INL Celebrates 60 Years of Nuclear Research

The Idaho National Laboratory is celebrating its 60th anniversary with ceremonies to recognize its contributions to the world's use of nuclear energy.

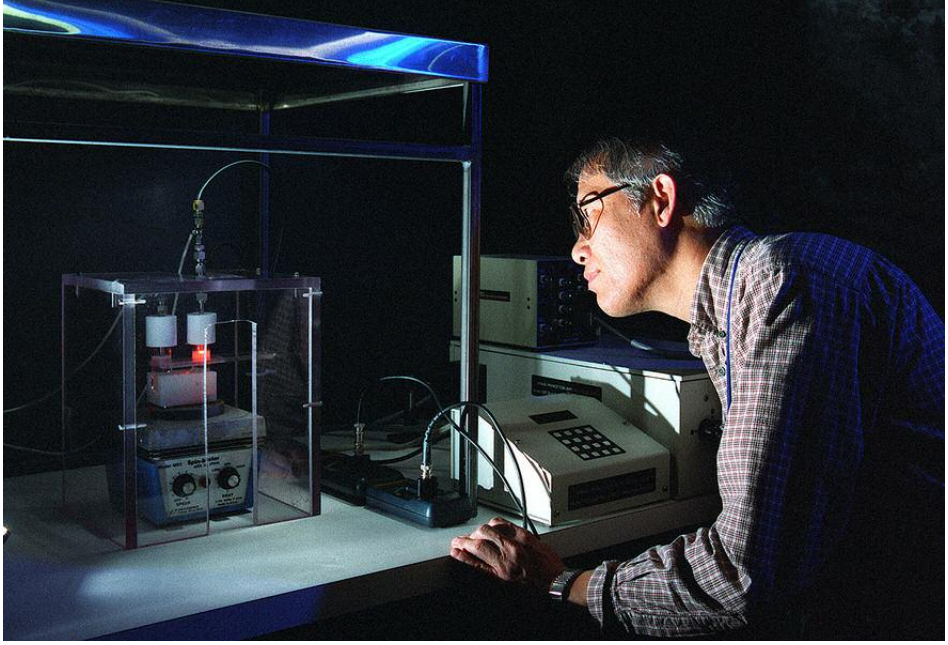
The laboratory has played a key role in the development of the nation's nuclear energy capability. The remote site was chosen in 1949 by the then Atomic Energy Commission to conduct experiments in the controlled use of nuclear reactors.

In 1950, the first of many innovative reactor designs, Experimental Breeder Reactor-I, was developed at the site, then known as the National Reactor Testing Station. In an historic milestone in 1951, EBR-I produced electricity from nuclear power for the first time. In 1953, it demonstrated the principle of "breeding," where a reactor produces more fuel than it consumes.

Through the 1950s and 1960s, more than 40 other innovative reactors were designed, built and operated at the site.

The 1970s saw much nuclear safety research at the lab, mainly for the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission. Nuclear power tests were conducted on various accident scenarios, which helped provide key insights on the Three Mile Island accident.

As the nation's leading center of nuclear energy research and development, the INL is set to continue its development and testing efforts into future nuclear power systems, advanced nuclear fuel cycles and nuclear medical applications.



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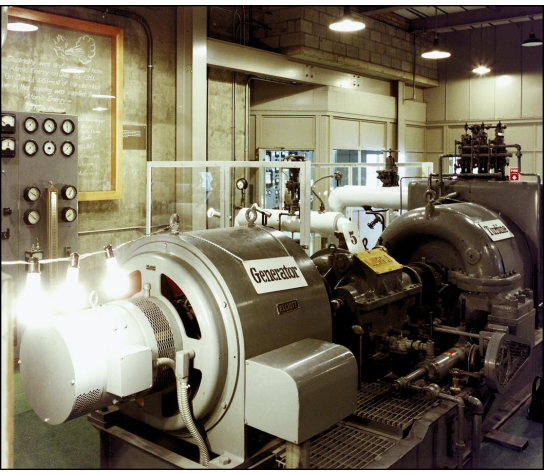
INL's Peter Kong has earned more than 20 patents for his inventions related to materials and plasma research.



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The first usable amount of electricity generated from nuclear power flowed from Experimental Breeder Reactor-I on Dec. 20, 1951.

ASME Commemorates 125 Years Of Service to Engineering Industry

This year marks the 125th anniversary of the first engineering codes developed by the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME). The society will sponsor events throughout the year to commemorate a history of engineering progress, safety and service.

Founded in 1880, ASME is one of the oldest standards-setting engineering societies in the world. More than 4,000 volunteers and staff around the world contribute to developing ASME codes and standards, including nuclear energy-related codes. Today, ASME's codes and standards are used in all 50 states and more than 100 countries.

In 1963, ASME developed specific code requirements for the design, manufacture and construction of pressure vessels, piping, pumps and other components used in nuclear power plants. The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission initially endorsed this code in regulation in 1971 and continues to revise its regulation to stay abreast of revisions to the ASME codes.

The Nuclear Energy Institute, as representatives of the nuclear industry, has several members serving on ASME's voluntary standards-setting boards.

Kenneth Balkey, vice chair of ASME's Codes and Standards board of directors, says, "I have had the opportunity to work with NEI for two decades on a number of initiatives related to ASME nuclear codes and standards."

Balkey has worked with Alex Marion, NEI vice president for nuclear operations, and Tony Pietrangelo, vice president for regulatory affairs, to develop codes for nuclear component weld inspections, in-service testing and risk-informed applications and to streamline regulatory endorsement and industry use of these codes.