



Update for September 2005 CUCSA Meeting

During the summer of 2005, Los Alamos National Laboratory continued to focus on meeting programmatic milestones and implementation of safe and secure work practices.

On May 16, 2005, Robert Kuckuck took office as Director of Los Alamos National Laboratory and will serve through the remainder of the University's current contract to manage Los Alamos. The Director has extensive experience in the nuclear weapons complex, having worked at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory and the Department of Energy's National Nuclear Security Administration.

On his first day, the Director held an All Hands meeting where he presented his top three priorities for the next four to nine months. 1) He wants to improve the external perception of the Laboratory. To accomplish this, improvements in safety, security, business, and operations must continue and LANL's outstanding work in science must be fostered. 2) He wants to create an atmosphere of trust, respect, civility, and communication. 3) Finally he will address employees' concerns and uncertainty about the Laboratory's future. One of his first actions was to obtain approval from UC and DOE for an Alternative Work Schedule which will be activated by mid September. He has held two off-site meetings with senior leaders to plan and prioritize work for the next four to nine months.

LANL has made significant accomplishments in achieving programmatic deliverables. All FY05 programmatic deliverables and commitments are expected to be met because of the continued hard work and dedication of LANL employees.

A major weapons programmatic accomplishment was in support of the W76 warhead. The W76 warhead will continue to constitute a significant portion of America's nuclear deterrent well into the 21st century. To ensure the continued safety, security and reliability of this component of the stockpile, LANL is engaged in a major life Extension Program. Critical to that effort was the successful execution of two hydrodynamic shots: 3625 on April 1, 2005 and 3612 on June 29, 2005. Hydroshot 3612 resulted in full return of data from one of the most complicated hydrotests ever conducted at the Dual Axis Radiographic Hydrodynamic Test (DARHT) Facility. Among the many diagnostic tools fielded for the shot, in addition to the radiography machine, were several hundred precisely aligned electronic pins, an electronic framing camera, neutron generator monitors, temperature monitors, a high-explosive microwave interferometer and Manganin pressure gauges. Researchers are using the results from this hydrotest series to improve the quality of the final, war-reserve components. Successful execution of both hydro experiments has kept the NNSA W76 First Production Unit on track and has established the highest possible level of confidence in the data and computer models for final certification of the refurbished W76. All of which has increased NNSA Headquarters and Department of Defense customer confidence in LANL.

On Friday, August 26, eight individuals, seven small teams and seventeen large teams received Distinguished Performance Awards in a presentation hosted by Director Kuckuck. The recipients and their families were honored at a reception following the ceremony. Individual recipients included personnel from a wide range of disciplines including chemistry, weapons design and engineering, space science, science support and physics. As an example, the Libya Rollback large team was recognized for sending technical teams to Libya in 2004 to provide assistance in terminating and dismantling its weapons of mass destruction programs and to verify that Libya could not reconstitute the threat. A recent agreement between Libya's National Bureau of Research and Development and the National Nuclear Security Administration will continue to involve Los Alamos in an ongoing relationship with Libya by providing technical collaborations and support.