

PUBLIC INFORMATION – NORTHWEST REGION OF RUSSIAN FEDERATION

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ABSTRACT

Regional Center of Public Information in Northwest region of Russian Federation is a part of the State Regional Educational Center of Ministry of the Russian Federation for atomic energy in St.-Petersburg, Russia (<http://graph.runnet.ru/>). This Center of Public Information (CPI) provides a wide range of information dealing with the nuclear power. The objectives of the CPI are: to conduct informational and educational activities so as to form a positive attitude toward atomic energy and nuclear technologies; to provide the population with a means reliable information about objects of potential risk; to organize an active exchange of the information with enterprises using nuclear technologies in the region. The main topics of informational support are these: electricity production, the ground of nuclear power, new Russian nuclear reactors, nuclear safety, nuclear power and environment, radioactivity, Leningrad nuclear power plant, responsibilities in nuclear engineering.

INTRODUCTION

The Center of Public Information (CPI) in Northwest region of Russian Federation in St.-Petersburg was created according to the agreement with the European Union Commission in the framework of the TACIS program with the participation of famous French companies (EDF, COGEMA, STEPFER), and opened by the Minister of Russian Federation for atomic energy 14 May 1997.

CPI is intended to help cooperation between firms, companies, enterprises belong to MINATOM of Russian Federation, and their partners, with the public of St.-Petersburg, Leningrad Oblast and the entire Northwest region of Russia. Within the region there are the great many of power, industrial, research, and medical enterprises using nuclear process engineering and radiation sources, and this demands systematic information support for the public about its probable influence on human health and the environment.

The special project, one of a kind in Russia, was established with the stated goal of educating the public – that associates atomic engineering mainly with the A-bomb and explosions at the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site – about the importance directions of "peaceful" atom to today's Russian economy.

CPI's duty is to show the results of many thousands of people working for MINATOM in the best light possible. The ultimate goal of such a duty is to form for the public a more easygoing, positive attitude to atomic engineering and nuclear technologies.

CPI also provides the mass media with authentic and well-timed information about the potential objects of risk. CPI watches over the exchange of information within the nuclear branch in Northwest region of Russia.

GENERAL APPROACHES

All the informational and educational activity involves every possibilities of CPI with all categories of the population.

These possibilities are:

1. Exhibition (divided to public excursion and special excursion for the participants of conferences being run in State Regional Educational Centre;
2. Video demonstrations;
3. Temporal exhibitions;
4. Providing lectures about atomic engineering;
5. Running of workshops, seminars, conferences;
6. Involvement in conferences, seminars, workshops in different cities and countries;
7. Publications in mass media ;
8. Maintaining the web site of State Regional Educational Centre (<http://graph.runnet.ru/>);
9. Running press conference and presentation.

The main activity in 1999 were excursions and lectures addressed for schoolchildren, students, teachers and professors, journalists, doctors of medicine, social activists, and others. State policy in the field of usage of atomic energy was discussed, along with radioactive waste treatment, the radioactive situation in the region, the consequences of Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant accident, and economics of atomic engineering, and much by the friend.

Numerous seminars for the experts responsible for radiation and nuclear safety at enterprises were also held. This came within the framework of the educational programs of postgraduate education on the basis of the CPI. The experts of CPI have developed and realized the 36-hour program of an educational seminar "Public

Relations in Nuclear Power" for the specialists of appropriate services of nuclear branch.

The number of meetings and workshops with the participation of members of Nuclear Society of Russia and USA, the youth branch of Russian Nuclear Society, and members of Association of the Ecological Journalists were also conducted.

The annual scientific student conference "Northern Lights" (<http://polar.virtualave.net/>) supported by the Ministry of Russian Federation for atomic energy in co-ordination with CPI was held in our Center in 1998, 1999, 2000 and will take place in February 2001.

All of the readers are also invited to the annual international conference "Radiation Safety" (<http://www.restec.ru/>) which is running in our Center in November 2000.

Regional Center of Public information has actively participated in local and regional conferences and seminars, and in international events dealing with the items of nuclear power for other cities and countries.

Articles prepared by CPI on work the Leningrad Nuclear Power Plant, other regional enterprises, and about branch events, are regularly published in the St.-Petersburg and regional media. There is on going interaction with the largest news agencies and electronic mass media about issues concerning nuclear power.

CPI specialists maintain State Regional Educational Centre's web site (<http://graph.runnet.ru/>). Several press conferences and presentations devoted to events in nuclear branch were conducted with the assistance of CPI.

Statistical results

The visitors of Center are supposed to fill in the small questionnaire containing a brief introduction on Center's work and following questions listed in Table 1

TABLE 1. This table shows the list of questions in questionnaires

1.	Name, surname
2.	Age
3.	Education
4.	Profession
5.	Place of work and position, occupation
6.	The purpose of visit
7.	The source of primary information about Center
8.	Impressions and Comments

Following these questionnaires we have collected statistic results of CPI activity. We have analyzed 308 questionnaires filled within the period of 9 months. 200 of them were field in by individual visitors, the reminding 108 – by groups numbering from two to 50 people. A large percentage of these groups were the schoolchildren and students, brought to the excursion by the teachers. The reason of this percentage is regular advertising educational events provided to teacher supervise bodies

by CPI. The figures of the assembled statistics are listed in Table 2.

TABLE 2. This table shows the statistical results for 9 last months

Total number of questionnaires	308
Information about the visitors	
Total number of visitors	2552
Total number of the individual visitors	200
Total number of group visitors	2352
Total number of groups	108
Number of visitors in one group	From 2 up to 50
Age of the visitors	From 10 up to 71
Education of the visitors	
Higher	367
Specialized secondary education	2
Average technical	8
Average (students)	230
Uncompleted average (schoolchildren)	1942
Source of information about the Center	
The teacher at school	1492
Familiar person	607
Mass media	193
University of Pedagogical Skill	15
Other sources	120
The positive impressions are expressed in:	
The questionnaire	267
The visitors	2298
Groups	95
Individuals	172
The comments are expressed	
The questionnaire	45
The visitors	272
In-groups	12
Individually	33
Is not expressed neither impressions, nor wishes	
The questionnaire	30
The visitors	228
Groups	12
Individuals	18

92 % of the visitors came on excursion to Center in groups. This audience consisted mainly of the schoolchildren from 5th to 11th class. The schoolchildren made up 76 % of all visitors of the Center, and according to the questionnaires, only two of them came on excursion individually. The number of schoolchildren that have received the information about Center from their teachers is 58 % of the visitors.

89 % of groups of the schoolchildren marked in the questionnaire that the information is represented very visually, understandable and interesting.

85 % of the questionnaires filled out by other categories of visitors comprise similar marks and thanks to the organizers of an exposition.

86 % of the visitors with higher education marked excellence of registration and information filling the exhibition.

89 % from a total number of the visitors noted a perfect impression being given off by the exhibition.

FUTURE PROPOSALS

The Regional Center of Public Information in St.-Petersburg has achieved a lot of goals since it was opened in 1997. However, we have the great number of direction to develop our work.

Despite of good contacts to the regional newspapers, magazines, TV- and radio- companies, CPI still, unfortunately, did not become the dominant representative of nuclear region enterprises in mass media. We plan to become a coordinator of regional nuclear enterprises to provide all necessary popular information about enterprises and their activity.

We are also beginning to develop a cycle of educational TV programs in the field of atomic engineering. They will be seen on the St.-Petersburg channel from June until December of this year. These 15-minute issues, which we plan to provide 2 times a month, will number twelve by the end of the year.

The best issues collected under the title "Atomic courier of Northwest " will be joint our collection and then will be presented by regional TV companies.

Simultaneously with implementation of this project we gather to make the CD, in which will joint the information, including video issues telling people about regional nuclear enterprises. Also we plan to issue several special video releases about the Kola and Kalinin nuclear power plants.

According to our 3-year's anniversary 14 May 2000 we plan to run the wide advertising campaign about the Center of Public Information on advertising boards in city, and also in traditional and new electronic mass media. We suppose to stage in our Center by that time the fairy tale "Why does NPP have striped tubes?" written by a 9 year girl from Sosnovy Bor, the small city in Leningrad area where Leningrad NPP is located.

For an information exchange and experience we will also begin issuing a quarterly magazine – manual oriented towards the readers of Northwest region. Also we plan to publish a manual about the life and activity of regional nuclear enterprises, about the interesting people, dates, and events.

CONCLUSIONS

Finally, there are several other directions of development for the Regional Center of Public Information:

1. Setting of activity on a reliable financial basis;
2. Creating the necessary engineering support, telecommunication system for the operating, collecting, and analytical representation of on-line information;
3. Retraining the stuff of information services in the theory and practice of Public relations.
4. Making closer contacts with the local mass media, with state and local control and supervisory bodies, and public organizations;
5. Publishing operation and security information materials all pertinent nuclear items