NNSA approves LANL workforce reduction plan

March 1, 2012

Program opens March 5, ends April 5

LOS ALAMOS, New Mexico, March 1, 2012—A plan to reduce the Laboratory workforce by between 400 and 800 employees this spring through a voluntary separation program has been approved by the National Nuclear Security Administration, LANL Director Charlie McMillan announced today.

Eligible employees from the regular workforce of about 7,600 may begin applying for voluntary separation on March 5. The process is scheduled to complete with employees departing by April 5.

“We’re very pleased with NNSA’s quick approval of the plan,” McMillan said. “Taking this action now mitigates the risk of involuntary layoffs and helps shape the Lab to complete our missions in the coming years.”

The plan calls for a severance package based on years of service, ranging from 1 to 39 weeks.

Other important aspects:

- About 7,600 regular employees are eligible for the program. About 3,500 students, postdocs, term employees, and skilled craft employees are not.
- Certain essential job functions are excluded from the program.
- Some applications may be denied to maintain a sufficient level of skills.
- An existing council of senior managers will continue other aggressive cost-curbing measures.

“We feel that this action is the best way to preserve the greatness of the Lab in uncertain economic times,” McMillan said. “We’ve been through challenges before in this Lab’s nearly 70-year history, and our first priority has always been to our national security missions and the science that drives them. At the same time, this program is the least disruptive to employees and the local economy.”

Community forums scheduled

Also today, the Lab announced that it will hold community forums in Northern New Mexico to answer questions at the following times and locations:

- March 12, Pojoaque, 6-7:30 p.m., Cities of Gold Conference Center
- March 13, Española, 6-7:30 p.m., Northern New Mexico College Performing Arts Theatre
- March 14, Los Alamos, 6-7:30 p.m., Duane Smith Auditorium

The Lab announced on February 21 it had submitted the workforce reduction plan to NNSA. The Lab’s fiscal year 2012 budget is more than $300 million lower than 2011—$2.2 billion versus $2.55 billion. Future budgets are expected to be flat or lower.