

## DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

June 29, 2007

**MEMORANDUM FOR:** J. Kent Fortenberry, Technical Director  
**FROM:** B. Broderick and C. H. Keilers, Jr.  
**SUBJECT:** Los Alamos Report for Week Ending June 29, 2007

Broderick was off-site this week.

**Federal Management and Oversight:** NNSA announced this week the assignment of a new Los Alamos Site Office (LASO) Manager, effective July 8<sup>th</sup>. The NNSA Chief of Defense Nuclear Safety also had a team on site this week, preparing for the biennial review scheduled Jul 30<sup>th</sup> - Aug 9<sup>th</sup>; LASO is the last of the first round of such reviews of site office operations (site rep weekly 1/12/07).

**Transuranic Waste Operations:** This week, LANL completed their operational readiness review (ORR) of the WCRR repackaging facility high-activity drum campaign and briefed the federal ORR team on the status. LANL expects to declare readiness for the federal ORR on or before July 11<sup>th</sup>, to support the federal review occurring July 16<sup>th</sup> - 27<sup>th</sup>.

LANL has identified 14 pre-start findings that need to be resolved or shown to be manageable before declaring readiness. One involves the presence of about 275 gallons of mineral oil in an external transformer about 5 feet from the facility; LANL plans to construct a fire wall between the facility and the transformer and to propose a safety basis revision that reflects this new design feature. Another involves NNSA action on a proposed exemption to DOE requirements for automatic engineered fire suppression in the glovebox; LANL has staged fire control agents within the glovebox for operator use and is assigning a fire watch during high-activity glovebox operations (site rep weekly 4/20/07).

In other areas, LANL has unloaded and decontaminated the TRUPACT shipping container that was contaminated last month. LANL has also unplugged a blocked line and mobilized residual sludge in a degraded treatment tank in the Radioactive Liquid Waste Treatment Facility; this tank has been a challenge for some time. Both of these operations were well-planned and deliberately conducted.

**Plutonium Operations:** Operating tempo is high. Both the Plutonium Facility (TA-55) and Chemistry and Metallurgy Research Building (CMR) are conducting extended-hour operations; 24 hour/day - 7 day/week operations are being discussed at TA-55 through next weekend. Facilities are monitoring personnel overtime against LANL safety restrictions involving excessive overtime.

**Chemistry and Metallurgy Research Building:** LANL has determined the baseline program needs for CMR capabilities beyond 2010 and the risk reduction options; key elements include reducing operational footprint, underway in Wings 2 and 4, and moving Pu-238 analytical chemistry to TA-55. LANL expects to submit detailed planning and a safety basis strategy in September; a new safety basis would notionally be submitted in FY 08 and implemented in FY-09 (site rep weekly 3/23/07).

**Tritium Operations:** NNSA has closed pre-start findings from the 2004 WETF ORR and intends to declare Bldg 450 operational in cold-standby; ventilation exhaust should be connected within a few weeks. This opens the way for LANL to move radiological-scale tritium operations from other buildings into WETF, which has more robust engineered features and controls (site rep weekly 8/4/06).