

CHAIRMAN REPORT  
NSRP WELDING TECHNOLOGY PANEL  
PROVO, UT  
APRIL 5, 2006

Let me begin by saying how good it is to see everyone again. For the second consecutive year, I was forced to miss our Fall meeting due to closed airport as a result of major hurricane activity on the Gulf Coast. I want to thank Mike for taking the lead during my absence.

There is good news to present today. The NSRP received funding for the remainder of this year. Until recently, there were doubts about the funding and the program has been operating at a reduced level. A few weeks ago the NSRP received \$3.11 million to cover the costs of the research projects, panel meeting costs and the administrative costs of managing the program. Efforts are already underway to secure funding for FY 07 and further years.

I attended the January 23, 2006 Executive Control Board meeting. The primary objective of this meeting was for the ECB to review and authorize funding for Research Announcement projects and panel white paper projects. Because of the timing and the limited funding, the lead investigators for the present RA projects were asked to propose follow on work from their existing projects. Six of these projects received additional funding, including the Variable Balance SAW Technology project that we will hear more about later in today's meeting.

There were also 13 panel projects originally proposed. One of these projects was withdrawn prior to the meeting. Of the 12 remaining, the Welding Technology Panel projects were all ranked very high, all within the top half of the project rankings. Two were funded and the third was removed from the authorized list, not due to the quality of the project, but rather the limited funding level for this year. Both of the two funded projects will be briefed later today.

I want to commend the panel members. Once again, our proposals did very well when presented to the ECB. I believe that this is due solely to the majority participation of the shipyard members who review the proposals, rank them, determine if they can be implemented in their yards and help provide insights into potential savings for each of the projects. This year was a little different as the time to circulate the projects was less and so your responses had to be more timely. We will continue to receive funding approval as long as we submit quality projects and can demonstrate a high level of participation in the project reviews.

Changing the direction of this report, I want to highlight a couple of newsworthy announcements that may impact your shipyard. Both are relating to welding fumes. As you know the NSRP, with the activity of this panel being included, has provided

information relating to the potential impact of welding fume legislation revisions. Additionally, the litigation activity relating to welding fumes is of interest to all of us and our employers. Two items have recently been released:

First, the American Welding Society announced the results of a study performed by the Duke University Division of Occupational and Environmental Medicine. The report findings are summarized on the AWS homepage. There is also a link to download the full report from the AWS homepage.

Second, OSHA has released a final standard on hexavalent chromium. The new permissible exposure limit has been reduced from 52 to 5 micrograms of Cr (VI) per cubic meter of air as an 8 hour time weighted average.

In conclusion, I appreciate the opportunity to represent this panel as Chair. I thank everyone for their participation and their continuing to help the US shipbuilding industry improve our welding processes and materials.

Respectfully submitted:

Lee G. Kvidahl