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THE SCIENTIST AND THE SPY

Two sons of Siouxland and their ties to the atomic bomb

On July 16, 1945, the Manhattan Project came to fruition with the Trinity Test, the first detonation of an atomic bomb. Two of the men involved in the massive project to develop atomic weapons for the United States had Siouxland connections. Nobel prize-winning physicist Ernest O. Lawrence, a graduate of the University of South Dakota in Vermillion, played a key role in enriching the uranium needed for the bomb. George Koval, a graduate of Sioux City's Central High School, worked at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Tennessee. Koval also leaked atomic secrets to the Soviet Union.



The trinity test, July 16, 1945
LOS ALAMOS NATIONAL LABORATORY PHOTO

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It wasn't supposed to happen so quickly. After the atomic bomb test in New Mexico and the bombings of Hiroshima on Aug. 6, 1945, and Nagasaki on Aug. 9, 1945, U.S. military intelligence had it that the Soviet Union might need until 1953 to bring a nuclear weapon to the production stage. In the current film "Oppenheimer," an account of the life of American physicist J. Robert Oppenheimer and his direction of the Manhattan Project, which produced the bombs, the idea of the Soviets obtaining a nuclear weapon is almost treated as an afterthought by scientists and military men. With World War II raging, the greatest concern was Nazi Germany producing a bomb. Even after the war ended, estimate about when the Soviet Union would obtain one were conservative. A CIA file from October 1946 shows as much. "It is probable that the capability of the U.S.S.R. to develop weapons based on atomic energy will be limited to the possible development of an atomic bomb to the stage of production at some time between 1950 and 1953. On this assumption, a quantity of such bombs could be produced and stockpiled by 1956."

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96 Million Volt Atomic Bullets Are Reported

Chicago.—(AP)—Production of 96,000,000-volt atomic bullets that may achieve striking results in the transmutation of the elements was reported Friday by Prof. Ernest O. Lawrence of the University of California.

Son of Dakotans Wins 1939 Nobel Physics Prize

Stockholm.—(AP)—The Royal Academy of Sciences Thursday night awarded the 1939 Nobel prize for physics to Prof. Ernest Orlando Lawrence of Berkeley, Cal.

He gained the prize for invention and development of the cyclotron and the results obtained with it, especially in connection with the production of radioactive elements.

Council OKs wastewater plant consulting agreement

Nearly \$38 million to go to Minneapolis firm

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SIOUX CITY — The Sioux City Council, in a split decision Monday, approved a nearly \$38 million consulting services agreement with a Minneapolis environmental engineering firm for the wastewater treatment plant facility plan improvements project.

The agreement passed by a vote of 3 to 1. Mayor Bob Scott, who was initially going to abstain on the matter, cast the lone "no" vote. Councilman Matthew O'Kane was absent from the meeting.

Hazen and Sawyer P.C. will provide design, site survey and geotechnical investigation, construction administration and observation, as well as post construction services for the project in an amount not to exceed \$37,822,334.

"This dollar amount is shocking. You read it and it is shocking," Councilman Alex Watters said before the vote.

Tom Pingel, the city's utility director in charge of the plant, said city staff worked closely with Hazen and Sawyer and "rigorously tried to reduce the scope" of the project.

"We saved about \$1.1 million by reducing the scope, but still kept what we thought was needed to keep this as a successful project," he said.

In May, in spite of objections from the business community, the council approved the third and final reading of a residential, commercial and industrial sewer rate hike to help fund a projected \$470 million rebuild of the city's aging wastewater treatment plant, which is between 50 and 60 years old. That same month, the council approved a resolution to create a wastewater treatment plant reconstruction and design advisory committee to address concerns by users during the design stages of the plant's reconstruction.

Siouxland Chamber of Commerce President Chris McGowan expressed disappointment that the business community has had "no input to this point." He said the advisory committee, which will have 25 members, has not met and that there has been no dialogue.

"We haven't had a meeting yet to discuss any of this. The business community is concerned that we're getting our cart in front of our horse. We've been asking for this dialogue since March or April, and we'd like to see that commence before we commit to spending \$37 million on the scope," McGowan said.

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The Mini
Let us not forget what a Little Boy did on Aug. 6, 1945. That too, has lived in infamy. —**WILLIAM F. BURROWS, SIOUX CITY**

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Current rate effective May 1st, 2023 and is subject to change without notice.