

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

October 21, 2005

MEMORANDUM FOR: J. Kent Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: C. H. Keilers, Jr.
SUBJECT: Los Alamos Report for Week Ending October 21, 2005

Rosen was on site this week for the annual plutonium surveillance and monitoring conference.

DOE Independent Oversight: The DOE Office of Independent Oversight and Performance Assessment (DOE-OA) has completed their on-site review of NNSA and LANL; the site expects the first draft report for factual accuracy review by Nov 4th. Preliminarily, DOE-OA found resumption-related corrective actions in general and integrated work management (IWM) implementation in particular to be lagging from where they ought to be at this stage; also, both federal and contractor assessment systems, including issue management, warrant improvement. The DOE-OA team received full cooperation. Based on the review's thoroughness, the team's report ought to provide a well-substantiated snap-shot of the site's condition as the site prepares for contract transition.

Plutonium Facility (TA-55): LANL has completed a readiness assessment (RA) on implementation of safety basis controls for enhanced external security measures at TA-55 (site rep weekly 10/7/05). There were no pre-start findings; the 4 post-start findings and 5 observations focus on sustainability of controls such as vehicle speed limits.

Fire Protection: On Oct 3rd, LANL submitted to LASO an improved integrated plan to address fire protection issues and achieve site-wide improvements, as requested by a Board letter dtd 5/31/05 (site rep weekly 9/2/05). The plan covers staffing, fire hazard analyses, the 2004 emergency service baseline needs assessment, county fire dept contract, fire alarm system replacement project, and wild-land fire management. LANL based the plan on benchmarks with other DOE sites (e.g., SRS, LLNL) and plans to increase fire protection program funding in FY-06 by 50 % above the FY-05 target.

Nuclear Material Stabilization: During this week's conference, LANL reported that they continue to be on track to achieve the accelerated risk reduction committed to by the Secretary in DOE's latest LANL implementation plan for Recommendations 94-1/00-1 (7/23/04). Specifically, in the last two years, LANL has achieved 56 % of the overall risk reduction that is to be done by end of CY 2009. Within the last year, LANL has stayed on track by emphasizing robust packaging; processing has been limited by the long-term suspension of transuranic liquid waste receipts by the TA-50 Radioactive Liquid Waste Treatment Facility – RLWTF (site rep weeklies 7/1/05, 10/29/04). Eventually, some of this material will have to be unpackaged, processed, and repackaged or otherwise dispositioned; LANL currently expects this to take another two years (i.e., through CY 2011).

On Sep 7th, LANL submitted to NNSA a revised project execution plan for Board Recommendations 94-1/00-1. The plan accounts for impacts of the LANL-wide suspension and acknowledges that the RLWTF issues and the priority assigned to TA-18 Early Move Project have profoundly affected execution. One implicit assumption appears to be achieving increased throughput of transuranic waste within LANL and from LANL to WIPP. Specifically, in April 2005, LANL established that TA-55 will need to ship about 7.5 kCi of transuranic waste to Area G per year over 3 years; actual shipments in FY-05 from TA-55 to Area G and from Area G to WIPP were about half and about a quarter of that amount, respectively. Without improvement, the current trend could impact both mission and nuclear material stabilization activities.