Los Alamos National Laboratory sponsors 15th Hazmat Challenge

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Competition tests skills of hazardous materials response teams

LOS ALAMOS, New Mexico, July 27, 2011—Twelve hazardous materials response teams from Missouri, New Mexico, and Oklahoma will test their skills at the 15th annual Hazmat Challenge August 2-5 sponsored by Los Alamos National Laboratory. The challenge provides hazardous materials responders the opportunity to network and learn new techniques under realistic conditions in a safe environment.Held at the Laboratory's Technical Area 49, the event challenges participants to respond to simulated hazardous materials emergencies involving a rail car, a clandestine laboratory, transportation and industrial piping scenarios, simulated chemical releases, and a confined space incident, said Chris Rittner of the Laboratory's Emergency Operations Division. The finale of the Hazmat Challenge is an obstacle course;

teams are graded and earn points based on their response skills.The Laboratory began the Hazmat Challenge in 1996 as a way to hone the skills of its own hazmat team members. The competition offers an invaluable training opportunity for other New Mexico and regional hazardous materials response teams. The winning team takes possession a travelling trophy, and the top three teams receive permanent trophies.Brief videos about the 2008 and 2010 Hazmat Challenge appear on the Laboratory's Web site and are some of the more popular shows on the Lab's YouTube channel.For more information on this year's challenge, contact either Rittner at crittner@lanl.gov or Rita Cordova at ritac@lanl.gov by email.