



PRESS RELEASE

U.S. ARMY CHEMICAL MATERIALS AGENCY UMATILLA CHEMICAL DEPOT

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Public Information Session on Rocket Fires Scheduled

HERMISTON – The Army will hold a public information session Thursday, June 16, on the progress of its rocket fires task force.

The informal session will be held from 4-6 p.m. at Good Shepherd Medical Center, Conference Room 1, 610 N.W. 11th, Hermiston. The session will be held in conjunction with the Oregon Chemical Demilitarization Citizens Advisory Commission's monthly meeting, which will follow at 7 p.m.

"People are welcome to drop by any time between 4 and 6 p.m. to learn more about rocket processing and our efforts regarding the rocket fires," said Don Barclay, Army Site Project Manager for the Umatilla Chemical Agent Disposal Facility.

The public will have an opportunity to view videos showing the recent rocket fires. Video and photographs also will be available of last week's operation to separate the propellant from the warhead on a sampling of rockets. Nine propellant samples have been sent to an Army research lab in New Jersey where ammunition experts will analyze the propellant to try and determine if it played a role in the recent fires.

Three small fires in April and May occurred during rocket shearing operations in the facility's Explosive Containment Rooms – rooms designed specifically to control such events. There was minimal damage, there were no injuries and no chemical agent was released to the environment. However, because the frequency of fires was unprecedented in the national chemical weapons disposal program, the Army created a task force to review the fires and try to determine the cause. Those efforts continue.

"Following the first fire in April, we have been attempting to determine the root cause and working to mitigate the severity of any future fires," Barclay said. "Meanwhile, we are safely processing rockets and we want to keep the public informed about what we are doing."

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**For more information,
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