# Los Alamos scientists monitor Santa's magical journey

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LOS ALAMOS, New Mexico, December 21, 2011—Los Alamos trackers will use state-of-the-art technology to mark the course taken by St. Nick and his eight tiny and highly efficient reindeer. Visit http://santa.lanl.gov beginning at 6 a.m. December 24 to see his whirlwind journey.

"We expect Santa and his team to arrive in Northern New Mexico about midnight on Christmas Eve," said scientist Diane Roussel-Dupré of the Lab's Space Data Systems group. Roussel-Dupré was interviewed on this topic last year for The White House Blog.

Los Alamos supports Santa trackers at North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD), which has been following Santa's Christmas runs since the 1950s.

The Santa tracking program began in 1955 when a Sears, Roebuck ad included a misprinted phone number for Santa. Eager youngsters wishing to speak with Father Christmas instead were put through to NORAD's predecessor, the Continental Air Defense Command Operations Center, in Colorado Springs. Colonel Harry Shoup

asked his staff to monitor radar and provide children updates on Santa's location. That Santa-tracking tradition has been continued by NORAD ever since its formation in 1958. The program reached the Internet in 1998 and receives millions of visitors from hundreds of countries around the world.

Laboratory space scientists will use a combination of technologies to monitor Santa's progress as he speeds through the skies. They can call upon a satellite-tracking dish, located in Los Alamos, and use sensors on the Lab's FORTE and Cibola Flight Experiment satellites. The U.S. Air Force also will use its nine tracking stations around the world to help monitor Santa's trek.

In addition to the Lab's website, http://santa.lanl.gov, Santa's journey can also be followed by visiting www.noradsanta.org, through Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Flickr by typing @noradsanta into the search engine, by calling the NORAD Track Santa Hotline at 1-877-446-6723, or by emailing noradtrackssanta@gmail.com.

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