

## DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

March 16, 2007

**MEMORANDUM FOR:** J. Kent Fortenberry, Technical Director  
**FROM:** B. Broderick and C. H. Keilers, Jr.  
**SUBJECT:** Los Alamos Report for Week Ending March 16, 2007

**Transuranic Waste Operations:** LANL is past mid-way and largely on track to upgrade the waste repackaging facility (WCRR) and start remediating high-activity drums by May 1<sup>st</sup> (site rep weekly 2/23/07). This has been an intense, closely-managed campaign. Key milestones include: complete the safety basis review, procedures, and physical upgrades (e.g. seismic, vehicle barriers, transportainers) by Mar 31<sup>st</sup>; complete operator training (already started) by Apr 6<sup>th</sup>; complete the management self-assessment (MSA) and a separate contractor assessment in parallel, and federal and contractor readiness declarations by Apr 13<sup>th</sup>; complete the NNSA operational readiness review (ORR), which will have LANL-funded contractor participants, by Apr 26<sup>th</sup>; close findings and start up by May 1<sup>st</sup>.

May 1<sup>st</sup> startup is not assured; there are substantial parallel activities and a high reliance on NNSA approving exemptions to the startup order (DOE O425.1c), the facility safety order (DOE O420.1B), and the nuclear safety management rule (10 CFR 830) within the next few weeks. The startup order exemption involves accepting the parallel nature and rigor of the contractor readiness reviews. The facility safety order exemption involves accepting lack of fire suppression for concrete vehicle barriers and metal transportainers. The 10 CFR 830 exemption involves proceeding in advance of NNSA issuing a safety evaluation report (SER); NNSA expects to issue the SER in April and expects LANL to deliberately implement it, possibly but not necessarily by May 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Plutonium Facility (TA-55):** This week, TA-55 transferred caustic and acid liquid waste to the Radioactive Liquid Waste Treatment Facility (RLWTF) – the first such transfers since RLWTF completed its tank replacement outage (site rep weekly 2/23/07). The transfers were delayed because of configuration management and other issues at TA-55. After the transfers, TA-55 discovered localized contamination near transfer line connections in the basement, which is under investigation.

**Los Alamos Neutron Science Center (LANSCE):** On Mar 7<sup>th</sup>, a LANSCE worker alarmed the personnel contamination monitor (PCM) while exiting a contaminated area; a radiological control technician (RCT) responded but then left to support other operations, expecting a 2<sup>nd</sup> RCT to assist the worker; the worker decontaminated himself, processed through the PCM without alarm, and left the site. Due to mis-communication, there was no RCT followup. The next day, an RCT detected residual contamination on the worker's left wrist before he was scheduled to reenter the contamination area. As a precaution, a radiological assessment team deployed and found no contamination in the worker's vehicle or home. LANL is investigating the event, which released no contamination but has commonalities with the July 2005 Am-241 contamination event (site rep weeklies 7/29/05, 2/3/06).

**Quality Assurance:** This week, NNSA approved the LANL Quality Assurance Program, as submitted on Mar 2<sup>nd</sup> in accordance with the Nuclear Safety Management rule (10 CFR 830). NNSA expects LANL to implement compensatory measures and to submit a monthly status report until the plan is fully implemented (site rep weekly 11/24/06).

**Weapons Engineering Tritium Facility (WETF):** WETF resumed normal operations this week after completing a major ventilation upgrade (site rep weekly 11/3/06).