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## Macktal Set To Outline Nuke Goofs

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When Joe Macktal appears before the Nuclear Regulatory Commission tomorrow, as ordered by a federal district judge, he will allege documented knowledge that workers at the Comanche Peak nuclear power plant near Glen Rose have been routinely exposed to carcinogenic materials — including asbestos.

Macktal, a former electrical foreman at the plant who contends he was fired for bringing safety concerns to plant managers while he was employed there, also will tell the NRC Monday that wall coatings applied in the reactor containment chambers at Comanche Peak contain certain chemicals that could corrode wiring used in the plant's main electrical systems.

Macktal, a Stephenville resident, has been ordered by federal District Judge David Belew to make all his safety allegations known to the NRC tomorrow or face charges of contempt of court. Macktal originally had vowed to withhold his testimony and face jail, but his attorneys have since advised him to give the NRC the information it seeks and to also release certain key information to the media.

In an exclusive interview Saturday, Macktal told the Empire-Tribune he has copies of official documents that show coating materials including asbestos were used at the plant without employees being notified and that several employees were exposed to dust

containing asbestos and dangerous concentrations of silica sand.

Asbestos is a known cancer-causing agent. Silica sand, when inhaled, is extremely abrasive to the lungs.

In fact, Macktal said, he has documents showing fines levied against Texas Utilities, the owners of the plant, and Brown and Root, the prime contractor, by the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration for allowing employees to be exposed to silica sand dust without proper protective gear.

Macktal also said he has documentation dating from 1987 from the manufacturer of the asbestos-containing coating material notifying plant and contract management that asbestos was included in the makeup of the coating, although labels on the coating containers did not indicate its presence.

Macktal also said he has original and altered copies of an employee handbook that was supposed to have been distributed to plant employees in 1986, but was withheld until 1988. The original handbook, he said, shows the date of publication and the name of the publisher, but the altered handbook has all that information blacked out.

Macktal alleges the alterations were made in an attempt to cover up the fact that employees were not notified in a timely manner of specific health hazards associated with their jobs.

Macktal also will allege Monday that the integrity of key electrical wiring in the plant is

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## Macktal

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compromised by the chemical content of coating materials placed on the containment chamber walls next to the wiring.

Certain chemicals in the coating materials, he said, are liable to corrode the protective insulation that surrounds the wiring and could lead to electrical malfunctions in the plant.

Macktal said he has documents that will prove all of his allegations and will produce those for the NRC officials to whom he will testify. He also has pledged to release further information to the media involving other safety and health concerns at the plant which, he alleges, have been covered up by Texas Utilities, the NRC and certain contractors, including Brown and Root.

Macktal said there is a strong possibility that the disclosure of certain documents he holds — including those alleging asbestos contamination — will spark investigations at other nuclear plants in the nation either in operation or under construction where similar materials have been used without the knowledge of plant workers.

Those types of practices, he

said, are the reasons he has thus far withheld his formal allegations from the NRC.

"They'll just cover them up," he said. "That's what they do."

Macktal said information he has obtained indicates there currently are up to 30 disability compensation cases pending related to the use of asbestos and/or chemical-contaminated materials at the Comanche Peak plant. Further, he alleged that up to 125 workers or former workers from Comanche Peak are seeking or receiving medical evaluation related to exposure to hazardous agents on the job.

At least one lawsuit in Bexar County, he said, has been filed related to asbestos exposure.

Macktal said it is his hope — and his attorney's belief — that by releasing duplicate information to the media in conjunction with his testimony at the NRC's offices in Arlington at 8 a.m. Monday, sufficient public pressure will be put on the agency and the utility to correct the problems he proposes to identify and to alert present and former workers to serious potential health risks.