Laboratory hosts Supercomputing Challenge April 25-26

April 20, 2011

LOS ALAMOS, New Mexico, April 20, 2011—More than 200 New Mexico students and their teachers are at Los Alamos National Laboratory April 25 and 26 for judging and the awards ceremony in the 21st annual New Mexico Supercomputing Challenge.About 50 teams of students from elementary, middle, and high school are expected at the Expo, said David Kratzer of the Laboratory's High Performance Computer Systems group and the Lab's coordinator of the Supercomputing Challenge.While at Los Alamos, students will present their projects and take part in tours, talks, and demonstrations with Laboratory scientists and researchers. Student projects will be recognized during an awards ceremony from 9 to 11 a.m., April 26 at the Church of Christ, 2323 Diamond Drive in Los Alamos."The mission of the Supercomputing Challenge is to teach teams of middle- and high-school students how to use powerful computers to analyze, model, and solve real-world problems," Kratzer said.The goal of the yearlong competition is to increase knowledge of science and computing, expose students and

teachers to computers and applied mathematics, and instill enthusiasm for science in middle- and high-school students, their families, and communities. The Challenge is project-based learning, geared to ground participants in a wide range of skills—from research, time management, and teamwork to writing, oral presentations, and computer programming. Any New Mexico high-school or middle-school student is eligible to enter the Supercomputing Challenge.Laboratory personnel can visit the Santa Clara Gallery on the second floor of the J. Robert Oppenheimer Study Center on Monday afternoon (April 25) to view posters that describe students' computational science projects. Check the Supercomputing Challenge webpage later this week and again on Monday morning to find out when teams will be presenting.Kratzer noted the support of nearly 100 Los Alamos employees who volunteer to work on the Supercomputing Challenge. "Without the support of these volunteers we couldn't provide the first-class event we do for the students who have worked so hard to get to this point. I am grateful for their assistance," he said.The Supercomputing Challenge was conceived in 1990 by then Laboratory Director Sig Hecker and Tom Thornhill, then president of New Mexico Technet Inc., a nonprofit company that in 1985 set up a computer network to link the state's national laboratories, universities, state government, and some private companies.More information about the New Mexico Supercomputing Challenge, including lists of student projects and sponsors, appears on the Supercomputing Challenge webpage.