

volume 4 number 1

the laboratory connection

your community's link
to information, opportunities, and people
at Los Alamos National Laboratory

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a word from the Community Relations Office

Putting up a new building is an enormous undertaking involving the coordinated efforts of hundreds of workers. The Laboratory has been extremely successful in seeing several recent construction projects to near completion both under budget and ahead of schedule. Associate Lab Director for Operations Jim Holt said that while the pace of new projects may be slowed somewhat in the new year, he expects both new construction and infrastructure upgrades to continue.

"The Lab is undergoing a significant increase in upgrade and new construction projects to improve our aging infrastructure," he said. "The Congressional Continuing Resolution will have an effect on the amount of construction we can do this fiscal year, but the long-term picture is good for continued improvements."

At the same time, the Facility and Waste Operations Division (FWO) has launched an initiative to revitalize the facility management process at the Lab. One goal of the initiative is to consolidate building-related maintenance functions by bringing the people who perform them under its wing.

"Working closely with our customers, we intend to take a more business-like approach to running our facilities and managing their assets," said FWO Director Tony Stanford. "Keeping costs under control through reduced down time, improved responsiveness, and generally doing more with our resources will allow us to provide an improved work environment and give us a competitive edge."

NISC Building Showcases Lab's Project Management



The NISC building was erected in 21 months and used 7,500 cubic yards of concrete, 924.32 tons of structural steel, and 370 tons of rebar. The project, which at its peak had 250 workers on site, had 390,000 hours of work without one lost work day. It was completed seven weeks ahead of schedule and saved the taxpayers \$9M.

Still ahead of schedule and saving the taxpayers \$9 million, the Nonproliferation and International Security Center (NISC) project wrapped up the year with an excellent safety record and without a single lost-workday injury. William H. Hamilton, Jr., the project manager, credits the team's dedication to both safety and excellence.

"Hensel Phelps has been outstanding throughout this project and the most important thing is that we're all working safely and having fun," Hamilton said. "The new laboratories and security facilities will make a real difference in the scientific work the Laboratory is able to conduct for our customers, and occupants will have an attractive and comfortable facility to come to each day."

In early December, the NISC Family Day provided employees from the groups that will reside in the new facility and members of their immediate families a chance to visit the new building. About 200 people attended the Sunday open house.

"We expect to finish about seven weeks early, and start moving people into the facility in March," said Roger Stutz, the project's

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Nonproliferation and International Security Division (NIS) liaison. “We should complete the personnel moves by July. This facility will provide very nice space for NIS and will allow us to consolidate some of our very widespread operations.”

The NISC project, which is co-located with the Metropolis Center, was one of the first major Laboratory construction projects to successfully use formal project management to maintain project scope, schedule, and budget. The early completion of this project and the money savings underscore two of the Laboratory’s operational

goals: management excellence and facility modernization.

“The NISC construction project is moving into its final stages, and the success of the project is evident in the beautiful building,” said J. Cliff Giles, Deputy Division Leader of NIS. “The challenge remaining—and it is an immense one—is getting the special security provisions of the building certified by the Department of Energy, successfully executing a readiness assessment for the radiological laboratories in the building, and then getting over 400 people moved into the building next spring with minimal disruption to the very

important jobs that they are doing for our nation.”

The 163,375-square-foot facility will house many of the nuclear safeguards, nonproliferation and weapons-assessment functions of the NIS. About 465 staff members from seven groups within the Division, as well as staff from Facility Management will occupy the new building.

The NISC will also house nine laser labs, 10 nonproliferation labs, 400 technical staff offices, 41 offices for group management, and 60 student offices.

Laboratory's Childcare Center Project Moves Forward

Childcare has been an issue for Laboratory employees for more than 25 years, but it's only been in the past couple of years that the Lab has begun looking at establishing a childcare center for its employees and contractors. “In the past, however, it was viewed primarily as a personal issue rather than as employment issue,” said Helga Christopherson, Director of Human Resources. This perspective on the Lab’s sponsoring a childcare center has changed over time because employees’ expectations have changed and because the Lab has been involved in a large recruitment effort.

“A childcare center is part of the Lab’s overall strategic plan because it supports hiring, retention, and employee morale goals,” said Christopherson. “Right now we have a lot of our technical employees who are closer to retiring than to having children but we expect that to change in the next few years as we continue hiring entry-level people to support our mission – the very people likely to have children. We don’t want to lose an important hire

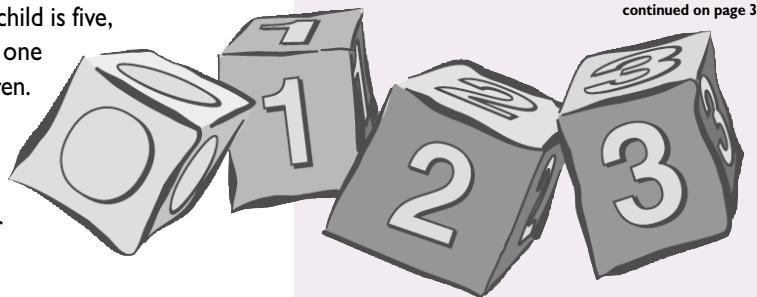
because of a lack of support for families with young children.”

At the same time, she said, the Lab is conscious of the fact that the facility could impact providers in the surrounding community. “Based on our research, a greater number of children need childcare than is currently available locally, and we’re seeking to fill that gap for our employees. We’re also looking primarily at children whose needs aren’t currently being met, namely preschool drop-ins and children under the age of two.” “Preschool centers in Los Alamos don’t offer drop-in care, and care for children under age two can be very expensive because the child to adult ratio has to be so low,” she said. For instance, New Mexico regulations require one adult per six children who fall into the age category of six weeks through 24 months old. By the time a child is five, the ratio drops to one adult per 15 children.

The Lab isn’t planning on running the center

itself but hiring a contractor with childcare experience. The Lab’s current request for proposal outlines a pilot program for 50 children up to six years of age. “We’ve had feedback from some providers that they’re concerned they won’t be able to compete with the Lab on salaries and tuition but we do plan on ensuring that the childcare rates and caregiver salaries are comparable to rates and salaries of other providers in town. Our goal is to overall provide more childcare slots in town, not to just move them from one provider to another.” Christopherson also indicates that the Lab’s biggest ongoing concern for the center is staffing—the same concern that many of the local providers have. “In fact, we may be able to help all providers in town as we seek to attract qualified

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caregivers to this part of Northern New Mexico. Not only is the Lab looking to partner with other providers on training for caregivers, we're also concerned with transportation issues. There are only so many caregivers in Los Alamos, so as soon as you look outside of the immediate area, transportation can become an issue," said

Christopherson. "It makes sense to look at solutions for all providers, not just the Laboratory."

"We're still working with issues of where the center should be and who the provider should be—and all of this will affect the opening date—but we intend to

keep people informed as we move forward."

To keep up to date on the status of the childcare center, the Lab has <http://www.lanl.gov/orgs/dvo/dependent/lanlchildcareupdate.html> on the web.

Lab Staff Hold Seats on Several Local School Boards

Los Alamos School Board member Mary Erwin will be among key decision makers determining whether a Lab childcare center will be located on property owned by the Los Alamos Schools. Chief of staff for the Laboratory's Business Operations Division, Erwin has been on the board for nearly two years, and this is the first issue where she has been acutely aware that she must wear two hats.

"It is awkward sometimes because I know and work with Lab staff who are very involved with the childcare initiative and information sharing can be difficult," she said. "Under the state's Open Meetings Act, school board members can't discuss a decision like this except as a board, and sometimes I have to remind my co-workers of that."

But for the most part, Erwin believes that being a Lab employee has been a plus in attempting to bring the two parties to the table.

"I believe I have been able to facilitate some movement," she said. "In a couple of instances, I heard that the Lab wanted information and I asked (LA Schools Superintendent) Jim Anderson to call and follow up. We certainly don't want to look like the problem, and for us it is really a business decision. It's about money for the schools, and supporting the Lab the best we can."

Erwin is the mother of four children, two of whom attended Los Alamos schools

from elementary through high school. She had always followed school board activities, but only attended a few meetings when she heard of an impending board vacancy two years ago.

"It's easy to sit back and criticize instead of being part of the solution," she said. "There wasn't any issue I was too concerned about, but I knew that some of the teachers had felt under siege, and I wanted to be a positive influence. And running for school board was relatively easy because there's very little competition so I didn't have to politick."

Erwin said the Lab gives her 12 community service days each year, but that she hasn't

needed to use them all because school board meetings are typically in the evening.

"Sometimes I will miss a meeting while on travel, but I have to consider my job first," she said. Erwin recently became chief of staff for her division and now has less flexibility in her job, but said her supervisors and co-workers understand the importance of what she is doing.

"I'm fortunate because the people I work with have the institutional picture," she said. "Managers should be educated to support community service, and employees should realize that they must go above and beyond where they can to compensate for that flexibility."

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Lab Manager Mary Erwin was elected to the Los Alamos School Board two years ago. Two of her four children attended the LA schools from elementary through high school.

New Emergency Operations Center Scheduled for Early Completion

The completion of the new Emergency Operations Center (EOC) showcases the Lab's success in project management and facility modernization, in line with its goal of successfully using formal project management to improve performance on major construction projects and maintain these projects on scope, on schedule, and within budget.

The University of California, on behalf of the United States Department of Energy (DOE), selected The Austin Company to design, engineer, and construct the \$21.5 million joint Los Alamos National Laboratory/Los Alamos County EOC. The Austin Company's Western Region, based in Irvine, California, is managing the design-build portion of the project.

"The Lab's EOC will be one of the best in the nation—it will be state-of-the-art," said Keith Orr, the project manager. "We've toured Emergency Operations Centers in several states and have spoken with project managers from across the nation. Hands down, the new EOC will be the best I've seen or heard about."

The two-story, 38,000-square-foot facility is part of the Cerro Grande Rehabilitation Project, which was launched in response to the destructive wildfires in Northern New Mexico during the summer of 2000. The building will serve as the command center for all emergency agencies in the event of an emergency. The facility will also house the county's police, fire, medical, and 911 dispatchers on a full-time basis.

The project is on track to set a new record at the Laboratory for efficiency in design/building. The project team expects an early completion of August 2003. "From inception to completion, the project will be completed in less than three years. I'm not sure if a project of this magnitude and with this many stakeholders has ever been

executed this quickly at the Laboratory," Orr said.

The NNSA gave its approval to proceed with the design and construction of the project, and preconceptual work began in September 2000. Holmes and Narver/Raytheon, a local Architect/Engineering firm, completed the conceptual design of the facility and The Austin Company was selected in September of 2001. Construction began in January 2002.

"It's not just a facility—it's a combination of a facility and all of the capabilities that the Cerro Grande Fire Recovery Project (CGRP) has put in place," Orr said. "It's truly a cooperative EOC because it has the space and resources to house representatives from the Neighboring Pueblos, the FBI, DOE, FEMA, the State Police, Los Alamos County Police, Firefighters and Emergency Managers, the Red Cross, the National Guard and others."

The new EOC will provide enhanced command and management capabilities, including a command center with a state-of-the-art video display "situation wall," as well as an integrated 911-dispatch center.

The facility features full self-support capabilities, including standby power generation, a reserve potable water supply, kitchen and sleeping facilities, and related capabilities to independently sustain uninterrupted operations for 14 days.

From within the center, emergency managers will be able to observe conditions and gather information from fixed camera locations as well as from helicopter and fixed-wing aircraft mounted



A concrete pump truck pours the roof of the new EOC, while the crane in the background places electrical equipment. The underground utilities subcontractor, the TLC company, installed the water line in the location where it will connect with the emergency fire protection water tower tank.

cameras and detection equipment. Detection equipment can also be deployed remotely, using a robot, and monitored from the EOC. Response vehicles can be tracked using Automatic Vehicle Locating (AVL) equipment in conjunction with the Global Positioning System (GPS). Information regarding vehicle location, hazardous materials locations, and best route to respond are brought together in the EOC through the Data Mirror/Max Responder capability. Additionally, Emergency Managers will be able to keep the public informed using both permanently mounted signs and in-place video editing/public communications tools that are linked to local television and radio stations.

"Communications is the key to any emergency management situation," Orr explained. "Aside from the vast communications capability in the facility itself, the Cerro Grande Rehabilitation Project has put in place the capability to effectively manage emergencies remotely. The combination of the Mobile Command Center and the Mobile Communications Van facilitate multiband radio as well as voice and digital satellite communications from virtually anywhere in the area."

When complete, the new EOC will house

Emergency Operation Center
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the offices of the Laboratory's Emergency Management and Response staff administrative staff; as well as personnel from the Los Alamos County Police, Fire, and 911 Joint Dispatch Center.

"Our ability to stay ahead of schedule wouldn't have been possible without the help and support of the Cerro Grande Project team, including the Construction Project Manager Keith Orr, Angela Thomas and Jeff Schroeder," said Brad Pomeroy, The Austin Company's on-site Construction Supervisor.

Ken Stone, the vice president and manager of operations for The Austin Company's Western Region said that Austin's EOC Team is impressed with the Lab team's commitment to quality and partnering. He said that even though this is the company's first project at the Lab, it is going so well that they have responded to requests for proposals on additional projects.

"Our expectations have been exceeded. We've been really pleased with the commitment to teamwork. When we run into a problem, we work together to get things resolved, without compromising the

project specifications, then move forward." Stone explained. "Everyone has a job to do, but you can still do that job while working as a team. It makes the entire effort a positive experience."

Another area of accomplishment is The Austin Company's commitment to the Northern New Mexico Initiative of subcontracting work to local businesses.

"The Austin Company held a subcontractor fair in Pojoaque and from there hired several local firms," said Lorraine Lucero, the business division contract administrator. "They advertised in the local papers and several subcontractors representing different trades responded. It was something that was very effective."

Lucero explained that the Laboratory serves as the intermediary between the prime contractor and the local firms to let them know about the opportunities that are available. She cited an example of one Española business in particular that received a large enough subcontract that it was able to buy a new truck and hire one additional employee.

"This is an accomplishment, not a goal," she said.

The Austin Company has also reached out to Northern New Mexico by providing direct job opportunities to local trades-people, providing educational development and scholarship programs for New Mexico high school and college students and developing building trades apprenticeship positions. These positions are funded by The Austin Company and the subcontractors.

"The Austin Company has done this before across the country. This is a perfect opportunity to further develop trade skills that carry an individual for the rest of their work career," Stone said. "On the scholarship side, we are supporting and developing students studying within the engineering-related fields so they can ultimately give back to the profession and their communities."

"We hope to become a familiar face around the Laboratory," Stone said.

The Austin Company will be celebrating 125 years of continuous business next year.

Science on Wheels Travels Miles to Reach Out to Kids in Northern NM

Science on Wheels program coordinators Bettie Bedell and Elizabeth Watts travel all over northern New Mexico twice a week to show elementary and middle school students that science is fun. This year's program started on October 17 and as of December 9, Bedell and Watts had reached 1,505 students and traveled 841 miles. The mileage includes visiting schools in Taos, Tierra Amarilla, Hernandez, Española, Santa Fe, Pojoaque, and Los Alamos. Last year, the Science on Wheels program reached more than 3,500 students at 40 northern New Mexico schools.

During December 2002, the two Bradbury Science Museum employees were scheduled to visit Mountain Elementary in Los Alamos, E. J. Martinez Elementary School in Santa Fe, Alameda Middle School in Santa Fe, Barranca Mesa Elementary School in Los Alamos, and San Juan Pueblo Elementary School in Española. This popular program was completely booked for the entire 2002-2003 school year on the first day of registration on September 9th. For more information about the Bradbury Science Museum Science on Wheels Program, please call Bettie Bedell at 505-667-8676 or Elizabeth Watts at 505-667-3157.



Schoolboard
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Pojoaque School Board member Reuben Roybal is a 22-year Lab employee who works as a computer network security analyst. Now finishing his first term, Roybal said his district has some particularly daunting challenges.

“We can’t keep math and science teachers because we have two big competitors right next door,” he said. “The Los Alamos Public Schools pay 12 to 14 percent more, and certainly teachers are lured away by the higher salaries.”

Roybal said that sometimes these teachers go to work at the Lab as staff members or technicians.

“The scientists who built the Lab and still do the majority of the science here no longer live and educate their children exclusively in Los Alamos County,” he said. “I think it’s important to stress that we are all neighbors here, and all of our children will be the Lab’s future scientists and technicians and support personnel.”

During his tenure, Roybal has fought to offer more college prep courses at Pojoaque High School, but has found it to be an uphill battle.

“Teachers have to be certified to teach AP courses and must be willing to go through that process,” he said. “And students must sign up for the classes and also take the AP tests. Until very recently, only a small percentage of our students were taking the tests. Last year, we received a grant to support student funding for these tests and this is slowly helping to improve our AP outlook.”

Roybal’s other goal is to see a streamlined math curriculum for students from kindergarten through high school.

“It will take community input and teacher and budget stability, but we’re going to focus our efforts on bringing about a

streamlined, seamless curriculum to develop students’ math skills,” he said. “The caliber of students we have at Pojoaque is unmatched elsewhere in the state. But our resources have failed those students.”

Eventually, Pojoaque hopes to be included in the Math and Science Academy program now in its third year at Española Valley Middle School. In the meantime, Roybal urged all Pojoaque parents to take an active interest in their children’s education. He said he had three children in the Pojoaque Schools when he ran for his school board seat. He added that the Lab has been “generous and understanding” during his term of office.

Española School Board member James Esparza agreed. An explosives technician, he has been a contractor with the Lab for 15 years, and on the school board for two.

“I have wonderful supervisors who understand that I need to go to meetings and conferences,” he said. “I have gotten both encouragement and positive feedback.”

Esparza said the Lab plays an important role in northern New Mexico’s educational



Reuben Roybal, a computer network security analyst for the Lab, is finishing his first term on the Pojoaque Valley School Board. He has fought to offer more college prep courses at Pojoaque High School.

network, through the Math and Science Academy, tutoring programs and gifts of equipment and other resources.

“Before I was on the school board, I never understood how important the Lab is to our efforts,” he said. “The Lab provides jobs, mentors our youth and provides so many excellent programs, particularly through the Los Alamos Laboratory Foundation. They really go above and beyond.”

Lab Recruiters Give Hand Up to Laid-Off SF Machinists

When a small Santa Fe company shut its doors recently, the Lab responded quickly to help find positions for its laid-off employees. FlowServe, which manufactured industrial pumps, had 52 employees, most of them machinists. Many of them had worked at FlowServe for more than 20 years.

The Lab’s recruiting team organized a job fair to allow former FlowServe staff to meet Laboratory hiring officials and discuss employment opportunities. Twenty-three individuals attended the job fair, where they met with human resources staff and managers from the Engineering Sciences and Applications Division. Resumes for the candidates were also sent to hiring officials in three other divisions that regularly hire machinists, inspectors, and managers. The job seekers were also provided with a list of the 17 machine shops throughout the state that do contract work for the Lab.

Many of the workers were grateful for the Lab’s assistance. In an e-mail sent to the recruiting team after the job fair, one candidate expressed appreciation for the opportunity to meet with the hiring managers, saying it was “uplifting for me. Thank you for the opportunity to be heard. Thank you for caring. It means a lot, especially now.”

Local Leaders Hold Positive View of Many Lab Programs

Los Alamos National Lab recently completed its fifth annual community leaders' survey, designed to take the pulse of how leaders in northern New Mexico think the Lab is doing in various areas. The survey also tracks leaders' critical issues so improvements can be made in the Lab's performance and understanding of community concerns.

The survey, conducted by Research and Polling, Inc. on behalf of the Lab's Community Relations Office, received 238 community leaders' opinions on issues connected to the Lab's operations. The 22 questions covered everything from the Lab's efforts to purchase goods and services in northern New Mexico to the level of satisfaction with the LANL Foundation. Those polled included leaders in the areas of business, education, and special interest groups as well as local, national and tribal governments.

The survey had 378 contacts – down only three from last year's high of 381 – and a 63 percent response rate, tied with the 2000 survey for the highest response rate.

Overall, the impression of the Lab is at its highest point in the survey's five-year history with 73 percent of respondents rating the Lab as favorable. That compares with responses in the low sixties for the past three years and in the high fifties for 1998. Also, the Lab is perceived as having a positive financial impact in northern New Mexico with 79 percent of community leaders satisfied with the overall impact of the Lab on the local economy.

Community leaders also rated the Lab favorably for its efforts to listen to the concerns of the community (68 percent), efforts to provide equal employment for qualified candidates (66 percent) and in the educational programs offered (58 percent).

Of those expressing opinions, partnerships with the schools and education agencies were viewed as the most effective with 64 percent rating themselves as satisfied. People also seemed comfortable with the effectiveness of Lab partnerships with the business community (55 percent thought the partnerships were effective) and local governments (59 percent). In other areas, respondents were unsure how the Lab was doing – or wouldn't say. While 47 percent of community leaders thought the Lab is effective in partnering with state government agencies, a full 36 percent fell into the "Don't know/Won't say" category. Tribal representatives, however, have a positive impression of the Lab with 70 percent rating the Lab as favorable with the remaining 30 percent rating their impression as neutral.

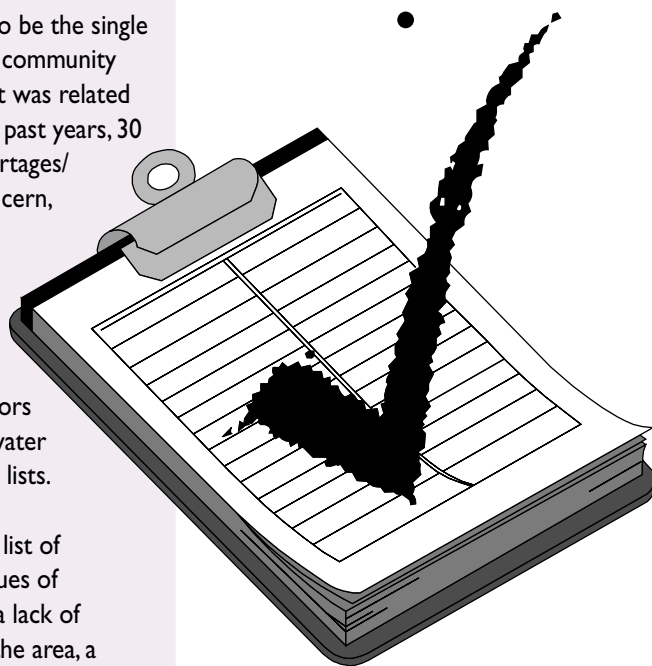
Anderman said that respondents were asked what they perceived to be the single biggest problem facing their community this year – whether or not it was related to the Lab. In a change from past years, 30 percent indicated water shortages/reserves as their biggest concern, compared with only seven percent in the 2000 survey. This change may stem from the three years of drought in northern New Mexico as well as other factors that have currently moved water issues to the top of people's lists.

While water issues lead the list of concerns this year, other issues of continuing concern include a lack of economic diversification in the area, a regionally poor education system and illegal drug use.

Survey results suggest that while the Lab continues to enjoy a positive impression

with almost three out of four community leaders it still has areas for improvement including communication. Sixty-nine percent of community leaders indicated satisfaction with LANL communication, 27 percent said they were dissatisfied. The number of "Don't know/Won't say" responses for some newer lab initiatives also indicates that the Lab has an ongoing challenge in communicating its activities to local communities. This publication is one attempt to bridge that communication gap.

The Lab welcomes your suggestions on how we can improve communication with the surrounding communities. We would also be interested in what type of stories you would like to see in this publication. Send your comments to community@lanl.gov or call us at 1-888-841-8256 toll free.



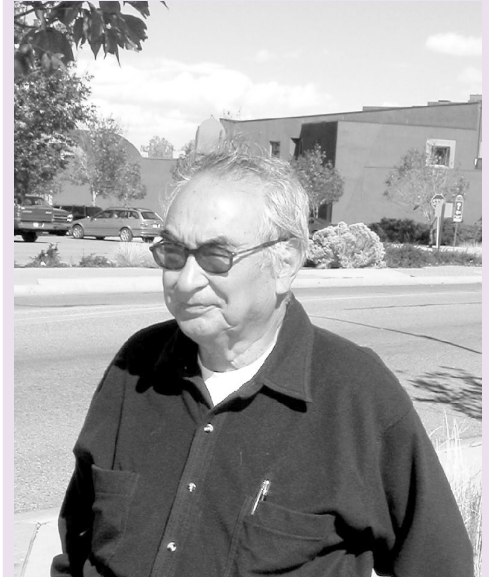
Longtime Lab Physicist Fred Begay Honored by UNM

Dr. Fred Begay, a nuclear physicist and technical staff member at Los Alamos National Laboratory, was recently honored with a 2002 UNM Alumni Association Zia Award, awarded to UNM graduates who have established distinguished careers in science, public service, and education. Now working in the Laboratory's Community Relations Office, Begay earned a Bachelor of Science degree in physics and mathematics in 1961, a Master of Science degree in physics in 1963, and a PhD in nuclear physics in 1972.

Begay joined the Laboratory's laser program in 1971 and has been the subject of newspaper and magazine articles and documentaries produced by Public Television and the British Broadcasting Company.

He has worked with such science luminaries as Hans Bethe, Stirling Colgate, Bruno Rossi, Wolfgang Panofsky, and the late Glenn Seaborg. He is the Assistant for Science and Technology to the President and Vice President of the Navajo Nation and president of the Seaborg Hall of Science, an independent, nonprofit institution for education and research. He also conducts one-day basic science classes at middle schools on the Navajo reservation.

The Lab's Tribal Relations Team Leader, Joe A. Garcia said, "It's gratifying to see others recognize what a unique resource Fred Begay is, both for Navajo youth and for the Laboratory's efforts to bring diversity to our scientific community."



Nuclear Physicist Dr. Fred Begay joined the Lab's laser program more than 30 years ago. He received a Zia Award from his alma mater, UNM.

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