LANL exceeds Early Recovery Act recycling goals

March 8, 2010

More than 136 tons of metal saved from demolished buildings

LOS ALAMOS, New Mexico, March 9, 2009—Los Alamos National Laboratory announced today that Lab demolition projects under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act have recovered more than 136 tons of recyclable metal since work began last year, largely due to the skill of heavy equipment operators and efforts to gut the buildings before they come down. Some 106 tons of metal came from one large building alone, 16 tons more than the original estimate.

“Recycling metal from a demolition project reduces costs and cuts the amount of waste that goes to a landfill,” said Al Chaloupka, LANL’s demolition program director. “We put a lot of effort into getting metal separated from the debris and making sure it isn’t

contaminated so it can be recycled.”Under Department of Energy regulations, only metal from uncontaminated, nonradiological buildings can be recycled.

“Minimizing waste is an important part of our cleanup responsibilities,” said George Rael, Environmental Projects manager for the Los Alamos Site Office of the National Nuclear Security Administration. “It’s just as important as safely getting the waste to licensed disposal facilities.”

Los Alamos will demolish 21 Cold War-era buildings using Recovery Act funds provided through DOE’s Office of Environmental Management in July 2009. Nine uncontaminated buildings have been demolished since then. All are located in the Lab’s historic Technical Area 21, which supported plutonium production in the 1950s and 1960s as well as important nonweapons research.

LANL is hiring small-business subcontractors to perform the majority of the work, which includes weeks or months of building preparation and equipment removal prior to demolition.

Demolition of the first radiological building is scheduled to occur this April.