



The NRC dating service?

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It seems like everybody's got a new idea for attracting new talent to the federal government these days. But Jim McDermott, chief human capital officer of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, thinks he's found a foolproof way to convince young engineers to come to his agency: Find them dates.

"There are incentives, and then there are incentives," McDermott told a crowd of human resources officials at the HCMF Conference in Arlington, Va., earlier today. "When we're hiring, we say, 'Is there a significant other in the picture?' If there's no significant other, I tell them, 'We can help.' "

McDermott said his unorthodox recruitment pitch works because while nuclear engineers may know how to split atoms, they're not quite so adept on the dating front:



Future NRC engineers? (from CBS' Big Bang Theory)



McDermott

"Now, engineers study a lot in college," McDermott said. "They neglect very important extracurricular activities. My girls went to school with engineers, [and] they said, 'Dad, they don't know how to dance, they don't know how to dress, they don't even know how to talk.' "

Engineers may not necessarily become better dancers by taking a job at NRC, but McDermott said they can meet other single engineers (who probably won't roll their eyes at *Star Trek* or lectures on reactor cooling systems). McDermott said NRC's dating scheme — which he jokingly called "NRC Harmony," after the eHarmony online dating service — has so far resulted in about eight or nine weddings.

McDermott's comments made me think of the sitcom *Big Bang Theory*, which features hopelessly nerdy theoretical physicists and their often-failed efforts to find romance. McDermott said he's seen bits of the show, which hit close to home: "I thought I was watching something on the NRC."