

DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

March 24, 2006

MEMORANDUM FOR: J. Kent Fortenberry, Technical Director
FROM: C. H. Keilers, Jr.
SUBJECT: Los Alamos Report for Week Ending March 24, 2006

The Board and a staff team were here on Tuesday and Wednesday reviewing LANL nuclear activities. On Wednesday evening, the Board held a public hearing and meeting on LANL contract transition.

Management: The Corrective Action Review Board (CARB) is starting their review of the quality and sustainability of the TA-55 and CMR corrective actions from the 2004 resumption reviews; this is one of several reviews of higher-hazard activities that the CARB hopes to complete before the June 1st contract transition. The CARB continues to provide a stronger feedback mechanism between identified issues and their corrective actions than previously existed at LANL – in spite of the fact that most CARB members are also highly involved with transition and their other management duties.

Plutonium Facility (TA-55): TA-55 expects to complete the sprinkler head replacements today. Related modifications, post-maintenance testing, and resolution of NNSA conditions of approvals continue, and the facility expects to resume full operations (i.e., Mode 1) during the week of April 3rd.

LANL has proposed and NNSA has approved conducting NFPA standpipe flow testing before operations resume. This will require routing fire hoses through open building confinement doors for a total of four 8-hour periods. LANL plans to seal the doorways with heavy plastic and thereby maintain differential pressure. LANL also plans to station personnel at the standpipe valves and at the open doors, who can quickly secure the testing and the doors if directed by the person-in-charge.

Radioactive Liquid Waste Treatment Facility (RLWTF): Last week, a decontamination crew in proper protective equipment re-entered the underground tank vault that was the scene of the high airborne contamination incident of a year ago (site rep weekly 3/11/05). Planning for this re-entry has been extensive, in support of the planned replacement of the caustic waste receipt tank in this vault.