

At Los Alamos, we are committed to safe, secure, and reliable weapons systems. This year, Los Alamos achievements in this area include the production, delivery, and certification of the first plutonium pits for acceptance into the nation's nuclear weapons stockpile in almost 20 years and the certification of the Laboratory's Dual Axis Radiographic Hydrodynamic Test facility.

DARHT facility declared fully operational by NNSA

The Laboratory's Dual Axis Radiographic Hydrodynamic Test facility is now fully operational, according to NNSA. The groundbreaking DARHT facility creates intense magnetic fields that accelerate electrons to extremely high energies and guide them to collisions with tungsten targets, generating x-ray bursts that can be used to create high-resolution digital images of intense hydrodynamic events such as implosions. Full-scale operations are slated for early fall.

Plutonium pits delivered, meeting key NNSA pit production milestone

The first plutonium pits—the triggers for thermonuclear weapons—certified for acceptance into the nation's nuclear weapons stockpile in almost 20 years were produced and delivered by the Lab's Plutonium Facility at TA-55. The nation lost its pit production capability when the Rocky Flats facility in Colorado closed in 1989. Re-establishing the capability at Los Alamos was a long, complex process, requiring the development of new production techniques, the qualification of new materials, and stringent analysis and testing to ensure—without nuclear tests—that the new series of pits would meet war-reserve requirements.

Assess the safety, reliability, and performance of LANL weapons systems

We constantly assess the nuclear weapons stockpile for safety, security, and reliability, maintain the stockpile through life extension, alternative design, pit manufacturing, and system surveillance, and endeavor to hire and keep the best technical experts in the weapons field.