

1-7-93  
January  
7, 1993

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## Letters

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# Why museum space is offered

Editor:

The enclosed letter has been mailed to Mr. John Rhoades, director of the Bradbury Science Museum. Others of your readers may be concerned and find it of interest.

Dear Mr. Rhoades:

Recent issues of the Los Alamos Monitor have discussed the new museum building and the planning of exhibits to be displayed in the new building. I am pleased with your progress and look forward to visiting the new museum when it is opened. However, the articles also discuss the request of a Santa Fe organization for space in the museum for an exhibit of their choosing and design.

I suggest that to provide space in the museum for an organization not associated with the Los Alamos National Laboratory or with the Department of Energy and with only anecdotal knowledge of science at Los Alamos is improper, undesirable, and probably contrary to DOE rules and regulations. The Bradbury Science Museum was created for the purpose of displaying science, engineering, and technology matters that have been created and developed in this laboratory or in association with other DOE laboratories. Much, but not all of this, has been in the field of nuclear fission and applications of nuclear energy. The exhibits should be

planned and prepared by individuals who have knowledge and expertise in these fields.

Further, to provide museum space for one organization with no association with the laboratory and no demonstrated competence in nuclear energy matters could require that space be provided to any and all organizations with a peripheral interest in Los Alamos. I suggest that this whole idea is a bad one and should be discouraged and stopped at the outset. However, I can see no reason for not accepting ideas from individuals and organizations for displays in the museum. These, then, could be evaluated by whatever process you have for this purpose.

William R. Stratton  
2 Acoma Lane

• EDITOR'S NOTE: The Monitor reached John Rhoades as he was in the process of starting the move from the current location of the Bradbury Science Museum to the new location in downtown Los Alamos.

"Lab senior management has decided to work with the Los Alamos Study Group on the basis of a court decision at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, and in the spirit of cooperation with citizens who have opposing views," Rhoades said of the decision to make room for exhibits by the Los Alamos Study Group, an

organization based in Northern New Mexico with its offices in Santa Fe.

Mary Riseley of the Los Alamos Study Group said she is aware that many residents of Los Alamos don't understand why the group sought space in the museum. "Because this is a publicly funded museum with free access to the public," Riseley said, "it is unconstitutional to refuse access to opposing points of view."

Riseley said lab management realized it would lose a court battle on the issue, just as Lawrence Livermore officials lost their battle, which went on for eight years.

"It isn't a matter of permission from the lab exactly. It really isn't a matter of discretion on their part," she said. "They could set limits. They could not say no."

She said the exhibits must relate to the work being conducted at LANL. "Our exhibits simply complete the story and supply the information left out of the lab's promotional exhibits," she said, noting that their exhibits will take note of the health effects and the "consequences of nuclear weapon development."

She said working with John Rhoades has been a pleasure because of his cooperation. "He is clear about the limits of what he has to offer and he is very easy to work with," she said.

# '93 budget won't shift <sup>New Mexican</sup> lab work from weapons <sub>1-8-93</sub>

By KEITH EASTHOUSE  
The New Mexican

Los Alamos National Laboratory will not shift dramatically away from weapons work in 1993, according to budget estimates released Thursday by laboratory officials.

However, the budget estimates show that money devoted to environmental cleanup and waste management at the laboratory is increasing rapidly. Funding for arms control and nuclear non-proliferation work is also on the rise.

Additionally, the budget projections show that the lab is getting significantly more money from the Department of Energy for research on so-called "dual-use" technologies, with both commercial and defense applications.

There's a growing debate over the extent to which Los Alamos and the nation's two other nuclear weapons labs are turning from wartime to peacetime work in the post-Cold War era. That debate has intensified since the election of Bill Clinton, who wants the labs to devote more resources to developing technologies to aid U.S. industry.

Karl R. Braithwaite, executive staff director at LANL, said at a budget briefing for the press that significant changes are taking place.

But he said the federal budgetary system, in which money is appropriated for specific uses, makes it hard for LANL to shift its spending priorities.

"Groups criticize us for not moving fast enough into the non-defense area," Braithwaite said. "But we can't pick up money authorized for nuclear weapons work and use it for non-nuclear weapons work. We'd go to jail for that."

Braithwaite said the laboratory has demonstrated in the past that it can shift its priorities. During the Carter years, he said, the budget was evenly divided between energy and weapons research.

Braithwaite said he expects nuclear weapons funding to decline under Clinton.

Greg Mello of the Los Alamos Study Group, a Santa Fe environmental group, said the budget projections paint a "picture of a lab mired in the priorities of the past.

"Nuclear weapons programs are declining very slowly from the tremendously high levels of the mid-1980s," Mello said.

Mello and other members of the study group charged the lab with ignoring their repeated requests for budget projections in recent months.

Bill Heimbach, a lab spokesman, said making budget projections is complicated and the lab did not feel it had solid numbers until recently.

The budget briefing yesterday was held in response to news media queries on budget projections.

The lab estimates it will spend \$226 million on nuclear weapons research and development, \$14 million less than was spent in 1992, but \$12 million more than was spent in 1991.

Lab officials said those figures are somewhat misleading because they include money spent for implementing environmental, safety and health measures at lab facilities that conduct weapons research.

Lab spending for such work has risen in recent years, lab officials said, but they did not quantify the increase.

Mello said that distinction is important, but does not change the fact that the money is weapons-related.

Money for environmental cleanup and waste management will leap from \$128 million in 1992 to \$201 million in 1993, an increase of 56 percent — a clear indication, according to the lab, that priorities are shifting.

But Mello said waste management — which he said accounts for a large share of that money — should be categorized as a weapons-related expense because it goes toward supporting weapons projects.

# ALBUQUERQUE JOURNAL

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## Non-Military Work May Boost Los Alamos Staff, Budget

By John Fleck

JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

Los Alamos National Laboratory could get more than 300 new employees this year and an estimated 9-percent budget hike, mostly because of an increase in environmental cleanup spending, according to figures released Thursday.

The figures show that military research remains the bulk of Los Alamos' budget this year. But non-military work, especially in the areas of environmental cleanup and

waste management, is growing. Despite the military emphasis, officials point to a trend away from weapons work and say they expect that trend to continue under Bill Clinton's administration.

"I think we're expecting the non-defense side to grow and offset the decline in defense," said Karl Braithwaite, executive staff director at the laboratory.

For 1993, defense work will be an estimated 54.7 percent of the lab's budget, according to estimates that lab chief financial officer Peggy Patterson provided to

reporters Thursday.

Patterson cautioned that the figures are tentative, because the federal government shifts program funding throughout the year.

The bulk of Los Alamos' military money is for nuclear weapons research, but the laboratory also will get an estimated \$120 million this year from the Defense Department for non-nuclear military research.

This year's defense component of the lab's budget, 54.7 percent, is down from 59.7 percent last year.

Analyzing how much of the budget is actually going to defense work is difficult, because some money spent on "environmental restoration and waste management," the fastest-growing part of the budget, is spent handling waste.

The budget for waste management and environmental cleanup is up to \$201 million this year, a 57-percent increase over 1992. That work will account for most of the new jobs the lab is slated to get, which would boost its overall employment to 7,765.

But some of that money is a key part of

continued weapons work at the laboratory. For example, money spent on planning for a new radioactive waste treatment plant is considered environmental cleanup money, even though a significant part of the waste it will treat will be generated by nuclear weapons research.

Related figures in a Los Alamos long-range planning document obtained by the Journal show that, despite the lab's public

MORE: See LOS ALAMOS on PAGE A4

## Los Alamos' Non-Military Work May Boost Budget, Expand Staff

CONTINUED FROM PAGE A1

statements about a shift away from nuclear weapons work, nuclear weapons-related construction also makes up the bulk of the lab's long-range "wish list" for future construction projects.

The construction plan was provided to the Journal after the newspaper filed a

formal request.

Thursday's briefing for reporters sparked a complaint from community activists who say they have been asking for similar budget information for more than six months without result.

"We can't get any information out of the lab," said Greg Mello, one of the leaders of the Los Alamos Study Group, an organiza-

tion working to try to move the laboratory away from military work. "This is not the way democratic institutions should operate."

Mello and five members of the organization tried to attend Thursday's press briefing, but were turned away by Los Alamos officials who were backed up by an armed laboratory guard.

Spokesman Bill Heimbach said the laboratory did not respond to Mello's most recent request for laboratory budget data, made late last fall, because budget estimates were rapidly changing at the time.

The first firm figures for 1993, released Thursday, have only recently been available, Heimbach said.

# Group protests exclusion from LANL briefing

By STEPHEN T. SHANKLAND

Monitor Staff Writer

The Los Alamos Study Group, a Santa Fe-based group that examines the doings of Los Alamos National Laboratory, protested its exclusion today from a budget briefing at the lab.

Five members of the study group, including Greg Mello and Mary Riseley, came to the lab's public affairs building to attend the briefing, but weren't allowed in. Riseley said the group wanted to document the refusal.

Lab Executive Staff Director Karl Braithwaite said he would be willing to meet with the group.

They were still waiting when the briefing was concluded.

The briefing was an attempt to "manipulate and intimidate New Mexico news media," the Study Group statement said.

The group said in a news release, "Only three of the many qualified New Mexico print journalists with demonstrated interest in defense and Department of Energy issues were invited to receive information from senior staff member Karl Braithwaite on the current LANL budget. No television or radio correspondents were included."

Lab spokesman Bill Heimbach

said, "I think there's possibly some confusion about what the session is this morning. It's simply in response to the request of three reporters for some in-depth information on the fiscal year 1993 budget.

"It's not a press conference. It's an honest attempt to fill the request of three news reporters (Stephen T. Shankland from the Monitor, Keith Easthouse from the Santa Fe New Mexican, and John Fleck from the Albuquerque Journal.) These three were the only ones that requested the information."

But the group said, in its release, "LASG has repeatedly made requests for up-to-date budget information relating to the laboratory's current and projected activities, requests that have been consistently denied."

Asked if the lab would hold such a briefing for the Los Alamos Study Group if the group requested it, Heimbach said, "We would consider it."

Heimbach said the Los Alamos Study Group "called and asked yesterday (Wednesday) if they could come. We told them that it was a briefing for three reporters. It was going to be only for those three reporters."

## Lab-Dialogue Group Feels Snubbed

By John Fleck

1/12/93

JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

A group of New Mexicans trying to open a dialogue with University of California officials about the university's management of Los Alamos National Laboratory say they feel snubbed after members of a university oversight committee visited the lab last week without contacting them.

Dixon garlic farmer Stan Crawford said he was "shocked" that members of the University of California President's Council on the National Laboratories did not make any attempt to contact local citizens groups or Indian tribes that had tried to open a dialogue.

"I would have thought that they would have made some attempt to contact activist groups out here," said Crawford, one of a group of New Mexicans who traveled to California in November to talk to the university's Board of Regents during a public meeting in November.

The University of California manages Los Alamos for the federal government.

At that November meeting in San Francisco, Crawford, San Juan Pueblo Gov. Herman Agoyo and others told university regents they wanted California officials to come to New Mexico to hear local residents' concerns about the laboratory.

"We invited them to meet with the communities surrounding Los Alamos," said Juan Montes, a resident of Questa who spoke at the November meeting. "I wish they would have taken us seriously."

University spokesman Rick Malaspina described last week's meeting in Los Alamos as "a get-acquainted orientation session" for the committee, a panel of scientists recently formed to help the university oversee laboratory operations. The committee does not include any members of the university's Board of Regents, a group appointed by California's governor to run the university.

Committee members spent two days at Los Alamos last week, talking with officials from the New Mexico laboratory and its California counterpart, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, about the future of nuclear-weapons work at the two labs, according to a story about their visit in the Los Alamos Newsbulletin, a laboratory-published weekly newspaper.

Malaspina said meeting with New Mexicans is the responsibility of the regents themselves, the university's governing body, rather than the lower-level advisory committee.

He said members of the Board of Regents still intend to visit New Mexico, possibly this spring, in response to the complaints raised by Crawford and others at last November's meeting in California.

No date for that meeting has been set yet.

## Activists Say LANL Is Too Tight-Lipped

Reporter 1/13/93

When is a news conference not a news conference?

The answer, apparently, is, when the hosts say it's not a news conference.

Last week, officials at Los Alamos National Laboratories (LANL) invited reporters from three newspapers — the Albuquerque Journal, the Los Alamos Monitor and the New Mexican — into their office for a discussion of the research facility's budget for the coming year.

When six members of the Los Alamos Study Group, a Santa Fe-based citizens' organization that monitors activities at the lab, showed up at the news conference and were denied entry, they immediately cried foul. They claimed that lab officials were deliberately attempting to withhold information from news organizations and citizens' groups that look less favorably on LANL's activities.

"What's upsetting to us is not that we were not allowed to go, but just how hard it is to get information from these people," said the study group's Mary Riseley.

But a LANL spokesman, Bill

Heimbach, countered that the gathering was a briefing, not a full-blown news conference.

"It was not meant to be a press conference, nor was it meant to exclude other reporters," he said. "It came as an honest attempt to give three reporters detailed information that they had requested."

Heimbach said that the study group has, in fact, been given information on the budget. But Riseley argued that as an arm of the U.S. Department of Energy, LANL should be required to make all of its financial information widely available.

"If it's classified, nobody gets it," she said. "If it's not classified, it should be in the library."

(At the briefing, by the way, reporters were told that the lab would not be reducing its weapons work significantly, but that more money would be spent on environmental cleanup and waste management.)

—Josh Kurtz

## Lab oversight panel visit draws groups' concern

Monitor 1/12/93  
By The Associated Press

Community activists and Indian groups who have concerns about Los Alamos National Laboratory are upset that a University of California oversight committee visited the lab without contacting them.

Stan Crawford, a Dixon garlic farmer, said he was shocked the university committee didn't make any effort last week to contact local citizens groups or Indian tribes that had tried to open a dialogue with the university, which manages the lab.

Several New Mexicans traveled to California in

November to talk with university regents during a public meeting. Crawford, San Juan Pueblo Gov. Herman Agoyo and others told university officials at that meeting they wanted California officials to come to New Mexico to hear local concerns about the lab.

Reporter  
Jan 20,  
1993

## LETTERS

### LANL Should Loosen Up

Editor:

Your story about the "private" press budget briefing at LANL last week [Jan. 13 Newlines, "Activists Say LANL Is Too Tight-Lipped"] is well written and accurate. Mr. Heimbach's comments demand amplification, however.

Mr. Heimbach is quoted as saying his briefing was not "meant to exclude other reporters," and yet he told the Los Alamos Study Group that a reporter had called earlier that morning and had been refused permission to attend. Which statement is true? And contrary to what Mr. Heimbach said to the Reporter, the Study Group had not received the budget information, and did not receive it from LANL until the morning after the briefing.

Last fall, when Greg Mello's report on LANL conversion was issued, Bill Heimbach criticized it as being based on year-and-a-half-old data. But he acknowledged in the Albuquerque Journal (Nov. 18, 1992) that LANL and DOE had refused to release more current budget documents, despite repeated requests from Mello and others.

While we waited for an hour and a half at LANL's Public Affairs Office last week, we contemplated the irony: We were members of the public being greeted there by armed guards to prevent us from attending a briefing on public information.

Is Mr. Heimbach's behavior the way we want public officials to act? The Los Alamos Study Group hopes not, and we propose that unclassified LANL information be made freely available to interested citizens and public interest groups.

MARY RISELEY  
Santa Fe

# Non-Military Role Crucial for Labs, Director States

1-23-93

ABQ  
Journal

By John Fleck

JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

LOS ALAMOS — From health care to energy research, Los Alamos National Laboratory must reach beyond military research to ensure its future, lab Director Sig Hecker said at a news conference Friday.

But helping manage the nation's diminishing nuclear stockpile will remain the lab's primary mission as long as the nation has nuclear weapons, Hecker said.

Hecker's comments came following the release of the lab's new "Strategic Plan," the result of a year of introspection by laboratory officials as they tried to chart a future for the 7,600-employee institution.

The difficulties Los Alamos faces are summed up by one of the plan's key assumptions — after 50 years spent designing nuclear weapons, "there will be few, if any, new nuclear arms requirements this decade."

The result, according to the plan, is that Los Alamos faces significant cuts in the defense dollars that have been the core of its budget.

Hecker argued adamantly that maintaining the nation's nuclear weapons expertise will remain a primary mission for Los Alamos as long as the United States has nuclear weapons, and as long as there are fears that countries like Iraq might try to get them.

According to the plan, Los Alamos' nuclear weapons jobs for the future include:

- Helping the Department of Energy dismantle nuclear weapons at the Pantex plant in Texas;

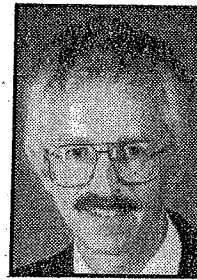
- Ensuring the nuclear weapons left after arms reductions are as safe against accidental blast as possible;

- Using lab expertise to help fight the spread of nuclear weapons.

But in the future, Hecker said civilian research and development will have to play a much greater role in lab operations.

As a goal, the Strategic Plan calls for civilian work to climb to roughly 10 percent of Los Alamos' budget by 1998. It is between 3 percent and 4 percent this year, Hecker said.

By example, Hecker pointed to the lab's supercomputer ability de-



Hecker

veloped to design nuclear weapons, but which is now used for such diverse tasks as helping oil companies get more out of their wells and studying the AIDS virus.

Work on that sort of non-military research is expanding at Los Alamos, Hecker said. But he acknowledged it hasn't been easy.

Greg Mello, a Santa Fe activist and one of the lab's leading critics, agreed with Hecker's message that commercial technology is central to the future of Los Alamos.

But Mello, in an interview, questioned whether the lab's continuing emphasis on nuclear weapons work hinders its ability to shift to commercial research.

Mello hadn't yet seen the Strategic Plan, but has followed its preparation and is familiar with the ideas in it.

# Protestors urge cleanup of Area G

1/24/93

By STEPHEN T. SHANKLAND  
Monitor Staff Writer

About 30 "People for Peace" demonstrators gathered Friday in Santa Fe to pressure the state Environment Department into swifter action enforcing regulations on a Los Alamos National Laboratory radioactive waste storage area.

The group met for about an hour at lunchtime. They addressed their demands to Judith Espinosa, secretary of the Environment Department.

"It was a very quiet demonstration," said Environment Department spokesman John Geddie.

Area G of Technical Area-54, which temporarily stores transuranic waste pending the opening of the Waste Isolation Pilot Project, was found in May 1992 to violate the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act. Barrels of radioactive waste were covered with dirt, but should have been exposed so they could be examined more easily.

Mary Riseley of People for Peace and the Los Alamos Study Group said, "People in New Mexico at large don't realize there was an inspection. The remedy is for the state to issue an enforcement action, and then the DOE will release money to clean it up."

Riseley said the eight months that have elapsed since the Area G inspection was "a real long time to wait in issuing an enforcement action."

But Geddie said, "They need to just wait a little bit longer. As far as we're concerned, we're not dragging our feet."

Geddie said the Environment Department was making sure it was proceeding through the regulations correctly.

"We think the DOE is probably watching this pretty closely. We want to make sure everything we do is defensible. Whatever action we take, we don't want to be discredited

by any technicality," Geddie said. "You can anticipate some sort of response from this department relatively soon. We're still reviewing it internally," Geddie said.

Greg Mello of the Los Alamos Study Group attended the demonstration and spoke to Kathleen Sinneros, who heads the Environment Department's Water and Waste Management Division.

"We each understood our roles," said Mello. "We felt that if we weren't there asking them to act more expeditiously, we wouldn't be doing our job."

"Such a long delay sends the signal that the state is open to influence by the laboratory, influence which is not shared by citizen groups," Mello said. "The state has a hard time enforcing against an institution with such implicit and explicit political power as the laboratory."

Geddie said he thought the demonstrators understood the careful workings of the Environment Department. The demonstrators were making sure the enforcement action "doesn't slip through the cracks," Geddie added.

Attending the demonstration were Herman Agoyo, executive director of the Eight Northern Pueblos group, and representatives from People for Peace, the New Mexico Green Party, the Los Alamos Study Group, and Forest Guardians, Mello said.

The demonstrators carried banners saying, "Dear Judy — please protect us," and "Hey Jude," Mello said.

People for Peace is a group of 30-to-50 activists that formed to protest the Persian Gulf War.

Mello said waste cleanup "is in everyone's interest," since it would generate jobs and clean up problems instead of leaving them for future generations.

Riseley said the New Mexico population was a "historically quiescent population. But now that is changing."



# NEW MEXICO

Wednesday, February 10, 1993

Albuquerque Journal

Page 1, Section D

## Los Alamos Seeks Weapon-Building Capability

By John Fleck

JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

Los Alamos National Laboratory, long a designer of nuclear weapons, plans to add the capability by 1997 to build them, according to internal laboratory documents made public this week by a Santa Fe peace group.

The documents, including a Jan. 22 copy of the laboratory's internal "Strategic Plan," lay out a detailed plan for turning Los Alamos into what lab Director Sig Hecker described last year as "a full-service lab."

Los Alamos has long built specialized nuclear explosives for underground tests conducted in Nevada. Now, according to the Strategic Plan, Los Alamos wants to develop a top-to-bottom capability to build all the key parts for war-ready nuclear bombs.

The Los Alamos Study Group, the Santa Fe-based peace group that released the plan, complained the document is at odds

### '97 Target Date Revealed in Laboratory Documents

with Los Alamos officials' public statements that the lab doesn't want to get into the bomb-building business.

"They may not want to do it, but they're very happy to accept the money that will put them in a position to do it," said Greg Mello, one of the group's leaders.

Laboratory public affairs director Scott Duncan issued a statement Tuesday complaining about the release of what he called an "internal" document. He declined further comment.

The plan comes as some of the nation's existing nuclear weapons factories, such as the Rocky Flats Plant outside Denver, are being closed because of safety and environmental problems.

The Strategic Plan outlines steps necessary to give Los Alamos the capability, by 1997, to build stockpile bomb parts out of plutonium, uranium and lithium — key

components ensuring a bomb's nuclear blast.

Whether the lab would actually build bombs is an open question.

The nation isn't building any new nuclear weapons now, and John Immele, head of Los Alamos' nuclear weapons program, told congressional staff members Jan. 12 that it will be 15 years before bomb manufacturing resumes.

By then, according to current government policy, a new nuclear weapons factory will be completed somewhere in the country. But that plan has its critics, who say Congress is unlikely to fund the multibillion-dollar cost of the new plant.

That, and Los Alamos' capabilities, will create pressure to do the work at the New Mexico lab, said Tom Zamora-Collina, an author and nuclear weapons analyst at the environmental group Friends of the Earth in Washington, D.C.

It is a fact the laboratory acknowledges. "Pressure for the Laboratory to take on additional . . . manufacturing . . . responsibilities will increase," the Strategic Plan states.

The Strategic Plan variously refers to its new manufacturing capability as the ability to build "prototype" nuclear weapons and the ability to provide "contingency" weapons production capability.

But with so few new nuclear weapons needed for the foreseeable future, the distinction between building a few "prototypes" and building bombs for the U.S. arsenal is fast disappearing, said Zamora-Collina.

Zamora-Collina said Los Alamos is borrowing a page from the book of defense planners who advocate "prototyping" — building a small number of a new high-tech weapon, even if unneeded, to maintain production capability.

The laboratory plan refers to that concept as "deterrence through capability" rather than "deterrence through targeting."

A key goal, the plan says, is to maintain the expertise at Los Alamos to "underpin the nation's ability to maintain a safe and reliable stockpile as well as to modify or produce any weapons that may be required as dictated by future national security requirements and policy."

Laboratory director Hecker released a summary version of the Strategic Plan at a news conference Jan. 22. The summary, which describes Los Alamos' efforts to expand non-military work, makes no mention of the laboratory's hope to add production capabilities.

Pressed by reporters that day on the possibility of Los Alamos taking up production work, Hecker said the lab wanted to "keep alive manufacturing technologies," but added that production of actual war weapons wouldn't be an issue any time soon.

# Lab has a secret agenda, watchdogs say

■ Los Alamos isn't telling the whole truth about its post-Cold-War plan, they say.

By **LAWRENCE SPOHN**

Staff reporter

Los Alamos National Laboratory might not be designing new nuclear weapons, but it has designs on being the nation's nuclear weapons leader, according to the lab's internal plan.

The Los Alamos Study Group, a privately funded lab watchdog based in Santa Fe, today released copies of the lab's 120-page internal Strategic Plan.

It described the plan as "startling" because it shows the lab's intent to become "the prime

steward for the nation's stockpile."

The study group contends that the lab isn't playing straight with the public by trying to emphasize the lab's refocusing on civilian research and development.

Actually, the lab wants "to consolidate a wide array of nuclear weapons activities at Los Alamos" but is not making those details part of its public statements, the group said.

"There is a tremendous difference between what LANL emphasizes publicly and what is written in this document," said Greg Mello, a physicist and researcher for the study group.

"The lab has as yet made little change from Cold War priorities, and is promoting an expanding nuclear weapons mission for itself."

Please see **ALAMOS/A9**

## ALAMOS From A1

He cited numerous references in the lab plan that call for building demonstration facilities that "will give LANL the ability to manufacture complete nuclear weapons as desired."

Mello criticized these proposals not only because they represent "unending nuclear weapon research, development and testing," but also because they "have serious negative implications for New Mexico's environment — and potentially its economy as well."

Los Alamos Director of Public Affairs Scott Duncan issued a one-page prepared statement on Tuesday that stated the Strategic Plan is "proprietary information" and was "designated for internal use only."

Efforts to reach appropriate laboratory officials through Duncan's office were rebuffed.

Lab officials, however, have denied they are seeking to relocate Department of Energy weapon production component

facilities to Los Alamos.

As recently as last month Director Sig Hecker said weapons production is not the crucial issue now.

Instead, the concerns have shifted to the safe dismantling of thousands of decommissioned warheads and the safe storage of abundant nuclear materials such as weapons-grade plutonium and highly enriched uranium.

Generally, officials have said the lab is shifting from designing new weapons to making existing weapons safer. It also is trying to expand its civilian research base, which Hecker says has been growing slightly over the last five years.

John Immele, who directs the lab's nuclear weapons programs, has said that it makes sense for LANL to become the primary steward of the nation's nuclear weapon stockpile because the bulk of the weapons that will remain were made or designed in Los Alamos.

In a recent news briefing on an 18-page excerpted summary of the Strategic Plan, Hecker ac-

knowledged that so far only about 4 percent of the lab's budget is going for civilian research and technology transfer efforts.

He said the lab's target this decade is boosting that percentage to between 10 percent and 20 percent, also the stated goal of President Clinton.

Hecker also pointed out that much of the growth in the lab's nuclear weapons program actually is going to non-design areas, including environmental restoration activities. These will receive some \$202 million this year out of the lab's \$1.1 billion budget.

Albuquerque  
Tribune  
2/10/93

Reporter 2/10/93

## LANL Busy Stopping Up Irk Some Leaks

Los Alamos National Laboratory has been through a month of embarrassing leaks.

Last week, lab officials acknowledged that a nuclear reactor had been leaking radioactive water since mid-January. And

most recently, on Tuesday, they were forced to downplay a leak of their sensitive "Strategic Plan" to a citizens' watchdog group.

According to Greg Mello, spokesman for the Los Alamos Study Group, the 120-page document was obtained from an anonymous source. Intended for laboratory managers only, it outlines a broad strategy for guiding the lab through the unsure post-Cold War period in which the lab's primary mission of nuclear weapons research is being challenged.

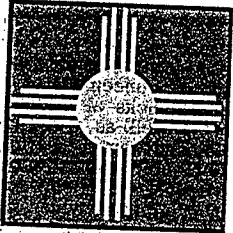
Until this week, lab officials publicly had stressed those parts of the strategy related to the conversion to civilian research. But Mello said details of the plan show the lab is "hedging its bets" and preparing for expanded nuclear activity more than previously believed.

Most worrisome, he said, is the written goal for the lab to become "the prime [Department of Energy] steward for the nation's stockpile" of nuclear weapons. That expanded role would mean new weapons manufacturing at the lab, requiring processing and storage of more dangerous materials like plutonium and tritium than have been used there in the past, Mello said.

Meanwhile, lab officials were mostly mum Tuesday. Director of Public Affairs Scott Duncan released a printed statement calling the document "proprietary information" that competing labs might use against Los Alamos in the fight for lucrative government programs.

"We believe we have the right, if not the obligation, to discuss with our employees certain issues bearing upon their future before they read or hear about it in the news media," the statement said. "Consequently, we have nothing further to say publicly regarding the Los Alamos Strategic Plan"

—M.E. Sprengelmeyer



# THE SANTA FE NEW MEXICAN

## Group says lab plans to build weapons

By KEITH EASTHOUSE  
The New Mexican

Los Alamos National Laboratory is preparing to transform itself into a facility that would build nuclear weapons, leaders of a Santa Fe environmental group said Tuesday.

Historically, the laboratory has limited itself mostly to designing and testing nuclear weapons, a job that requires much less plutonium than building bombs.

Lab officials have repeatedly said

they do not want the laboratory to become a bomb production or plutonium processing facility because of the worker safety and environmental hazards that would be involved.

However, lab director Sig Hecker said at a press conference last month that the distinction between a research facility and a production facility is not as sharp as it once was because future nuclear weapons production needs are likely to be much smaller than during the Cold War — and could be non-existent.

The Los Alamos Study Group is bas-

ing its charge that the lab will build weapons on a 120-page internal laboratory document called The Strategic Plan, a shorter version of which was presented to the media by Hecker in January.

That version stressed that the laboratory is shifting from weapons design work to a caretaker role in which the lab will focus its efforts on ensuring the safety and reliability of the remaining weapons stockpile.

The more detailed version, which was intended for internal lab use only, was obtained by the study group.

Scott Duncan, director of public affairs at the lab, said the lab would not respond to the study group's claims.

"We believe we have the right, if not the obligation, to discuss with our employees certain issues bearing upon their future before they read or hear about it in the news media," Duncan said. "Consequently, we have nothing further to say publicly regarding the Los Alamos Strategic Plan."

The document, which was provided to the media by the study group, describes plans to:

- Upgrade the laboratory's ability to

build prototypes of plutonium pits, the radioactive metal spheres at the heart of nuclear weapons, by 1994.

- Install by 1997 machining capabilities in two facilities that would allow uranium components used in nuclear weapons to be fabricated.

- Design and install another facility for fabricating additional nuclear weapons components, also by 1997.

- Complete an upgrade of Technical Area 16, the Weapons Engineering Tritium Facility, to accommodate both re-

Please see LANL, Page A-2.

# LANL

Continued from Page A-1

search and development work involving tritium and "contingency fill activities" by 1998.

■ Have in place research and development and manufacturing programs involving non-nuclear weapons components used in nuclear bombs by 1997.

Some of the plans already have been made public.

For example, in December the Energy Department announced that in response to the vanishing need for nuclear weapons, Los Alamos and Sandia National Laboratories in Albuquerque would manufacture

mean filling a nuclear weapon with tritium, an activity he said would constitute production work.

He pointed out that most of the planned upgrades and constructions are not scheduled for completion until the mid to late 1990s, after a congressional ban on underground nuclear testing goes into effect.

Since testing is considered crucial for research and design work, Mello said that the completion dates indicate that the work that will be done will be production work.

Mello said that a part of the

## Some people, including DOE critics, have suggested that weapons development and production work could be consolidated at Los Alamos, where the lab could remanufacture plutonium pits in a small, stable arsenal as the need arises.

some of the non-nuclear parts they had only made prototypes of in the past.

Additionally, in the past year there have been indications that nuclear weapons production work formerly done at the DOE's Rocky Flats plant near Denver may be temporarily transferred to Los Alamos until a permanent production facility can be built.

The Rocky Flats plant is closed due to environmental, health and safety problems.

Some people, including DOE critics, have suggested that weapons development and production work could be consolidated at Los Alamos, where the lab could remanufacture plutonium pits in a small, stable arsenal as the need arises.

The lab already has the capability to build plutonium pits. It also has plutonium handling, processing and storage capabilities.

Greg Mello of the study group called the strategic plan "a detailed plan to develop the capability to make nuclear weapons in Los Alamos."

He said the phrase "contingency fill activities" could

plan which lists various future construction projects in the lab's nuclear weapons program demonstrates that the lab is not turning away from nuclear weapons work.

"Most of the construction projects called for in the plan serve LANL's military, rather than civilian, research and development (needs)," Mello said.

Duncan said one reason the lab refused to respond to the study group's claims is that the document contains information that could be used by the lab's competitors.

"We view this as proprietary information that could be useful to the laboratory's competitors for particular programs and funding, or could be used by potential Los Alamos contractors to gain an unfair advantage," Duncan said.

Mello said that proprietary information — as a reason not to make something public — would be legitimate if the lab was a private business instead of a government agency.

He said that "volunteering Northern New Mexico to be host to these kinds of things should be publicly discussed."

## 3 LANL employees contaminated on job

By KEITH EASTHOUSE  
The New Mexican

Three workers at Los Alamos National Laboratory were contaminated with radioactivity in two separate incidents last week at Technical Area 55, the laboratory's top-secret plutonium research complex.

Low levels of radioactivity were detected in the nasal passages of all three workers, according to Department of Energy reports of the incidents obtained by *The New Mexican*.

The report did not specify what type of radioactive substance was involved. Lab spokesman Jim Danneskiold declined to disclose the nature of the material.

Danneskiold said the only way the workers could have been placed in danger is if the contamination had entered their lungs. He said tests performed on the workers' after the contamination incidents found no evidence that had happened.

"There was no uptake," Danneskiold said.

The contaminant may have been plutonium, a radioactive metal used in nuclear bombs, which is the main radioactive material handled at TA-55.

Plutonium is most dangerous when inhaled into the lungs. Extremely small quantities of plutonium have been linked with lung cancer.

The contamination incidents came about two weeks after two other workers at TA-55 were contaminated with plutonium while cleaning up after an experiment in the facility's plutonium processing area.

Plutonium was detected in those workers' nostrils, but the levels of radioactivity involved in that case were significantly higher than in the latest incidents, Danneskiold

said. Radioactivity was not detected in the lungs of those workers either, he said.

"I would characterize that as a serious contamination incident," Danneskiold said.

He said that the more recent incidents were not as severe.

The incidents last week occurred Feb. 1.

In one of the incidents, two of the workers were contaminated after they had unwrapped a package containing nuclear materials, according to the report.

The workers followed proper procedures and were wearing protective equipment, Danneskiold said. The problem, he said, was that the materials, packaged several years ago, were not wrapped as safely as they would be by today's standards.

"They were packed in conformance to the standards that were in existence then," Danneskiold said.

In addition to the contamination in their nasal passages, the workers received contamination on their protective equipment, the report said. Radioactivity was also detected on the arms and neck of one of the workers, according to the report.

In the other incident, a technician was contaminated because a radioactive handling device that the worker was using called a glove box had a hole in the glove, according to the report.

Radioactivity was detected on the technician's forehead and left calf, probably because the worker touched those places after removing the contaminated hand from the glove box, Danneskiold said.

The workers' health will be monitored, he said.

Contamination incidents described as "serious" by

# Group says lab preparing to build nuclear weapons

LA Monitor 2/10/93

SANTA FE (AP) — A Santa Fe peace group contends Los Alamos National Laboratory is preparing to transform itself into a facility that would build nuclear weapons.

The lab historically has limited itself to designing and testing such weapons, and lab officials have repeatedly said they don't want Los Alamos to become a weapons-building plant.

But the Los Alamos Study Group said Tuesday it bases its charge on a 120-page internal lab document titled "The Strategic Plan," which comes when some of the nation's existing nuclear weapons plants are being closed because of safety and environmental problems.

The document, given to the media by the study group, says the lab plans to:

- Upgrade by 1994 its ability to build prototypes of plutonium pits, the radioactive metal spheres at the heart of nuclear weapons.

- Install by 1997 machining capabilities that would allow the fabrication of uranium components used in nuclear weapons.

- Design and install by 1997 a facility for fabricating

additional nuclear weapons components.

- Complete by 1998 an upgrade of the lab's Weapons Engineering Tritium Facility for research and development involving tritium.

- Have in place by 1997 research, development and manufacturing programs on non-nuclear weapons components used in nuclear bombs.

Scott Duncan, the lab's public affairs director, declined comment, saying: "We believe we have the right, if not the obligation, to discuss with our employees certain issues bearing upon their future before they read or hear about it in the news media."

The study group's Greg Mello contends the memo is "a detailed plan to develop the capability to make nuclear weapons in Los Alamos."

"Most of the construction projects called for in the plan serve LANL's military, rather than civilian, research and development (needs)," Mello said.

The document says a key goal is to have the expertise at Los Alamos "to underpin the nation's ability to maintain a safe and reliable stockpile as well as to modify or produce any weapons that may be required...."

# Opinions

4

Thursday, February 11, 1993

## Editorials

### Time to talk

Los Alamos National Laboratory officials are so darned slick. Witness the recent release of a much more detailed Strategic Plan than the streamlined version released earlier by the lab.

The detailed version, which came into the hands of the Los Alamos Study Group in Santa Fe, apparently outlines lab plans to transform LANL into a facility that could build nuclear weapons.

Lab officials wouldn't comment on the allegations by the Los Alamos Study Group, stating, instead, that, "We believe we have the right, if not the obligation, to discuss with our employees certain issues bearing upon their future before they read or hear about it in the news media."

When — exactly — was this discussion going to take place?

Top dogs at the lab wanted it both ways, apparently. They wanted to play up in public their plans to convert to peaceful work by taking up the challenge of industrial competitiveness, while downplaying nuclear weapons plans.

Why release a deficient summary of "The Strategic Plan"? Why not start a dialogue with lab employees and the community on the new directions for the laboratory?

It's been clear for quite some time that powerful interests hope to convert the laboratory into a nuclear weapons complex. Is this the route laboratory officials have chosen to follow?

In short, the release of the fuller Strategic Plan was a public service by the Los Alamos Study Group.

The lab's response was a return to the old days: "Tell 'em only what they need to know."

Too bad.

Los Alamos Monitor

DIGEST

(from Page 1)

without details, Duncan said. "We believe we have the right, if not the obligation, to discuss with our employees certain issues bearing upon their future before they read or hear about it in the news media," Duncan said. "Consequently, we have nothing further to say publicly regarding the Strategic Plan."

### Lab declines comment on plan

Scott Duncan, director of Los Alamos National Laboratory's Public Affairs Division, said in a statement Tuesday that the lab won't release the full version of the lab's Strategic Plan.

The content of the plan was the subject in news stories all over Northem New Mexico Wednesday when the Los Alamos Study Group said the plan revealed that LANL was preparing to have the capacity to produce nuclear weapons.

"We view this (Strategic Plan) as proprietary information that could be useful to the laboratory's competitors for particular programs and funding, or could be used by potential Los Alamos contractors to gain an unfair advantage," Duncan said.

Specifically, the full version of the plan contains information on unresolved issues, strategies, assumptions, timelines, budget profiles, and managers responsible for specific tasks," Duncan said.

To keep the public informed, the lab released a summary version

Monitor 2/11/93

# Livermore conversion weighed by Clinton

'Green' lab may shift weapons work to LANL

The Washington Post 3/4/93 New Mex

WASHINGTON — The Clinton administration is strongly weighing a proposal to transform one of the nation's three laboratories for nuclear weapons design into a center for research on environmental cleanup, Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary said Monday.

The new assignment is being considered for Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, which was established more than 40 years ago south-

**'Livermore has been the proposal and it's one that intrigues me greatly.'**

Hazel O'Leary  
Energy Secretary

east of Oakland, Calif., and includes some of the nation's top nuclear physicists and engineers among its 7,700 employees. "Many people have talked of a green lab coming out of California ... totally dedicated to restoration" of the environment, O'Leary said in an interview with reporters and editors at *The Washington Post*. "Livermore has been the proposal and it's one that intrigues me greatly."

Greg Mello, of the Los Alamos Study Group, a Santa Fe-based environmental organization, said if the proposal is adopted it could mean that nuclear weapons research and development work that had been performed at Livermore would be transferred to Los Alamos National Laboratory.

"It could mean that Los Alamos will carry an increased burden of nuclear weapons activities," Mello said.

According to a 1993 lab document outlining future directions, Los Alamos is already planning on building a complete nuclear weapons production capability by the late 1990s. That would enable it to take over much of the weapons production work that has been performed at the Energy Department's Rocky Flats plant outside Denver.

Mello said that if the lab takes over weapons research and production work from Livermore and Rocky Flats, it will increase the amounts of plutonium handled at Los Alamos — and increase the chances that plutonium, which remains radioactive for 240,000 years, could contaminate the environment.

Mello said these developments

## LAB

Continued from Page A-1

could undercut the lab's effort to switch from weapons work to civilian research and joint commercial ventures with private industry.

"It will make it much more difficult to build a local economy out of nuclear weapons work (than out of civilian research activities)," Mello said.

The idea to make Livermore the DOE's green lab was first suggested last year by Rep. George Brown, D-Calif., in a letter to then-Energy Secretary James Watkins.

Several officials said the proposal remains in a preliminary stage, but would reflect President Clinton's desire to see the Energy Department move from the front lines of the Cold War to new civilian responsibilities, including repairing the environmental damage created around the country by work on nuclear weapons over the past 50 years.

"Our business for the long term is technology transfer" and promotion of conservation and efficiency, O'Leary said. As an indication of the reduced military importance of nuclear weapons, she recalled that during her initial discussion with Clinton about the Energy Department last December, he hardly mentioned the nuclear weapons work that was at the core of the department's responsibilities during the Reagan and Bush years.

Officials at Livermore as well as at two sister labs in the nuclear weapons business — Los Alamos and Albuquerque's Sandia — have known for a while that the glory days of weapons invention were finished. President George Bush canceled production of new U.S. warheads last year, and Congress passed legislation allowing just 15 more underground nuclear tests for weapons design before a complete cessation in 1996.

O'Leary's predecessor, James D. Watkins, had strongly opposed the legislation, saying in a January report that it would "undermine the long-term quality of the nation's nuclear deterrent." But O'Leary said Monday the legislation was appropriate "as it exists" and the administration will not try to change it.

"This needs to be a collaborative effort, it needs the thinking of the lab directors," O'Leary said of the proposal to alter Livermore's principal mission. She said the idea would be discussed soon with Livermore Director John A. Nuckolls and his colleagues, and decided before September.

O'Leary also said that in any event, an effort would be made to retain the "core competence" of nuclear weapons scientists so their work can be revived "in case the world becomes unsettled again."

Clinton, in a letter to Congress on Feb. 12, said he would spell out later this spring a schedule for resuming talks with Russia aimed at reaching accord on a comprehensive nuclear testing ban. Also expected are details on the final 15 tests, which O'Leary said would likely begin either later this year or next year.

O'Leary indicated her management style would differ from that of Watkins, whose blunt and highly detailed management directives intimidated many employees. She said her aim will be to "make the mission clear," then let staff express their own views.

O'Leary said she agreed with Watkins' own assessment that the department had rated an "F" on his arrival in 1989 and only a "C-plus" at his departure in January.

Staff Writer Keith Easthouse contributed to this report.



# Demonstrators leaflet on lab property

By DAVID BURNS  
Monitor Staff Writer

Demonstrators against nuclear weapons broke new ground Monday when they were allowed to hand out pamphlets and newspapers at Los Alamos National Laboratory.

According to some, it was the first time lab officials had allowed protesters on Department of Energy property.

"It's a real sign of change, a real victory," said Mary Riseley of the Los Alamos Study Group, based in Santa Fe. "They're allowing us to distribute literature at the lab without a permit for the first time ever."

About 25 protesters situated at various entrances to the lab handed out leaflets, write-ups, and issues of Crosswinds newspaper to employees as arrived for work.

The demonstrators came from Santa Fe in New Mexico and several other southwestern states to participate in the event organized by the Los Alamos Study Group.

"We came prepared to be arrested," Riseley said.

But, she said, she was surprised by the cooperation of lab security officials and employees. Riseley said she was among many protesters who were arrested for demonstrating at the lab 10 years ago. Back then, they were only allowed in a small parking area near the fire station on West Jemez Road across from the LANL administration area, she said.

Just four months ago, protester Doug Doran, 41, of Albuquerque was arrested for trespassing at the lab and was held in the county jail for 25 days through Christmas. A jury trial for Doran is scheduled May 14 in Magistrate Court.

"I think it's a sign of change in the presidential administration," Riseley said. "We're not against the lab, we're against the weapons. We're trying to help the lab to change. We need to have a change."

She said the predicted LANL reduction in force of 300-to-400 jobs

announced Friday is "just a harbinger of what's to come."

Many lab employees were polite and receptive to the demonstrators, Riseley said.

She said only one man told her she would be thrown out of the Otowi Cafeteria entrance, where she was soliciting passersby.

Greg Mello of the LASG agreed that people were receptive: "It's not that tough (to hand out leaflets). People are pretty friendly."

Shortly after he said that, a big elderly man shouted an obscenity in Mello's face as Mello offered him a leaflet.

Another man walked by and also shouted obscenities and told Mello to "get an honest job for Christ's sake."

One woman, however, gladly took a handout and said, "I'm open-minded."

Most lab employees either politely ignored the protesters or quietly took what they had to offer and moved on.

Lab spokesmen said the demonstrators were allowed on lab property because they weren't obstructing traffic, and because they called ahead of time. Lab spokesmen said they weren't sure if it was the first time protesters had been allowed on DOE property.

"It's something that should be allowed in a free society," Mello said.

He added that the lab is changing, and that emphasis should be geared away from weapons production.

Protesters were told by lab security that it was "OK" for them to hand out literature as long as they didn't block traffic or doorways.

The Los Alamos Police Department had extra patrols on hand, but they weren't needed, police said.

Protesters said their intent wasn't to get arrested, but to hand out their material. Some of the protesters, however, said they were willing to be arrested if necessary.

## LANL official can't fathom exhibit plan

The Associated Press

LOS ALAMOS — A spokesman for Los Alamos National Laboratory said he does not understand the reasoning of an anti-weapons group that wants to place an exhibit at the lab's science museum.

"It's a historical fact that Los Alamos was home to the Manhattan Project," Scot. Duncan said, referring to the code name for the program that built the world's first atomic bomb. "I don't understand what there is to have a counter display about. That's history, that's fact."

The 10-member Los Alamos Study Group has asked the Bradbury Science Museum for "equal time" to show its point of view, and the lab has verbally agreed.

The group describes itself as "dedicated to the cessation of weapons development and (to) the conversion of Los Alamos National Laboratory to non-military research, development and education."

Among the museum's exhibits are models of linear accelerators and nuclear reactors, and reproductions of the nuclear bombs that leveled Nagasaki and Hiroshima in 1945, along with life-sized sculptures of Manhattan Project leader J. Robert Oppenheimer and his boss, Gen. Leslie R. Groves.

The group plans exhibits that chart laboratory "whistleblowers" who spoke out about health and safety violations at the lab and that outline the economic, environmental and health costs of the arms race.

The exhibits could be in place by early next year.

The group cited as precedent to the exhibits a 1985 California appellate court decision allowing a group called Lab Watch to put an anti-nuclear exhibit in the visitor center at Lawrence Livermore Laboratory in Livermore, Calif.

"The laboratory provides a sanitized view of nuclear weapons," said Study Group spokesman Greg Mello. "That's something that deeply disturbs our members."

The group said its exhibits will paint a more complete picture of the Los Alamos lab, its work and its legacy.

Museum director John Rhoades said the museum is outdated in many ways, particularly since the thaw in the Cold War.

But he said that is not the same as a whitewash.

He said an exhibit called "Changed World, Changing Laboratory" is in the works.

Duncan said the group will be allowed to exhibit but that details are still being worked out.

# Protesters Push For End to Nuclear Tests

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOS ALAMOS — Los Alamos National Laboratory employees are decent people, said anti-nuclear protester Mary Riseley on Thursday, but "at the core of what they're doing is this deeply destructive thing."

6193  
About 20 representatives from anti-nuclear groups carried signs and banners in a peaceful protest Thursday against continued nuclear testing.

"The point is we don't need these weapons," said Riseley, a member of the Los Alamos Study Group, as demonstrators paraded in front of the Department of Energy's office here. "We need to be working together instead of against each other. And these weapons are a

powerful symbol of working against each other."

Representatives from People for Peace, All Peoples Coalition, Citizens for Alternatives to Radioactive Dumping and Physicians for Social Responsibility also participated in the protest, which lasted a little over an hour.

Anna Bachicha, a spokeswoman for the Department of Energy in Albuquerque, said the office was preparing a letter to Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary passing along the concerns of the demonstrators.

"They did ask for a ban on nuclear testing and this is a decision that is made by the Congress of the United States," Bachicha said. "They did ask to convey to the secretary of energy their desire that a test

moratorium be continued."

The demonstration coincided with the 50th anniversary reunion of the Manhattan Project that developed the atomic bomb. But protesters said they were marking the 30th anniversary of President John Kennedy's speech announcing the intention to begin negotiations toward a comprehensive ban on nuclear weapons.

Tom Hitch of Santa Fe, a member of People for Peace, said he wants President Clinton to honor his campaign pledge to convene multilateral talks leading to a ban.

Riseley said Los Alamos National Laboratory should abandon weapons testing in favor of technologies dealing with medicine, the environment and science.

"The next 50 years should really be used for cleaning up the planet," she said.

# AGONY OF NAGASAKI, HIROSHIMA 8-12-93



Daniel Rosenbaum/The New Mexican

Tomoko Ogata, a 50-year-old resident of Nagasaki, points to photos of two people she knows who suffered severe burns during the Aug. 9, 1945 nuclear

bombing of the city. The photos are on display at the Los Alamos National Laboratory's Bradbury Science Museum.

## Japanese visit LANL exhibit

By KEITH EASTHOUSE  
The New Mexican

You've seen the photos. Hiroshima and Nagasaki in ruins. A pile of skulls. The charred corpse of a young boy. A radiation burn victim whose back looks like red jelly.

Tomoko Ogata, a 50-year-old resident of Nagasaki, knows that last victim. He is still alive. His name is Sumiteru Taniguichi.

He was a teenager on that August day 48 years ago when a plutonium bomb made in Los Alamos exploded 1,700 feet above Nagasaki, killing an estimated 70,000 people.

Ogata viewed the photo, a testament to agony, at Los Alamos National Laboratory's Bradbury Science Museum on Wednesday. She was part of a contingent of 20 Japanese high school and junior high school teachers who are visiting sites that were critical to American history.

The teachers belong to *Shin-Eiken*, an association dedicated to teaching the English language and Western history to Japanese students in a way that will "produce a democracy-oriented, peace-loving younger generation," according to a written descrip-



Daniel Rosenbaum/The New Mexican

Hiroko Horimoto's uncle was killed in the blast. Said Horimoto: "He had a wife and five children."

tion of the organization.

The teachers have exposed their students to the writings of inspiring figures in American history, including

Martin Luther King Jr. and Helen Keller. They have also stressed the importance of creating a peaceful world, and in that vein have discussed the atomic bombings.

Their views on nuclear weapons were summed up by Fumiko Ozaki, a 51-year-old teacher who is also from Nagasaki.

"Nuclear weapons should be abolished," Ozaki said.

Ogata said she believed it was wrong for the United States to drop atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. But she said she also blamed the Japanese government for its military aggression.

Like Ogata, Ozaki was not in Nagasaki on the day — Aug. 9 — when it was bombed. But her husband, 3 years old at the time, remembers, and to this day fears for his life.

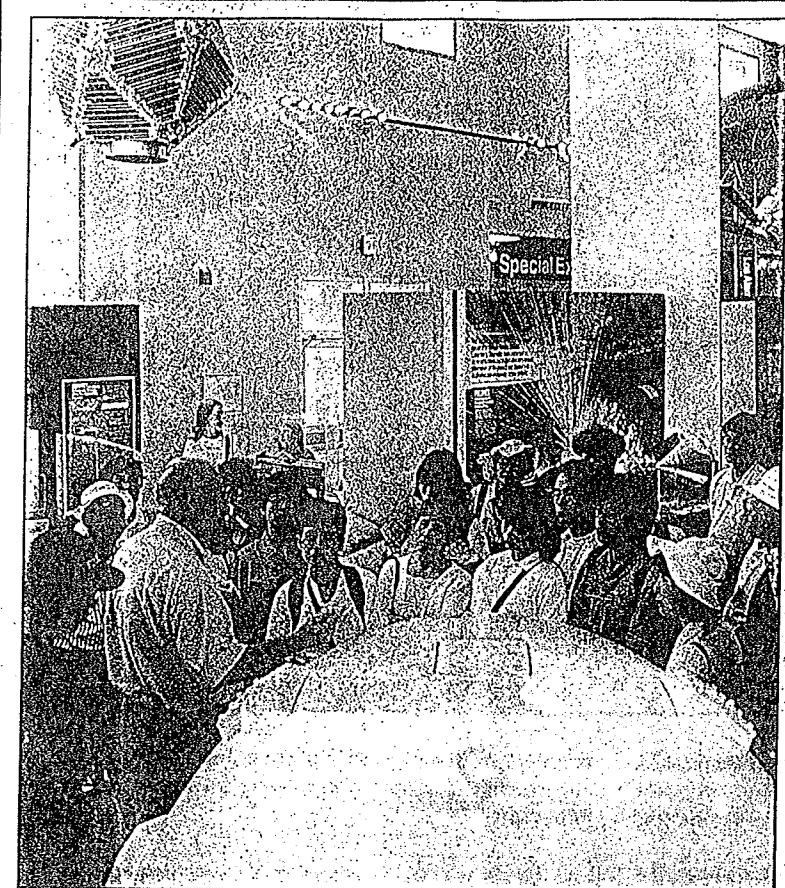
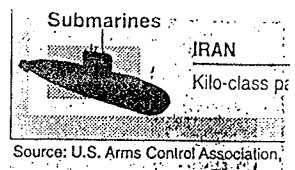
"He is afraid," she said, explaining that her husband worries that the radiation he was exposed to will one day give him cancer.

That apparently is not an idle fear. According to Ozaki, about 3,000 people die every year in Japan from cancer caused by radiation from the atomic

over Please see AGONY, Page A-2

s in France.  
 ess, Iran ordered 500 of Russia's workhorse  
 dle T-72 tanks, reports the authoritative Stock-  
 rake holm International Peace Research Institute.  
 ma- Russia also sold the Iranians two Kilo-  
 the class patrol submarines, making Iran the first  
 Gulf nation with undersea power.

In Washington, the Clinton administration is  
 expected to reveal a comprehensive arms con-  
 trol policy in the coming weeks.  
 Rep. Lee Hamilton, D-Ind., chairman of the  
 House Foreign Affairs Committee, said he  
 would support any Clinton proposal for limits  
 on Middle East sales.



Daniel Rosenbaum/The New Mexican

Japanese high school and junior high school teachers stand before a model of the bomb that was detonated over Nagasaki on Aug. 9, 1945, during a visit to Los Alamos National Laboratory's Bradbury Science Museum.

# AGONY

Continued from Page A-1

explosions.  
 A LANL representative gave the Japanese teachers a tour of the museum, which includes exhibits on the lab's history and current research there. He explained that the laboratory's nuclear weapons work has gone toward many constructive uses, such as the development of heat-resistant materials that have non-weapons applications.  
 But many of the Japanese appeared unconvinced. One teacher said the lab's weapons design work was "not a legitimate activity."  
 However, the teachers were impressed that the laboratory had allowed the Hiroshima and Nagasaki

exhibits at its museum. The exhibit, which will be on display throughout August, is the work of the Los Alamos Study Group. The photos are on loan from the Peace Memorial Hall in Hiroshima. The text accompanying them argues that it was not necessary for the United States to drop the atomic bombs.  
 The Japanese contingent has seen the photos many times, and did not linger long in front of the exhibit.  
 But emotion was visible in the eyes of Hiroko Horimoto as she recalled her uncle Hiroshi Fukushima, who was killed instantly in the Nagasaki blast at the age of 27.  
 "He had a wife and five children," Horimoto said.



Supporting the zoning change, Eduardo Gutierrez, Hispanic community leader. "The people with can't afford to live here," Gutierrez said.

# REZONE

Continued from Page A-1

tellus' property.  
 MacGregor said she did not think the council's action would stop Smith's, which was the motivation for changing the zoning.  
 "It will not prevent Smith's in the long run from building in a totally inappropriate location," MacGregor said. "I want to see it rezoned ... in a way that will stand up in court."  
 Santa Fe Mayor Sam Pick agreed.  
 "We can say whatever we want; this is an after-the-fact rezoning," Pick said. "We decided to change the rules."  
 Several residents of the west-side neighborhood near the Smith's site, who spoke in favor of the move, applauded the council's decision. The residents listed concerns about traffic, drainage and the impact on the area of development such as the Smith's store.  
 About 100 people attended the meeting.  
 "Rezoning of this Baca Street site would allow citizens a voice in this process," said Miguel Chavez, a resident of the area. "This process would allow citizens to take ownership."  
 David Aubin, a member of the Neighborhood Coalition, agreed.  
 "It's about neighbors talking to neighbors," he said. "That doesn't sound like a burden. It sounds like being a good neighbor."

# SHOOTING

Continued from Page A-1

road away from the house and didn't see

# Birthplace of A-bomb gives peace activists a forum

By DEBORAH BAKER  
Associated Press

8/9/93  
TriLame

LOS ALAMOS — In Los Alamos National Laboratory's Bradbury Science Museum, just around the corner from a stark-white bomb case, hangs an image of the blackened body of a little boy.

The bomb case, once used for training, was one of several made to carry "Fat Man," the atomic bomb of the type

dropped on Nagasaki, Japan, on Aug. 9, 1945.

The charred child in the photograph died that day.

In observance of the U.S. bombing of Nagasaki, and of the city of Hiroshima three days earlier, peace activists have hung an exhibit at the birthplace of the bomb.

It is a graphic postscript to the rest of the museum.

Twenty panels of photographs show mushroom clouds rising over the two cities, dying infants using their last strength to cry, lines of nearly naked victims — their clothes torn away by the force of the blasts — awaiting medical treatment.

The accompanying text disputes that the bombing of the two cities, particularly Nagasaki, was necessary to end World War II. It reminds the reader that

the 200,000-plus casualties were nearly all civilians.

It may surprise some visitors to find the wall of pictures in a museum devoted to the work of a facility that designs nuclear weapons — the same laboratory where "Fat Man" and its counterpart, "Little Boy," were created.

But since the museum moved to its

Please see **BOMB/A12**

## **BOMB** From A1

new location in April, one wall has been set aside for "Alternative Perspectives" — specifically, for exhibits of the Los Alamos Study Group, a loose association of northern New Mexico activists opposed to nuclear weapons development.

Backed by a California court decision in the late 1980s that granted a similar group access to a visitor's center at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, the study group asked the Los Alamos lab last year for exhibit space. Lab officials agreed.

"What I feel we are doing is ... providing the space for lots of voices to be heard," said museum director John Rhoades, who advises the group on the presentation of their exhibits but exerts no control over their content.

The study group's usual exhibit highlights the economic cost of the arms race, the lab's "culture of secrecy," and the second thoughts of some scientists who worked on the Manhattan Project, which developed the bomb.

That exhibit has been stored for the month of August, while the Hiroshima-Nagasaki pictures are on display.

Greg Mello of Santa Fe, a spokesman for the study group, contends the alternative-exhibit wall says what would otherwise be left unsaid.

"The rest of the museum stops with the bomb falling out of the airplane over Hiroshima," Mello said. "It deals with nuclear weapons as a strictly technical problem, devoid of human concerns."

It is particularly significant to show the Hiroshima-Nagasaki photographs in the place where the atomic age began, Mello believes.

"Los Alamos occupies center stage in the mythic landscape of the atom," he said.

The exhibit includes a big book in which visitors are encouraged to write their reactions. Its pages reflect divergent, often impassioned, views.

One Los Alamos resident wrote last week that it was "outrageous" to show the photographs without portraying the injuries inflicted by the Japanese in World War II.

"If you would have peace, then prepare for war," wrote another visitor.

"We would have lost many more men if we had landed on the Japanese shore. Yet, seeing charred bodies of children does not give me a feeling of victory," said another entry.

An entry in what appeared to be a youngster's handwriting said the pictures were "gross."

"I learned a lot more about the atom bomb. I know one thing for sure about it. It is so deadly," the same entry said.

A Santa Fe woman who was viewing the exhibit last week said in an interview that the museum itself was "a love song to the bomb" and the exhibit provided a dose of reality.

"If you keep separate from the results of your work, you don't have to worry about the consequences of it," said Charlotte Cooke, a peace activist who said she didn't belong to the study group. "This town is a monument to denial."

A lab employee who was there at the same time had a different view.

"War is hell. There is no question about it. People die. The problem is, who started it?" said Langdon Toland, who works in the technology transfer area. "The people who died (in the Japanese bombing) at Pearl Harbor died just as hideously."

8-10-93

# Hiroshima exhibit draws wide variety of visitor comments

By STEPHEN T. SHANKLAND  
Monitor Staff Writer

The Los Alamos Study Group has taken down its exhibit in the Bradbury Science Museum on the effects of the atomic bombing of Japan.

And judging by remarks in the comment book, most people are either very happy or very sad to see it go.

During its stay of just over one month, the exhibit generated 94 pages of commentary, most of it strongly polarized.

## News Analysis

Although many thought the alternative exhibit was good for the museum, many others thought the exhibit didn't tell the full story of the atomic bombing of Japan.

The exhibit, consisting of 20 poster-sized photographs depicting the effects of the atomic bomb blasts on Japan, was produced and loaned by the Peace Memorial Hall in Hiroshima. The Los Alamos Study Group produced an accompanying text.

LASG member Mary Riseley said she would like to see the exhibit stay longer. But museum director John Rhoades said that the exhibit would be most appropriate in the history wall, and the difficulty of modifying the history wall made the possibility a low priority.

The Hiroshima-Nagasaki exhibit temporarily replaced a LASG-produced exhibit that describes facets of Los Alamos National Laboratory operation.

After a group similar to LASG won a lawsuit to display an alternative view of Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in Livermore's equivalent of the Bradbury Science Museum, LASG members asked LANL officials for space in their museum, and LANL agreed.

The old exhibit is once again on display.

The museum made a fresh comment book available for the duration of the Hiroshima-Nagasaki exhibit, and visitors from many states and countries wrote down their reactions.

In the words of one visitor, the comments in the book hint at an even greater "anger, passion, and confusion."

### Was the exhibit justified?

Many people said the exhibit should remain because, as one visitor said, "The sobering photos of Japanese victims round out" the exhibits in the museum.

Several people also praised LANL for letting the alternative exhibit be displayed.

"I'm glad to see LANL taking a small step (through this alternative space) toward genuine dialogue..." one wrote. And a visitor who identified himself as a physicist wrote, "Your allowing differing opinions is quite refreshing, and allays the impression of the museum as P.R. for LANL."

"So often in this country, healthy disagreement has only been an ideal, not an option. This exhibit is important, and probably should be permanent," one person from Pennsylvania wrote.

A visitor from Oak Ridge, Tenn., home of another Department of Energy nuclear weapons facility, was "saddened that our museum at home has no such exhibit."

And several others said the exhibit compensates for what they perceived as a one-sided movie, "The Town that Never Was." A visitor from Colorado wrote, "The film in the auditorium made no mention of the human impact of nuclear bombs being dropped. This display should remain. The entire story needs to be told."

Another visitor said, "Though it was a scientific breakthrough, we only thought of the benefits of victory. We would have lost many more men if we had landed on the Japanese shore. Yet, seeing charred bodies of children does not give me a feeling of victory... This exhibit should be a permanent part of this museum. Connecticut."

There even were relatively non-partisan comments, such as that from the visitor who wrote, "This is the most thought-provoking, challenging part of the museum. We all need

(Please see EXHIBIT, Page A-9)

## Los Alamos Monitor

### EXHIBIT

(from Page A-1)

to question our beliefs and values every so often."

### Was the exhibit complete?

But although many said the exhibit improved the museum, many thought the exhibit itself was incomplete. Many writers pointed to such events as the Bataan Death March and the attack on Pearl Harbor.

"Could you install a wall on alternatives to the alternative perspectives?" one visitor asked.

And a visitor from Washington state wrote, "Where are the equally graphic pictures of the Bataan Death March survivors? Only by presenting a balanced view can the use of nuclear weapons be put into perspective."

Another wrote, "The pictures before me do depict terrible consequences of nuclear war; however, pictures of the devastation of South Korea, China, etc., by Japan are not shown."

Another warned, "Do not judge the past by the convenient values of the present."

Others, though, warned that the history of the bombing already had been distorted. "We need to stop telling history in a self-serving manner. The bomb was not really necessary in order to stop the war," one wrote.

"The Japanese were trying to surrender when we bombed them," another visitor wrote.

But a visitor from Michigan disagreed. "It is not true that Japan sued for peace before. There may have been small factions that favored it, but they were considered traitors by the military and the Emperor," he said. The bombing of Japan, he wrote, had many causes: "The barbarous attack on Pearl Harbor, the cruelty of the Japanese towards their prisoners of war and occupied territory, and to some degree, the lack of knowledge of the power of atomic energy made this, at the time, just another military option that had to be taken, to stop the war and war casualties."

But some thought history wasn't that simple. "The exhibit attempts to shock us by showing the decision to use the bombs was not wholly rational and had some political ulterior motives. Decisions in wartime have never been fully rational, and it is easy in retrospect to show the flawed thinking used," a visitor from Ventura, Calif., wrote.

And a visitor from Seattle, Wash., wrote, "There is no one side to this issue, no clearly-defined right or wrong. Put yourself in Truman's shoes and imagine what you would

have done and how you would have explained to the world had things turned out worse."

### Is the bomb justifiable?

A core debate in the book centers on whether the use of nuclear weapons was justified. Many people said the bomb saved lives, but many also said it was unjustifiable.

"Thank God for the bomb. I would not be here today but for Truman and the bomb," one visitor wrote. "Los Alamos needs no apology for what it has accomplished," said another.

But others disagreed. "Nothing can justify what the nuclear bomb did. Don't make excuses, and don't let it happen again," a visitor from San Diego wrote. And a visitor from Washington, D.C., said, "The men involved with the order (to drop the bomb) should be tried for war crimes."

Another visitor, from Ann Arbor, Mich., said the atomic bomb wasn't so different from other weapons: "Protesting United States use of the bomb is justified, as long as one is also willing to protest the fire bombing of Tokyo and Dresden and the cruise missile attacks on Baghdad. Hiroshima and Nagasaki were tragedies of a new and different sort, but this difference was one of magnitude, not one of kind. What happened there was no more or less justifiable than what had been happening since 1939."

### Who controlled the bomb?

Views were mixed about whether humans controlled the bomb or vice-versa.

One writer said that technology is not to blame for wars: "Any technology can be used to benefit or hurt mankind. The power of the technology should not determine its development. We should continue to unfold the secrets of nature. Because we as laymen do not understand something on a technical basis, we should not be afraid of it. We should strive to control man's desire to hurt mankind, not man's technology."

However, several others were clearly more cautious about unfolding the secrets of nature. One person wrote, "We're fools to think we know where this technology is going to take us."

Some believed the debate is growing stale. "We (need) to be forgiving of the past. The Jews need to be forgiving of the Holocaust, the Indians of the massacres, the pioneers of the Indians, the Japanese of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the U.S. of Pearl Harbor," one wrote.

But perhaps both sides of the debate would agree on the comment of one child: "War is confusing."

## Working and Watching



STEPHEN T. SHANKLAND/DOE

STEPHEN T. SHANKLAND/DOE

Above left, Kathryn Ellsberry, head of Los Alamos National Laboratory's Controlled Air Incinerator, describes the facility at a Thursday meeting of the Working Group to Address Los Ala-

mos Community Health Concerns. Above right, Greg Mello, a laboratory critic from the Los Alamos Study Group, watches the exchange.

## Lab: incinerator is only real option

By STEPHEN T. SHANKLAND  
Monitor Staff Writer

Los Alamos National Laboratory has no other legal option besides the Controlled Air Incinerator to deal with its mixed and hazardous waste, lab officials said Thursday night.

At a meeting of the Working Group to Address Los Alamos Community Health Concerns, Kathryn Ellsberry, who leads the incinerator project, said regulations require that LANL use existing and proven technology to deal with its mixed waste (waste with hazardous chemical and radioactive components).

That technology is the incinerator, she said. EPA calls incineration the "best demonstrated available technology."

Ellsberry said the use of the incinerator not only is beneficial in dealing with mixed and other wastes, but the facility also currently is the only option available for LANL.

"It's a political hot potato. There's no doubt about it. But we have a problem at the lab, and we think (the incinerator) can help."

The incinerator can reduce the volume of mixed waste at the lab by burning off its hazardous components, Ellsberry said.

The lab must deal with its mixed waste, currently stored out of compliance, she said. The Federal Facilities Compliance Agreement (FFCA), recently negotiated between the Department of Energy and the Environmental Protection Agency, is a plan to bring LANL back into compliance with mixed waste regulations.

The FFCA allows LANL to deal with existing

and newly-generated mixed waste. The FFCA also requires LANL to minimize its future generation of mixed waste.

Before the FFCA was negotiated, LANL voluntarily had stopped producing mixed waste, but even the lab's stored mixed waste was out of compliance with the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) and with Land Disposal Restrictions.

John Puckett, a LANL member of the Working Group, noted that the laws of the land—reflecting public concern—had "squeezed" LANL into using the incinerator. The lab may not store the waste, and must use the best available technology to treat it, he said.

Permitting, Status

The incinerator has permits from the Toxic Substances Control Act and the hazardous waste section of RCRA, but still requires a RCRA permit to burn mixed waste and an environmental assessment, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act, Ellsberry said.

In April 1991, DOE decided that the incinerator required an environmental assessment, and DOE now is being that document with assistance by LANL, Ellsberry said.

Although there are no formal public hearings required for the assessment process, Ellsberry said that DOE was considering holding more informal public hearings to address concerns that may arise for facilities.

For example, a public hearing was held Wednesday for LANL's Mixed Waste Disposal Facility, which DOE decided only required an environ-

mental assessment.

Chick Keller, another LANL member of the Working Group, hoped the informal hearings with an environmental assessment would be more useful and satisfying for all parties involved.

The environmental assessment probably will be completed in February or March of 1994, Ellsberry said.

The incinerator hasn't operated since a test run in 1987, she added. Waste treatment at the incinerator is scheduled to begin in August 1995 after tests and trial burns.

Public Involvement

To deal with incinerator issues, the lab actively is seeking public involvement, Ellsberry said.

Greg Mello of the Santa Fe-based Los Alamos Study Group said public involvement is essential, but that the lab's conception of such involvement too often is "one-sided," with only the lab speaking.

This causes mistrust, he said. "The lab is setting itself up for a long period of siege... if the public trust is not cultivated."

To heal the mistrust, he said, LANL should involve the public in LANL's strategic planning process.

Lee McAtoc, a LANL member of the Working Group, said the lab overall was making progress in involving the public in its affairs.

Initially, LANL was moved from secrecy to talking "at" the public, and now is moving toward genuine participation, he said.

(See WORKING GROUP, Page 6)

## WORKING GROUP

(from Page 1)

Los Alamos Public Affairs Office Director Scott Duncan defended a memorandum he wrote that identified Rep. Bill Richardson, D-N.M., as the key person to convince of the benefits of the incinerator.

"Our facility has none of the concerns associated with it which have been voiced by Mr. Richardson. If we gain his acceptance, then all is possible. But without his 'buy-in,' I doubt if we are anything but dead in the water," Duncan said in the memo.

Duncan said several technical discussions convinced him that the incinerator is the "best available technology" to handle LANL's mixed waste.

He also said that he assumed discussions about the CAI would be open and public, and that he would advise the lab "not to proceed (with the CAI) if it's not in the public interest."

There is "absolutely nothing in that memo" that Duncan was ashamed to share with the public, he said.

Duncan said that in any case, the politics of the incinerator shouldn't be the core of the were secondary. Speaking of Ellsberry's presentation, Duncan said, "I'm glad you're focusing on the technology, because I think that's the real issue."

### Incinerator Operation

The incinerator would reduce the volume of waste produced by LANL and would immobilize the radioactive waste in ash, Ellsberry said.

The ashes from the burnt waste, more concentrated than the original waste, would be vitrified, or mixed

with glass, to keep them out of harm's way, she said.

The burning of waste also produces particulate matter in the exhaust. The exhaust is filtered several times to make sure combustion products are removed, she said.

Improvements to the incinerator include upgrades to the incinerator's construction, ash removal system, control and data collection, as well as

the addition of redundant air filters.

### Thyroid Cancer Study

• Bill Athas, a state epidemiologist and member of the Los Alamos Cancer Rate Steering Committee, said the Department of Energy has approved an analytical study of thyroid cancer in Los Alamos County.

The study also will examine cancer concerns in neighboring communities such as the pueblos.



# RE-NAMING "THE LAB"

## LANWC: The Los Alamos Nuclear Weapons Complex

By Suchi Solomon

**F**rom time to time the clouds of secrecy engulfing the Los Alamos Nuclear Weapons Complex lift and we get a glimpse into our shared future: a cluster of large projects costing hundreds of millions. Most of the money will be spent to store and treat nuclear waste. Is this a sign that the bomb-makers are jumping into weapons production full time?

*Item:* The 62 acre Area G waste storage facility site (on Mesita del Buey, 1 mile west of Tshirege—the largest Anasazi pueblo on the Pajarito Plateau) will be doubled in size by annexing a 72 acre tract held by the San Ildefonso pueblo. One wonders where will all this new waste be coming from?

*Item:* A permanent radioactive waste dump—twice the size of WIPP—is slated to be built. The "advanced" technology to be used to store waste? Shallow trenches lined with plastic, covered by a few feet of earth. Perhaps this shoddy plan is a bluff to make us swallow a leaky WIPP as our only alternative?

*Item:* A twenty year old controlled air incinerator (CAI) to burn hazardous chemicals mixed with radioactive materials will be fired up in February next year as a kind of "show and tell" for visiting EPA officials. This incinerator was secretly burning an unknown quantity of radioactive and hazardous materials for a ten year period. When word leaked out about its existence, it was shut down. Do Los Alamos planners seriously believe we have stopped caring about the air we all breath?

None of these projects will have environmental impact statements written on them before they begin. Neither will public hearings be held. One wonders why. Is there some fear amongst weapons planners that a massive increase in bomb work in Los Alamos will be unacceptable to us?

### ANCIENT RUINS & AREA G

Meanwhile they've started to clear the wetlands adjoining Area G of ancient ruins sacred to the people of San Ildefonso. When pueblo leaders and supporters visited this so-called "dig" they saw the crumbling walls of their ancestors' homes draped in black plastic. Pottery shards were being removed and wheelbarrows filled with rubble dotted the landscape. This destruction is being carried out in order to asphalt over the ruins—including a kiva—to make way for more shallow radioactive waste pits. Site destruction is going ahead even before the usual procedures and paperwork have been completed—thus sending a message to pueblo people: We took your land in 1942 for the first Area G and we're doing it again—in the same way.

What has been the history of Area G? Poor waste-handling has caused an underground vapor plume of

organic solvents and radioactive tritium to form. Corroded and leaking drums of plutonium waste triggered the largest environmental fine in New Mexico's history: \$1.6 million. Airborne tritium and plutonium, while below federal safety standards, are many times over background levels.

Of course it's anybody's guess if the beautiful land we call home may already have been irreparably damaged by radioactive spills. As no independent source of data on the environment exists here, the only news we get comes from Los Alamos offices and it's almost always as good as they can make it look.

A few troubling signs: The thyroid cancer rate in the city of Los Alamos is 4 times over the national average. Thyroid cancer is directly linked to gamma radiation exposure. In one small neighborhood across the canyon from the main administration, 12 people have died of brain cancer. The controversy over these victims of the Los Alamos product continues even while its factories belch invisible gases into the air.

With 14% of the nation's total transuranic waste perched precariously in Area G, the public has many questions about the health and safety impacts of the new projects. Before this big mess gets any bigger,

we need to confront Los Alamos decision-makers in open hearings. The public hearing held September 15 at Los Alamos Inn, with DOE officials, barely scratched the surface of what is in store for us. In various ways, people at that hearing voiced the main question: Is Los Alamos being re-tooled to become the nuclear weapons production center for the nation? But this question remains unanswered.

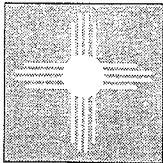
The expansion of waste storage area may be unnecessary—if a program of source reduction, waste minimization and compaction would be implemented. And much deeper issues are at stake: Why do we continue to design and build nuclear weapons now that the Cold War is over? Why has the U.S. government refused to guarantee to the world that it will never use nuclear weapons on a first-strike?

As a first step toward facing reality, let's stop calling it "The Lab." We would do well to forget the PR about white-coated geniuses tinkering with machines. Consider that they processed 1 1/2 metric tons of plutonium in 1981—the last year production figures were released. These guys are deadly serious and need to wear a name-tag which describes their real work—as—the Los Alamos Nuclear Weapons Complex.

*Petitions demanding an end to the destruction of pueblo ruins and calling for environmental impact statements for all new projects—with public hearings—are circulating within the community. Call Mary (988-4864) for copies. Letters expressing your concern can also be sent directly to: Sig Hecker, Director, LANL, Los Alamos, NM.*



Greg Mello, Director of Los Alamos Study Group and Herman Agoyo, Director of Eight Northern Pueblos, inspecting ancient pueblo ruins adjacent to Area G. Photo by Amy Burling



# SANTA FE

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THE NEW MEXICAN

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 30, 1993

SECTION B

## Lab's study for new landfill already attracting fire

By KATHLEENE PARKER  
For The New Mexican

LOS ALAMOS — A proposal for a landfill at Los Alamos National Laboratory is under fire from environmentalists opposed to its location near Bandelier National Monument and from Los Alamos officials who are upset by the county's exclusion from the project.

A decision by LANL to build its own landfill would mean the county would have to build another landfill for its use when the current joint landfill reaches capacity in several years, county officials said.

The proposed LANL landfill, at Technical Area 49, would be at the southern edge of the lab off of State Road 4, which forms the boundary between U.S. Department of Energy land and Bandelier National Monument. The landfill

would not accept radioactive or hazardous materials, said project engineer Craig Bachmeier of LANL.

The lab has made no public announcement of the proposal, but an internal lab memo said the landfill will be only for LANL and DOE use because of "factors of cost, security and present and future liability for cleanup."

Santa Fe resident Greg Mello of the Los Alamos Study Group, a lab watchdog organization, said his group is critical of the dump's proximity to Bandelier and believes there are technical problems with the site.

Bachmeier said that because the lab decision is still preliminary, such criticism is premature. It will be a year or more before the lab completes geological testing and makes a final decision, he said.

"To put it into perspective, DOE has not authorized any funding for this yet.

... We are at the very, very beginning," Bachmeier said.

Mello said that is the time to involve the public.

"The lab makes decisions in private and informs the public later," he said.

According to Bachmeier, the lab studied 33 sites on lab property. The TA 49 site appears to be best able to comply with state and federal laws, he said. The lab also wants to put the landfill where it will not be visible from residences, highways or Bandelier, and computer simulations indicate that the TA 49 site best meets that requirement, he said.

Mello said TA 49 is a poor choice because it is in a ravine. Runoff from rain and snow will flow into the ravine, causing erosion and potentially causing pollutants in the landfill to leach into underlying aquifers, he said.

"It is sort of like putting a dump in a riverbed," he said. "They are doing it to

“  
To put it into perspective, DOE has not authorized any funding for this yet . . . We are at the very, very beginning.  
”

CRAIG BACHMEIER  
Project engineer at LANL

minimize cost because there is less digging, and to save mesa-top sites for expansion of lab facilities, especially weapons activities."

Bachmeier said the landfill will be lined with nonpermeable soils and a man-made liner to prevent leaching into

ground water.

Mello said there will be conflicts between the landfill and Bandelier National Monument, especially from increased traffic from dump trucks.

Please see **LANDFILL**, Page B-3

## LANDFILL

Continued from Page B-1

Bachmeier said that about 12 dump trucks and a few smaller trucks will travel from the lab to the dump a day. All dump trucks will be covered to prevent blowing of wastes, he said.

Bandelier is cautiously supportive of the proposal.

"From Bandelier's perspective, it would be ideal if adjacent lab lands were managed as buffer zones, but maybe that isn't possible," said Brian Jacobs, a natural resource specialist at Bandelier.

Jacobs said he thinks lab officials are trying to be sensitive to the park, but he hopes park officials have a chance to take a long look at the proposal.

Los Alamos County officials already are making public their objections.

County officials realized that hazardous materials regulations would mean the lab and the county would have separate sections in a new landfill, said Byron Palmer of the Los Alamos County Solid Waste Management Board.

But the DOE decision to build its own landfill leaves the county in a lurch, he said.

The county has no suitable land for its own landfill and will be dependent upon DOE to provide a county dump site through a land swap, Palmer said.

Bachmeier said the lab and DOE will continue to work with the county.

"Due to funding reductions, there is just not money available for a facility that could serve both the county and the lab," he said.

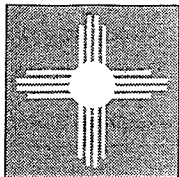
He said liability for any future problems make it impractical for

DOE to participate in a landfill with anyone.

"These are liability issues faced by any industrial organization, not just DOE. There is a responsibility for eternity for any environmental problems" that develop at landfills, he said.

County Council Chairman Jim Greenwood referred to recent incidents in which radioactive materials from the lab were sent to the county landfill accidentally and said he took issue with Bachmeier's position.

"I think if you ask the average person on the street if they are more concerned about what the laboratory or the county puts in the landfill, they will tell you the laboratory," he said. "I think maybe what we ought to be asking is if the county is willing to take the responsibility for what the lab puts in the landfill."



# SANTA FE

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THE NEW MEXICAN

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 1993

SECTION B

## DOE approves waste site in Los Alamos

By KEITH EASTHOUSE  
The New Mexican

### LANL can bury chemical, radioactive debris

The Department of Energy has approved a Los Alamos National Laboratory proposal to place nuclear and chemical waste generated by future laboratory operations into a planned \$22 million disposal facility.

The Mixed Waste Disposal Facility, which would be on 60 acres of laboratory property, originally was conceived as a repository for existing waste generated by past lab operations.

Paul Aamodt, deputy group leader of the lab's environmental restoration program, said that placing mixed waste — waste contaminated with both radioactive and chemical substances — into the

facility has always been a possibility.

Aamodt said that waste from future operations stretching to 2018 — when the facility is expected to stop taking all waste — would be placed into the disposal site.

He and Steve Slaten of the DOE's Los Alamos office said the amount of waste generated by future operations would be minimal — less than 1 percent of the total of 475,000 cubic yards of mixed waste that is expected to be buried at the site.

But a lab critic said the DOE decision gives the laboratory the freedom to place larger amounts of mixed waste

generated by future operations into the facility if it needs to.

Such larger amounts could be generated if the laboratory becomes involved in nuclear weapons production work, a possibility being considered by the DOE, said Mary Riseley of the Los Alamos Study Group — a Santa Fe citizens group created to monitor LANL.

Jay Coghlan of Concerned Citizens for Nuclear Safety agreed, saying that "the lab's real priority is to continue its waste-producing nuclear weapons programs."

Riseley also said that the DOE decision means that other DOE facilities

could ship their mixed waste for disposal at Los Alamos.

Aamodt said "we have absolutely no intention, unless it is forced upon us, to accept waste other than from Los Alamos."

Aamodt said the bulk of the waste would come from the lab's environmental restoration project, a \$2 billion effort to clean up and dispose of waste in and around the lab. That waste is the legacy of 50 years of laboratory operations.

The waste, which would be entombed in clay-lined underground shafts, would include contaminated soil and rubble,

toxic solvents and other materials collected during the environmental restoration.

The estimated amount of waste is roughly double the amount of plutonium-contaminated defense waste that would be disposed of at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant, the controversial underground nuclear repository near Carlsbad.

However, the waste that would be stored at the Mixed Waste Disposal Facility would be less radioactive than the waste that would go to WIPP, Aamodt said.

The LANL facility, which is still in the design stage, has a couple of hurdles it

Please see WASTE, Page B-4

## WASTE

Continued from Page B-1

still must overcome.

The main one is that it must be approved by the New Mexico Environment Department, which has the authority to regulate mixed waste under the federal Resource Conservation and Recovery Act.

Aamodt said the lab hopes to submit a permit application to the state next year. He said the lab wants to open the facility by 1998.

Lab officials also want the Environmental Protection Agency to allow the laboratory to bypass treating some of the waste — treatment is normally required

by federal law — and place it directly into the ground.

Aamodt said that to receive such an exemption or "variance," the lab must persuade the EPA that the disposal facility will not allow any of the waste to escape into the surrounding environment.

He said that if the lab does not receive such permission, it will have to consider other options.

One would be to treat the waste. But Aamodt said that would be expensive, particularly if the waste is in the form of large amounts of contaminated soil.

Another alternative would be to ship the waste off-site. Labora-

tory officials visited a privately owned facility in Utah called Envirocare in May. Aamodt said that facility could take some of the waste that will be dug up by the environmental restoration program.

But he said that shipping the waste would be more expensive and could provoke opposition from citizen groups and from the cities that the waste would pass through.

Earlier this year, the DOE decided to allow the lab to do an "environmental assessment" of the project, rather than a more time-consuming "environmental impact statement," which would require public hearings.

*This outcome was assisted by our coalition, internal contacts, a public demonstration outside NMED, etc.*

12-2-93 ABON J.

# LANL to restack nuclear waste drums

► The New Mexico Environment Department says the old earth-covered stacks violate the law because the drums can't be inspected for leaks.

BY JOHN FLECK  
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

After spending 12 years stacking 16,600 radioactive-waste drums one way, Los Alamos National Laboratory plans to spend \$43 million over the next 10 years restacking them.

The reason: the New Mexico Environment Department says the old earth-covered stacks violate the law because the drums can't be inspected for leaks.

At the time the drums were stacked, the method was legal, say

laboratory officials. But the law has changed, so the drums will be restacked.

The restacking involves a laborious process in which the old drums are uncovered, inspected, and moved to new storage structures being built on asphalt pads nearby, said Mike Baker, manager of the project.

It will take 10 years to do it, Baker said.

State officials defend their decision to require Los Alamos to move the drums, saying it is the only way

to ensure they are not leaking.

The plan to move the drums is part of an agreement between the state Environment Department and the laboratory. Attorneys are putting the final touches on the agreement, which is expected to be completed soon, possibly this week.

The Department of Energy, which owns Los Alamos, already has approved the agreement.

Officials with the other two parties involved — the state and the University of California, which manages Los Alamos for the DOE —

said this week they expect the deal to be signed soon.

The agreement will settle an enforcement action brought by the Environment Department on Jan. 28 against Los Alamos for violations of waste-storage rules.

The Environment Department had proposed a \$1.6 million fine, which would have been the largest ever levied by the state. Neither side would discuss the final size of the fine, but it is expected to be substantially less than originally proposed.

The major cost for Los Alamos, however, will not be the fine but the \$43 million cost of fixing the problems identified by the state.

The drum-stacking problem dates to 1979, when new Energy Department procedures were established for storing radioactive waste being held for eventual disposal at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant, a proposed nuclear-waste dump in southeastern New Mexico.

The offending drums contain lab-

See **LANL** ► PAGE 3

## LANL to restack nuclear waste

From **PAGE 1**

oratory trash, such as old gloves and tools, that are contaminated with traces of plutonium and other hazardous chemicals. Most of the waste has been immobilized in concrete.

The drums are stacked on three asphalt pads on a mesa six miles southeast of the laboratory's main building complex.

The stacks are covered with a plywood structure, then a layer of plastic and a layer of dirt.

At the time the drums were put there, the Energy Department believed the configuration was the best way to temporarily store the drums until WIPP was ready, lab officials say.

Now, regulations have changed, and present standards require regular inspections of the drums to make sure they are not leaking.

Since 1991, all new drums of waste have been stored on an asphalt pad beneath a rigid tentlike structure where they can be regularly inspected.

So far, there is no evidence the buried drums have leaked, though an inspection last year did uncover a pin-size hole in one drum and corrosion on eight of the other 100 drums exhumed for examination.

"We don't know that there's been any releases," said Environment Department spokesman John Geddie earlier this year, "but that's the bottom line — that we don't know."

The difficulty of determining

whether any drums have leaked is compounded by the fact that the drums are stored atop an old dump for low-level radioactive waste used in the 1950s, Baker said.

Using first-year funding of \$8.4 million, laboratory workers will begin building asphalt pads for the new storage area adjacent to the old storage area in the coming year. Tentlike structures covered with vinyl will be built on the pads.

To unstack the old drums, workers will build a sealed, filtered tent over the old stacks of drums and begin removing them and inspecting them one by one before placing them in new storage structures.

Any drums found to have leaks will be repacked in sealed containers, Baker said.

# JOURNAL

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# Los Alamos Can Supply All N-Bombs

## Lab's Annual Plutonium Capacity May Be Enough for 300 Weapons

By John Fleck

JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

A 15-year-old Los Alamos National Laboratory metal shop was designed to process enough plutonium to build at least 100 nuclear bombs per year, and possibly as many as 300, Department of Energy documents suggest.

Independent arms-control experts say that is enough bomb-production capacity to meet the nation's scaled-down 21st century nuclear weapons needs.

Such work used to be done at the Rocky Flats plutonium factory near Denver, which was shut down because of environmental and safety problems.

Laboratory officials dispute the 100-to-300 figure, but refused to reveal the correct number, saying Los Alamos' production capacity is a national security secret.

Portions of the building that had been set up for plutonium fabrication have been assigned other duties, said laboratory spokesman Jim Danneskiold. Danneskiold also said current, stricter worker radiation protection rules limit the amount of plutonium work that could be done.

Danneskiold also Tuesday reiterated: Los Alamos' position that it

does not want to become a nuclear weapons factory, saying such a role would damage the laboratory's basic research mission.

The Energy Department is considering either building a new bomb factory somewhere in the country, or modifying existing buildings at Los Alamos to meet future U.S. nuclear weapons production needs.

Hearings have been held around the country, including two in New Mexico in September, and a decision is expected in late 1994 or early 1995.

The information on Los Alamos' plutonium production capabilities was included in more than 400 pages of documents recently released to the Journal regarding the capabilities of the laboratory's Technical Area 55, where the bulk of its plutonium work is done.

Most of the documents date to 1978, when TA-55's main plutonium building was opened, and describe its design capabilities.

It took the department two years to release the documents under the federal Freedom of Information Act.

Non-government experts consulted by the Journal said the docu-

MORE: See LOS on PAGE A7

ALBUQUERQUE JOURNAL Wednesday, December 8, 1993 A7

# Los Alamos Could Supply Plutonium for All N-Bombs

CONTINUED FROM PAGE A1

ments provide the most detailed publicly available information to help answer the question of how many bombs Los Alamos could produce.

The answer is this: It appears Los Alamos could build all of the bombs the United States would need to support a 21st century, post-Cold War arsenal, said Christopher Paine, an analyst at the Natural Resources Defense Council, a Washington, D.C., environmental group.

"The significance of it is in the ability of the lab to serve as either an interim or long-term replacement for Rocky Flats," said Brian Costner, head of the Energy Research Foundation, a South Carolina environmental group, and co-author of a study on U.S. nuclear

weapons plutonium work.

To manufacture a plutonium "pit," the explosive core of a nuclear weapon, the metal is heated to more than 1,500 degrees Fahrenheit and melted down, then poured into a graphite mold.

Pits must then be shaped to precise specifications. The work is done inside "glove boxes," which permit workers to handle the radioactive metal remotely, often using lead-lined gloves inserted through sealed portholes.

According to the documents, the metal fabrication area in TA-55 was designed to be able to process and shape 220 pounds of plutonium metal per month.

The amount of plutonium required for a nuclear weapon is a secret, but independent researchers put it at roughly 4 kilograms — 8.8 pounds.

Using that estimate, Paine said

the newly released documents suggest Los Alamos could make about 300 bombs a year. That closely matches an estimate he previously made based on other data about Los Alamos plutonium processing capabilities.

A more conservative estimate, based on the documents' statement that "up to" 12 kilograms — 26.5 pounds — may be used to manufacture a single bomb, yields a production rate of 100 bombs a year.

No one without a security clearance knows whether 100 or 200 or 300 new plutonium pits a year is enough to meet 21st century stockpile needs.

No new bombs are now being built. Questions about whether bombs in the existing stockpile will need to be replaced remain unanswered.

The Department of Energy is trying to plan its future weapons man-

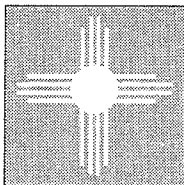
ufacturing complex with a working estimate of the required annual rate of bomb production, but that number remains classified.

Paine, doing independent calcula-

tions based on best guesses at the lifespan of a nuclear bomb, put the annual requirement at 100 or less.

One government source, speaking on condition of anonymity, said

future needs for new pit production could be low, because some new nuclear weapons could be built around old pits removed from warheads being retired.



# SANTA FE

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THE NEW MEXICAN

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 10, 1993

SECTION B

## State agency cuts LANL's fine to \$700,000

By KEITH EASTHOUSE  
The New Mexican

### Deal requires lab to uncover, inspect waste

The state Environment Department has scaled back the fine it will impose on Los Alamos National Laboratory for improperly storing nuclear waste from \$1.6 million to \$700,000, according to the terms of an agreement made public Thursday.

The penalty, while less than half of what the state originally proposed, still would be the largest ever issued by the Environment Department, according to Kathleen Sisneros, director of the department's Water and Waste Management Division.

The penalty is part of an agreement that calls upon the laboratory to un-

cover 16,600 waste drums — which are covered with earth on outdoor pads — inspect and restack them over a 10-year period at a cost of \$43 million.

The agreement has been signed by officials at the laboratory, the Department of Energy and the University of California, which manages the lab for DOE, according to Rick Malaspina, a university spokesman.

Sisneros said Environment Department Secretary Judith Espinosa is studying the agreement and was expected to sign it today.

The agreement requires the lab to pay \$500,000 of the fine within 30 days after Espinosa approves it. The remaining

\$200,000 must be paid by Sept. 30.

Also, the agreement calls upon the laboratory to build storage domes for the drums, which contain plutonium-contaminated trash destined for ultimate disposal at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant near Carlsbad.

While the state does not have regulatory authority over radioactive waste, it does have jurisdiction over waste that is contaminated with radioactive and chemical substances.

According to lab spokesman John Gustafson, the state has regulatory authority in this case because there is a likelihood that some of the drums contain such waste, called "mixed waste."

The Environment Department first discovered that the drums were stored in such a way that regular inspections were impossible — a violation of the Federal Resource Conservation and Recovery Act — in 1992.

The state was particularly concerned because evidence of corrosion was found in eight of the drums during a partial excavation of the drums conducted by the lab in the spring of 1992. Additionally, a ninth drum was found to have a hole in it the size of a pin.

The state wants to know if other drums are corroded and, if they are, whether they are leaking radioactive material into the environment.

"We're not saying the drums are leaking," commented Environment Department spokesman John Geddie. "What we are saying is that we don't know" because of the way the drums are stored.

Determining whether any leakage has taken place is complicated by the fact that the drums are located atop an old waste disposal site. Lab officials have maintained that there is no evidence radioactive materials have escaped.

The lab began stacking the drums under a layer of earth in the late 1970s, a time when such a storage method was in line with regulations. But when the regulations changed in the 1980s, the lab failed to change storage practices.

Since 1991, the lab has stored drums containing plutonium waste in storage structures.

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## CONTRACT

(from Page 1)

"He was very professional and up-front. He said he had a contract with lab to find out what the concerns of activist groups are, and said 'I want to be very up-front with you, get to know you and your concerns a little bit better.' I thought that was a decent way to do things, and I think that he has been very professional throughout," Mello said.

Mello said he talked with Covalenka in the first week of November, in mid-November, and fast during the second week in December.

Otway said there now is "no contractual obligation to do the ... work."

"Several people said, hey, this could be misinterpreted," Otway said. The lab didn't want to "raise suspicion" that LANL was surreptitiously gathering information on activists, so the work was officially stopped "a couple weeks ago," Otway said.

A task order describing the contract said Benchmark should "attend the meetings of at least three environmental groups, and identify at least three key environmental activists. In a written report, identify the major environmental, health, safety, and health concerns that the groups in general, and the key activists in particular, might have regarding waste management activities at the laboratory."

After identifying the activists, Benchmark should meet with the activists and propose one-on-one meetings with the appropriate EM-7 management and technical experts.

Benchmark then should write a report "summarizing the information gained from these interactions," the task order said.

Another part of the order said Benchmark should do the same — identify, approach, and meet with environmental activists — at neighboring

pueblos.

The order said Benchmark should "contact a representative number" of activists at San Ildefonso, Santa Clara, Nambe, Tesuque, Pojoaque, Santo Domingo, and Cochiti pueblos.

Benchmark also is tasked with looking over the past public relations records of EM-7, and to "develop a written analysis of lessons that should be learned from these previous experiences."

The contract probably "came out of the lack of coordination and quality control" that SIO now is supposed to provide, Otway said. The Waste Management Group probably "didn't know that some of us were following interest groups and knew what their concerns were, and were engaged in long-term dialogue with the best intentions," Otway said.

Otway said Covalenka wrote a

draft report on Mello, but that it wouldn't be a part of any official report, and that Mello would be receiving a copy.

What Covalenka found "was essentially accurate and confirmed what we knew anyway," Otway said.

All Covalenka did was go to public meetings, listen to concerns, take notes, then then call up activists, tell what he was doing, and ask to talk with the activists, Otway said.

Rita Carnes, managing director of Benchmark Environmental Corp., said the 80-person Albuquerque-based company provides consulting services for technical and regulatory aspects of waste management, environmental management, and radiation safety issues. The company, which also has a White Rock office, contracts with several other clients besides LANL, she said.

# Lab cancels its contract to identify activists

By STEPHEN T. SHANKLAND  
Monitor Staff Writer

Los Alamos National Laboratory's Waste Management Group hired a contractor to attend meetings of environmentalist groups, then identify and approach "key environmental activists" in the groups and in surrounding pueblos.

The contract also said the contractor should meet with the activists, write a report, then "facilitate" meetings with the activists and Waste Management Group's technical experts and managers.

But because the action could be perceived as suspicious, the contract subsequently has been canceled, Stakeholder Involvement Office (SIO) Director Harry Otway said Wednesday.

The recently-formed SIO took over the contract from the Waste Management Group when some public involvement work at LANL was consolidated in SIO.

"I'm convinced there was no attempt to surreptitiously find out anything," Otway said. "It was a well-meaning attempt by technical people to find out what it was about their programs (that) people were concerned about. They sort of stumbled into it naively without (being aware of the) political pitfalls."

LANL's Waste Management Group (formerly EM-7 and now CST-7) contracted Albuquerque-based Benchmark Environmental Corp. to perform the work.

Under the contract, one person, Covalenka, approached

Asked why the lab would hire a third party to handle public interactions, Otway said the Waste Management Group probably thought the external group would be seen as more neutral and objective.

But Greg Mello of the Santa Fe-based Los Alamos Study Group, who met with Covalenka, said the contract either was a "dumb idea" with good intentions or else had a more nefarious purpose than just establishing a dialogue with activists.

Mello said Waste Management personnel already know who the activists are and could simply have called up and talked. Mello said simply talking during a long lunch is a direct way to communicate. "It's much superior, and quite bit cheaper," he said.

Mello said Waste Management Group personnel told him that the contract's purpose was to build trust, but, "Hiring an intermediary to talk to someone you already know is not a trust-building exercise," Mello said.

"It would be so much better to put that kind of effort into responding to the direct requests that we have made to them about what we think," Mello said.

On the darker side, Mello said the lab could be "utilizing a contractor to discover the strengths and weaknesses of environmental groups — what points of might be divisive within the community, what their resources are, what litigation might be planned. It would be very useful to know a great deal about the opposition," Mello said.

Covalenka's approach was above-

# LANL Gropes To Find a New Way

*Enchanted times*  
f/w 1993

by Mary Riseley  
Los Alamos Study Group

The Cold War may be over, but the war Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) has been waging for 50 years against the pristine environment of the Pajarito Plateau may be heating up.

Only last year Department of Energy facilities at LANL were placed fully under the jurisdiction of federal environmental laws that have governed you, me and private corporations since the Sixties. LANL's previous "culture" of unlimited federal dollars and environmental nonchalance in the name of "national security" does not square well with the newly mandated public responsibility, so lab officials are struggling to adjust

Here is an update.

**The Controlled Air Incinerator.** Located in a 20-year old building used until 1987 for research and development, the incinerator project is hiring new staff and drafting an Environmental Assessment (EA) due out in February 1994. A trial burn is scheduled for a year later. LANL hopes to begin burning 1,236 cubic feet of transuranic waste and 530 cubic feet of mixed waste per year at the Controlled Air Incinerator (CAI) by August 1995. This timetable assumes that the EA will yield a "Finding of No Significant Impact" ("FONSI," in bureaucratic parlance) relieving them of the responsibility to produce a full-blown Environmental Impact Statement rather than the cursory EA.

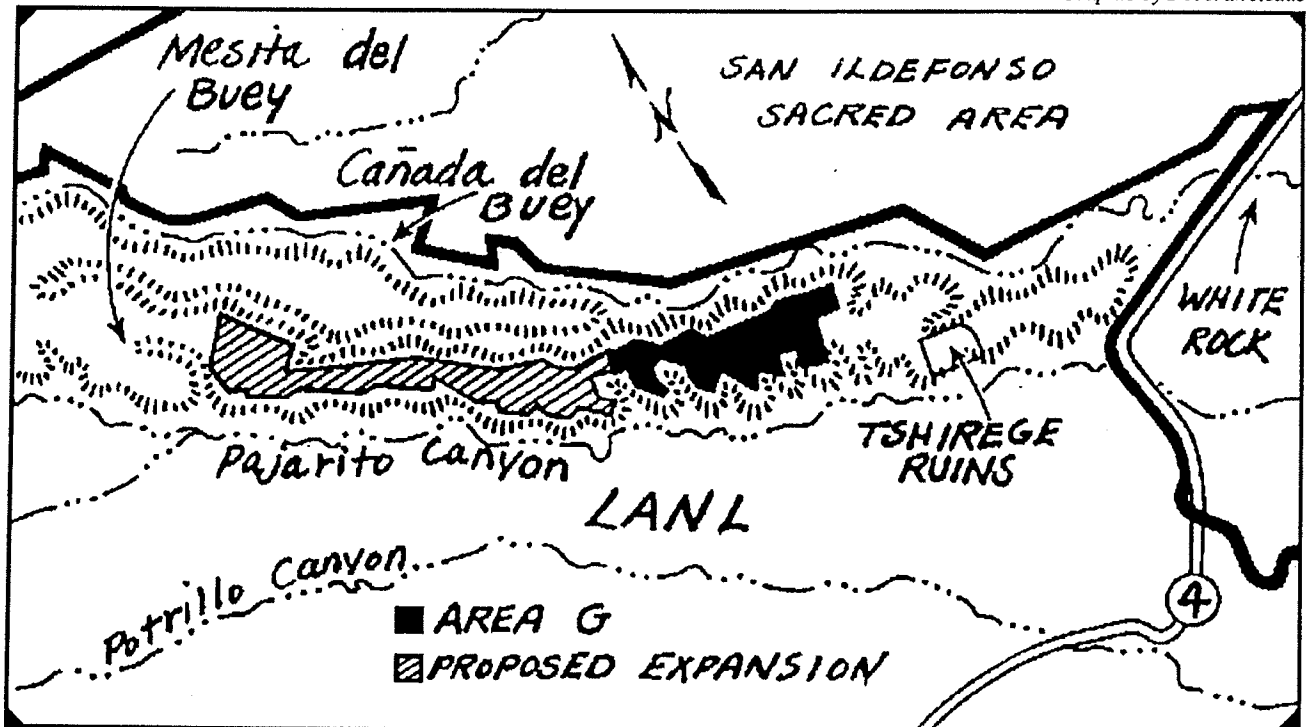
CAI Project Manager Kathryn Elsberry has said the incinerator is "the only option" for reducing the volume of LANL's legacy of wastes. It will take three years to incinerate all the backlog of thousands of barrels of waste. After that, CAI would be ready to take wastes from DOE weapons complexes around the nation.

Besides the hurdles posed by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the project still has to go through the permitting process at the state level for the Resource, Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA).

**Area G Expansion.** LANL's current radioactive dump lies immediately adjacent to Tshirege, the largest Anasazi ruin on the Pajarito Plateau. It began taking radioactive waste in 1957. Since 1971, 381,000 cubic feet of LANL-generated transuranic waste has been stored here; no one knows how much went in before 1971, since records are scanty. Wastes were just interred without liners or caps, in bulldozed pits.

None of this old waste meets acceptance criteria for the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant, so LANL hopes to build a new treatment facility, possibly on a site even nearer to Tshirege. The plan is to send one TRUPACT truck every other day from Area G to WIPP until 2013, and then one every two weeks indefinitely. It seems to be unthinkable that LANL might one day cease fathering radioactive waste! Right now annual rates of radwaste generation at LANL stand at 160,000 cubic feet of low level waste and 150 cubic feet of transuranic (TRU) waste.

Graphic by Deborah Reade

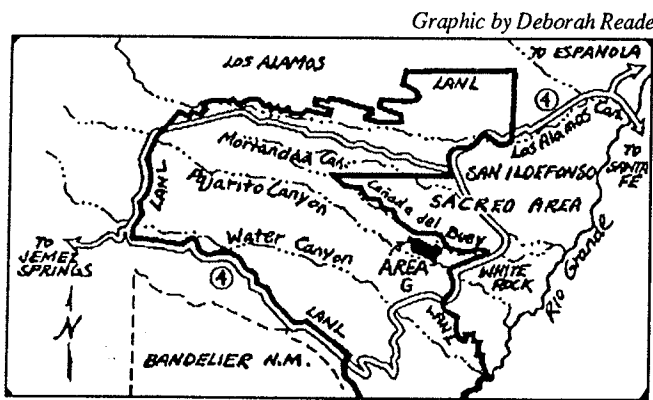




LANL's existing dump is expected to keep taking waste through late 1995, but that depends on what the clean up effort at Los Alamos discovers. Recently a building formerly used as a Catholic church in downtown Los Alamos was found to be sitting on 54 dump truck loads of soil contaminated from an old septic tank dating back to the Manhattan Project. It contained plutonium, americium, cesium and other lethal materials.

The EA for the Area G Expansion has been reviewed by DOE headquarters, and will soon be released to the N.M. Environment Department and various Pueblo governments before going out for public review and comment.

Herman Agoyo, executive director of the Eight Northern Pueblo Indian Council, recently showed up at a scheduled tour of Area G with his young son. LANL freaked, but the point was made. "If I'm safe here, why not Jordan? Are we really considering future generations as we handle these toxic materials?"



**The Mixed Waste Disposal Facility.** All mixed waste generated at LANL is currently stored on-site. LANL says this is due to lack of available treatment and disposal alternatives. This new dump would be twice the size of WIPP, to hold 475,000 cubic yards of mixed waste. It would be located on the south side of Pajarito Road where pits 2,000 feet long and 25 feet deep would be divided into 25,000 cubic yard segments.

The pits would be double-lined with an operational cover, leachate collection system and a RCRA-approved cap. There would be an on- and off-site monitoring system for air and water, pit leachate monitoring, and vadose zone monitoring. But RCRA only requires that the liner be monitored for 30 years.

The draft EA may be ready for internal review by January 1994. As with the CAI, the timeline for construction of this facility precludes preparation for a full EIS, they say.

This is a huge dump. Where are these wastes going to come from? Isn't the lab weaning itself from weapons production? How did DOE arrive at this estimated size if what is going to be buried here isn't already known? Will this site be receiving wastes from other DOE facilities?

**The Hazardous Waste Treatment Facility.** The EA for this project is in lag time, because of a recent decision to combine it with one for a proposed Mixed Waste Storage and Receiving Facility intended to serve as its staging area.

At present, hazardous wastes are shipped to off-site commercial facilities. Final designs for the new facility are slated for January 30, 1995. It will house the treatment processes for low level waste and whatever wastes are not amenable to off-site treatment or incineration.

Given all this new activity, does it strike you that LANL is unofficially positioning itself to become a major dumping ground and waste treatment facility for the entire nuclear weapons complex? The CAI burning wastes from Hanford and Savannah River, then vitrifying the ash for burial... where? At the Mixed Waste Disposal Facility? And we haven't even talked about the Accelerator Transmutation of Waste program which LANL is pushing hard and the price tag for which would be astronomical.

But LANL managers insist they want to do all this with public approval, or at least, acceptance. LANL is infected by the so-called "Keystone process" for public involvement. In fact, both DOE and LANL are talking about a citizen advisory process with a purview larger than just clean-up. The DOE Site Specific Advisory Board process would provide a budget of up to \$250,000 per year; the process mandates a self-selection element to comprise the board.

A first step in establishing such an advisory group for LANL was taken at an internal "brainstorming" session in late September. Attending were some 50 LANL and DOE personnel and four outside witnesses: Evelyn Vigil from the Los Alamos Monitor, Helen Stambro from the Los Alamos Working Group and two members of the Los Alamos Study Group.

The next step is for a parallel meeting or meetings to be held in northern New Mexico for member of the public at large to express their views. Selection procedures and draft charters from similar groups mandated at Hanford, Rocky Flats, Pantex, Oak Ridge and Savannah River have been obtained for review. Anyone interested in participating is encouraged to contact Christina Armijo at DOE-LAAO, 665-5025 or Harry Otway at LANL 665-4213.

Margaret Mead said long ago that only a small group of committed people could change the course of history. Where are we and what are we doing about this?

*Los Alamos Study Group is a member of the All Peoples Coalition.*