Los Alamos National Laboratory acknowledged for progress in safety excellence by Department of Energy

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Lab is awarded VPP Merit status

LOS ALAMOS, New Mexico, August 4, 2010—Los Alamos National Laboratory has received Merit-level recognition from the Department of Energy as part of DOE's Voluntary Protection Program (VPP). Merit is a status for DOE contractors with highly effective safety programs who commit themselves to attain Star status within a five-year period. Star recognition is the highest achievement level and recognizes outstanding safety and health programs.

"We would like to congratulate you and the employees of Los Alamos National Security, LLC for your pursuit of excellence in safety and health and for achieving recognition at the Merit level in the Department of Energy Voluntary Protection Program," said Glenn

Podonsky, chief of health, safety, and security for DOE's Office of Health, Safety, and Security.

VPP status is based on an assessment of management commitment, employee involvement, worksite analysis, hazard prevention and control, and safety and health training.

Laboratory Director Michael Anastasio lauded the achievement of his colleagues. "We care about the safety of our people, especially since many contend with hazards every day. VPP Merit recognition validates the great strides we have made in safety so far and gives us important guidance for future improvements," he said.

"Rarely in my two decades at the Laboratory have I seen such synergism and contagious enthusiasm across the entire Lab as I have while leading the VPP safety program during its four-year duration," said Bethany Rich of the Laboratory's Environment, Safety, and Health Integration Office. "While we still have to continue to improve our safety performance, this Merit recognition demonstrates we have built a solid foundation."

To achieve Star status, the DOE assessment report indicates that improvement is still needed in key areas, such as worker involvement in safety programs and reducing injury rates.

"VPP is workers looking out for each other," said Billy Turney of the Lab's Subcontract Technical Representatives Group, chair of the Institutional Worker Safety and Security Team at Los Alamos. "Putting employees first, empowering them to have a greater voice on safety across the Lab and then acting on shared worker knowledge can be very powerful."

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Operated by Los Alamos National Security, LLC for the Department of Energy's NNSA