

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

November 25, 2005

MEMORANDUM FOR: J. Kent Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: C. H. Keilers, Jr.
SUBJECT: Los Alamos Report for Week Ending November 25, 2005

Waste Operations: LANL has resumed transuranic waste shipments to WIPP at the rate of one per week; shipments last Tuesday (11/15) and this Monday (11/21) were the first two made since Oct 6th (site rep weekly 11/4/05). Overall, NNSA and LANL have shipped about one-fifth of the roughly 2,000 higher activity drums that constitute the Quick-to-WIPP population. The site rep is skeptical that NNSA and LANL can meet the safety basis requirement to ship the remaining drums from this set by June 2006; limiting factors appear to be the throughput constraints on both the TRUPACT loading facility (RANT) and the visual exam and repackaging facility (WCRR), as well as possibly the availability of WIPP trucks.

Management: NNSA stated this week that it will delay the LANL contract selection announcement that was scheduled for Dec 1st. Separately, the NNSA Site Office (LASO) started its partial stand-down on Monday (11/21). Some preparations were not yet complete, such as (a) identifying and having on-board supplemental federal support (e.g., from the NNSA Service Center); (b) increasing contractor oversight; and (c) setting up reporting processes to efficiently provide management daily perspective on emergent safety issues that might require immediate attention.

Transportation: Last week, NNSA reported results of a federal readiness assessment (RA) performed in October on LANL's implementation of its nuclear transportation safety basis, which was approved in Nov 2002; the companion LANL RA was completed in May 2005. The NNSA RA team concluded that, in general, the technical safety requirements (TSRs) are adequately implemented, but there are some deficiencies in select safety management programs including fire protection, quality assurance, and configuration management. A LANL corrective action plan is due next month.

Quality Assurance (QA): Also last week, LASO approved the LANL quality assurance program (QAP) and its implementation plan and placed them under change control; this action fulfills the requirement within the Nuclear Safety Management Rule (10 CFR 830) for a DOE approved QAP. Much needs to be done to fully achieve and validate implementation: as part of the Operational Efficiency (OE) Project, LANL continues to be on track to issue 9 of 15 institutional QA procedures by end of December, as discussed in site rep weekly 9/16/05; the 6 remaining procedures are still on hold based on the expected benefit from input by the new contractor management team.

Maintenance: LANL is not in compliance with the DOE nuclear facility maintenance management order (DOE O 433.1); LASO and LANL have recently increased emphasis on bringing LANL into compliance by mid-2006. Key DOE O 433.1 requirements include submitting and receiving DOE approval of a maintenance implementation plan (MIP) and updating the MIP biennially; establishing performance metrics; identifying consensus standards; and integrating the program with other safety programs (e.g., safety basis, integrated safety management). LANL submitted an institutional MIP in June 2005, and it awaits NNSA action. LANL expects nuclear facilities to submit annual plans in December to support implementation.