Lab completes record year for environmental cleanup

December 16, 2010

New LANL marks set for field investigations, shipments to WIPP

LOS ALAMOS, New Mexico, December 16, 2010—Los Alamos National Laboratory finished 12 months worth of environmental cleanup by breaking LANL records in several areas as fiscal year 2010 ended. Los Alamos personnel conducted more field investigations and cleanup campaigns than ever and completed a record number of Lab shipments to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) in southern New Mexico.

During the fiscal year that ended on September 30, the Lab investigated more than 300 environmental sites in 20 major field campaigns (up from 134 sites in FY 2009),

demolished 20 buildings using Recovery Act funding, and completed 158 shipments to the WIPP repository (131 in FY 2009).

“All of these things bring us closer to achieving our cleanup goals,” said George Rael, environmental projects manager for the National Nuclear Security Administration’s Los Alamos Site Office. The cleanup work is under an agreement with the New Mexico Environment Department, signed in 2005, setting milestones for cleanup of Manhattan Project and Cold War waste.

“We’re now entering the heavy cleanup phase,” said Michael Graham, LANL’s associate director for environmental programs. “We know where our sites are and have a much better understanding of what’s in them. Now it’s time to finish the work.”

Also in FY 2010, Los Alamos:

- Excavated more than 6,500 cubic yards of waste and contaminated soil from cleanup sites on current and former Lab property,
- Analyzed more than 7,100 samples from site investigations,
- Shipped without a safety or security incident more than 3,400 drums of transuranic waste to WIPP and 17,000 cubic yards of low-level radioactive waste to licensed disposal facilities,
- Drilled 15 new groundwater monitoring wells,
- Created or saved 444 full-time jobs and spent $125 million on Recovery Act-funded environmental work, and
- Entered into a memorandum of understanding with Santa Fe’s Buckman Direct Diversion Board to monitor, sample, and protect the community’s future water supply.

Cleanup of legacy waste at Los Alamos is a partnership between the Department of Energy’s National Nuclear Security Administration, which oversees LANL operations, and DOE’s Office of Environmental Management. When combined with Recovery Act funding, Environmental Management provided more than $325 million for LANL legacy cleanup in FY 2010.

Los Alamos National Laboratory **www.lanl.gov** **(505) 667-7000** **Los Alamos, NM**

Operated by Los Alamos National Security, LLC for the Department of Energy's NNSA