

BREA NEWS

www.bnl.gov/bera/activities/brea/

Volume 14 Issue 1

January/February 2014

BREA Meetings

BREA meetings are held on the second Tuesday of every month (except for August), at 1 p.m. in one of the conference rooms in Bldg. 400 (except where noted).

All BREA members are invited to attend and participate.

Meeting Schedule

January 14, 2014

February 11, 2014

March 11, 2014

BREA Officers 2014-2016

President

Ken Mohring
kenwadingriver@gmail.com

Vice President

Liz Seubert
liz.and.ev@gmail.com

Secretary

Louise Hanson
hanson.louise@gmail.com

Treasurer

Steve Shapiro
shapiro@bnl.gov

* * *

Newsletter Editors

Mona S. Rowe
mrowe@bnl.gov
Anita Cohen
afcohen@optonline.net



The new – and “green” – Interdisciplinary Science Building will house staff working on energy-related R&D. See article by Media & Communications staff writer Joe Gettler on page 3.

From the President

by Ken Mohring

Thank you for your support of the new officers during the recent election. I look forward to serving as your president as BREA continues to address existing and new challenges. For this time in its existence, I believe BREA has an excellent mix of officers and active members to guide us as we contend with ongoing issues such as health benefits, as well as possible changes to the management and operation of the Laboratory.

During the past two years, Dave Cox has done an outstanding job as our president and leader. He has dealt with new issues that have directly affected members including the health care programs and their costs, the loss of the Brookhaven Bulletin, and the solicitation for a BNL contractor. Please also see the article covering 2013 BREA activities on page 2 in this issue. I hope Dave will continue as a very active member.

In November, Dave set up a committee to address the most pressing issues before the organization. The goal was to position us for concerns that may arise in the near future. That committee has two aspects: changes to the health-care

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Highlights from BREA Meetings in 2013

November 2013

Special presentation on BNL contract renewal process – The current BSA contract to manage and operate (M&O) BNL expires on Jan. 4, 2015. DOE has decided to create an RFP (Request for Proposals) for the new M&O contract, opening it up to competition, rather than just extending the existing contract with BSA as it has done twice already, in 2008 and 2010. BREA's concerns are (1) what the new contract will say about retiree benefits, and (2) how to provide input into the process.

As the result of an invitation by Steve Shapiro, at 1:30 p.m., Louis Sadler, Assistant Chief Council, Office of Science, Brookhaven Site Office, DOE, gave a formal presentation to BREA. He spoke on the history of the current BSA contract, gave a very brief overview of the new M&O contract, and described the M&O contract competition process.

Medical benefits – Dave Cox distributed tables comparing medical benefits (coverage and cost) for “Retirees On Medicare” and “Retirees Not On Medicare” for 13 DOE labs. He then appointed a committee – “Special Committee on Medical Benefits” – to be chaired by Ken Mohring. The purpose of the committee is (1) to investigate the costs and coverage of alternative supplemental medical plans should BSA follow the lead of several other DOE Labs and significantly change its retiree medical benefits for 2015, and (2) to draft a statement concerning retirees’ medical benefits for BREA to submit to DOE for inclusion in the new BNL M&O contract RFP.

On a somewhat different topic, Elliot Auerbach reported the change in 2014 relative to 2013 for Social Security payments (up 1.5%). There will be no change for Medicare Part B premiums or the annual deductible. The BNL retiree medical premiums (including prescription coverage) will increase by 50% for people who retired before 2002, and by 33 1/3% for more recent retirees.

September 2013

Classified ads – The weekly classified ads that used to be published in the BNL Bulletin still exist internally on-line, but they cannot be accessed by retirees who no longer have an official appointment with the Lab. Dave Cox and Carmen Benkovitz have been working together to distribute these ads to BREA members. Dave receives the lists from an associate at the Lab and Carmen then emails them out. Liz Seubert mentioned that this service is very popular. Dave also sends to people who are not members. It was discussed whether he should preface his mailings with a script that encourages non-members to join. Also being planned is the set-up of an “unsubscribe” for disinterested BREA members.

July 2013

Community Advisory Council (CAC) – Arnie Peskin provided a brief history of the CAC. Some items that were included in its annual report were: clean-up activities, tick issues, forest fires, movement of the experimental magnets on Wm. Floyd Parkway, expansion of membership to local governments, and civic and business organizations, and that DOE reported that there will a solicitation of the Laboratory management contract.

June 2013

SeniorNet – A new program is being started at Leisure Glen in Ridge; volunteer teachers and aides are needed.

May 2013

Medical insurance – Retirees must consider all the consequences if they wish to opt out of the Cigna pharmacy plan. If someone chooses to leave the drug plan they will automatically be out of all portions of the Cigna plan. Elliot Auerbach brought up various aspects of drug plans. Drug plans will be included in the topics discussed in an upcoming meeting with Bob Lincoln.

March 2013

DOE former worker medical screening program – If an individual is found to have an EEOICPA-approved health problem, Victor Cassella said that the medical screening program will help with the paperwork for filing a claim. Also, if the claim is successful, the individual is entitled to at least partial coverage of home care costs.

Medical/prescription drug benefits – Target and Walmart apparently offer a number of prescription drugs at a very low cost (much lower than Cigna’s TelDrug): \$4 for a 30-day supply and \$10 for a 90-day supply. Check the respective websites of these companies for lists of these low cost drugs.

January 2013

Emailing of the classified ads – Since the demise of the Bulletin, Carmen Benkovitz has been emailing the classified ads to BREA members.

Changes in retirees’ medical/prescription drug benefits for 2013 – Meeting attendees reported that they have received their new CIGNA medical and prescription cards. Dave Cox and Steve Shapiro said that P and A withdrew the new fee via their monthly payment arrangements automatically. This led once more to a discussion of the current (increased) burden of the cost for CIGNA coverage, especially on elderly retirees who retired a number of years ago. People also expressed their concerns about how soon and how much future increases might/will be.

BREA minutes are posted on the BERA website at <http://www.bnl.gov/bera/activities/brea/Bus-Mtgs-Mins.asp>.

Being Green Isn't Rocket Science

The Interdisciplinary Science Building (ISB) at Brookhaven Lab—which has received LEED Gold certification from the U.S. Green Building Council—is a world-class facility for cutting-edge research, but being green isn't rocket science.



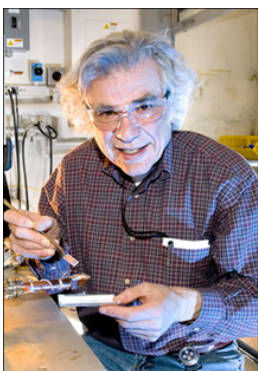
Several strategies that earned the ISB its LEED Gold certification can help reduce energy usage and make any building more environmentally friendly, including:

- **Climate control:** At the ISB, insulation and window coatings keep heat inside when it's cold outside. The coatings and a white roof also reflect sunlight to cool the building when it's hot outside. In existing buildings, insulation can be replaced or added, and new coatings can be applied to existing windows to help maintain comfortable temperatures inside while using less energy.
- **Cleaning Green:** Custodians at the ISB follow a green-cleaning initiative to minimize use of hazardous chemicals. They use cleaners that are biodegradable, non-corrosive, or non-toxic along with mops, brushes, and garbage bags that are made with recycled materials.
- **Minimizing fumes:** Paints, sealants, and glue used inside the ISB emit fewer volatile organic compounds (VOCs) compared conventional counterparts. Products labeled low- or no-VOC help improve indoor air quality.
- **Running with less:** The ISB's television monitors, refrigerators, ductwork insulation, roofing materials and more have passed rigorous energy efficiency tests to earn ENERGY STAR certification, helping to conserve electricity. Water is conserved at the ISB with low-flow toilet and faucet fixtures, and native plants have been used for irrigation-free landscaping.

ISB Project Manager Peggy Caradonna and her team oversaw the building's design and construction at Brookhaven Lab. She said, "Designing and constructing a sustainable laboratory building like the Interdisciplinary Science Building is different from renovating or constructing a home or office. But one decision at a time, we can all pitch in to be good stewards of the environment."

- Joe Gettler, jgettler@bnl.gov

In Memoriam *Myron Strongin, 1936-2013*



It is with much sadness that we note the death of former BREA president Myron Strongin, who died on October 8, 2013.

Myron joined the BNL Physics Department in 1963, and retired after 42 years of service in 2005. His main interest was in the study of superconductivity, especially its surface properties, and he was instrumental in initiating and developing a world-class program at the National Synchrotron Light Source. He served as Associate Chair of the Physics Department from 1986-1993, and also on the Affirmative Action Committee during the 1990s.

After his retirement in 2005, he continued to work full-time and was appointed Senior Physicist Emeritus in 2008. He took an active interest in BREA during its formative years and was elected President for 2006-7. He was keenly interested in expanding BREA activities in areas such as lunchtime lectures and contacts with other DOE laboratory retiree organizations. These are now well-established features within BREA. Myron was greatly liked and admired by all his colleagues and the many students he mentored. He will be greatly missed.

Dave Cox, Expatdave@aol.com, and Steve Shapiro, shapiro@bnl.gov

From the President (cont'd from page 1)

program, and the DOE solicitation for the management and operation of the Laboratory. I was charged with health-care issues and Steve Shapiro was charged with issues surrounding the solicitation. The action items from the committee's first meeting included preparing a statement/question concerning medical benefits for inclusion in the solicitation for the operation of the Laboratory; in early 2014, meeting with Bob Lincoln of Human Resources to discuss future changes to the health-care program; having a BREA representative at the DOE January 2014 pre-proposal meeting of prospective contractors; and performing a survey of various alternative insurance plans.

At the BREA meeting on December 2013, we discussed a draft of the statement/question for the contract solicitation. Later, an updated draft was circulated among committee members, and a final version was sent to DOE on December 20. Based on the November DOE presentation about the solicitation process, this is the only method for interested parties, such as BREA, to provide input into the solicitation procedure.

I will keep you informed as we enter a period that may include additional changes that affect retirees.

I wish all of you a joyous holiday season and a healthy 2014.

- Ken Mohring, kenwadingriver@gmail.com

Retiree Benefits/Costs: Changes for 2014

Social Security CoLA: +1.5% [+1.7% in 2013]

Medicare Part B Premiums: no change [+5.0% in 2013]

BSA Retiree Medical/Drug Coverage Premiums:

- recent retirees: +33 1/3% [+50% in 2013]

- 1990s and earlier: +50% [+100% in 2013]

Data compiled by Elliot Auerbach, ehauerbach@earthlink.net

Renew BREA Membership for 2014

The mailing label on your newsletter will show your membership status. If you see the year 2013, you need to renew your membership. Complete the form below to continue receiving the BREA newsletter. Consider five-year or lifetime memberships, which are discounted.

Membership type:

☐ annual (\$10)

☐ 5 years (\$40)

☐ life (\$95)

Last name: _____

First name: _____ MI: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Check made out to BREA for \$ _____

Mail to: Carmen Benkovitz
Membership Secretary
12 Sandy Drive
Smithtown, NY 11787

Brookhaven Retired Employees Association

BREA c/o BERA

Brookhaven National Laboratory

Bldg. 400

Upton, NY 11973

Phone: (631) 344-2873

Email: brea@bnl.gov

Web: www.bnl.gov/bera/activities/brea/

