAY's home page, **http://www.aip.org/pt/**. This month we focus on sites of interest to seekers of physics-related jobs. If you have suggestions for other topics or specific sites to be covered in Web Watch, please e-mail them to **ptwww@aip.acp.org**.

▷ **http://www.aip.org/careersvc/** AIP's Career Services Division has job listings divided into three categories: academic; bachelor's positions; and government, nonprofit and other. The division also has a substantial list of other sites, including general employment sites and those of specific companies. Its home page, **http://www.aip.org/careers/**, has links to information on the division's Résumé Search Service and Bulletin Board. Many of AIP's member societies (see **http://www.aip.org/aip/memsoc.html** for links to all ten home pages) have job or résumé listings, resources for job seekers and links to a variety of other such sites.

▷ **http://xxx.lanl.gov/announce/jobs/** Better known for its preprint server, the Los Alamos site also maintains this automated forum for listing jobs. The list can be browsed by date, subject, author or "thread." Before submitting an announcement, check the instructions at **http://xxx.lanl.gov/announce/**.

▷ **http://www.tp.umu.se/TIPTOP/forum/jobs/** TIPTOP (The Internet Pilot TO Physics) has a well-organized list of jobs, divided into full-time positions, postdocs, PhD studentships and summer jobs. Keyword lists allow searching by subfield. Browsers can also sign up for services such as weekly e-mail announcements of new jobs and impending deadlines. TIPTOP, run by a collaboration of universities and the European Physical Society (EPS), now includes the "Physics Around the World" Web site of Umeå University (Sweden), McGill University and the Vienna University of Technology.

▷ **http://www.nikhefk.nikhef.nl/~ed/herepeter.html** The EPS has links to physics job lists in several European countries.

▷ To cast your net more widely, try the IEEE's extensive list of jobs, information and related links at **http://www.ieee.org/jobs.html** or the "Optics.Org" site of the International Society for Optical Engineering (SPIE), which has job listings and résumés at **http://butler.spie.org/employment/employmentforum.qry**.

Compiled by **GRAHAM P. COLLINS**