



Water towers demolished at TA-21

The Department of Energy's Environmental Management Program changed the skyline of Los Alamos recently when they toppled two water towers at Technical Area 21 (TA-21) in August.

"By bringing down these towers, we are making a noticeable difference in the landscape at TA-21," said Pete Maggiore, Assistant Manager for Environmental Programs at the Los Alamos Field Office. "This is another positive step toward eventual transfer of this area to Los Alamos County."

TA-21 was one of the early sites of the Manhattan Project and Cold War-era work at Los Alamos. It was the location of the world's first plutonium processing facility and where groundbreaking tritium research took place.

The towers will be dismantled and scrap material will be hauled to an Albuquerque salvage facility.

Demolition of the towers, one of them 66 years old and the other 38 years old, is one of several projects to remove remaining debris at TA-21 prior to transferring the site to Los Alamos County.



Workers watch while a water tower at TA-21 is brought down on Aug. 18.



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TRU Program demonstrates CMP retrieval

The LANL TRU Program is using equipment from the logging industry to demonstrate how they will retrieve corrugated metal pipes (CMPs) from Area G.

"We will use a 50-ton crane rigged with a remote-controlled hydraulic system that grabs a CMP and picks it up," said Charlie Johnson, LTP retrieval project manager. "Then we place it in cradle pallets on a work table and wrap the CMP with plastic."

The practice pipes are 20 feet long and filled with low strength grout so they simulate the 158 pipes filled with cemented transuranic waste buried at Area G. About 20 people are working on the demonstration project.

"The purpose of this exercise is to demonstrate our methodology and the equipment being used," Johnson said.



The crew places a demonstration CMP on the work table to be wrapped.



Two crew members help guide the rig by operating ropes called taglines.

Monsoons mean busy storm water season

Rain events during the monsoon season this year kept the storm water team hopping.

The monsoon season, which traditionally begins about July 1, delivered more rain to the Laboratory than in many previous years.

Precipitation rates in July were in the 99th percentile, approximately 250 percent of the average July precipitation compared to the last 10 years.

“More rain means more sample collection, inspections and maintenance of storm water controls,” said Project Manager Steve Veenis. “There was far more rain in July than we generally see so it was certainly a busy month for our team.”



The E050.1 gage station in Los Alamos Canyon measures storm water flowing at 7 p.m. (left) and one hour later at 8 p.m. (right).



Two workers examine the location for samples to be taken.

Cleanup project begins along upper truck route

Los Alamos National Laboratory’s Corrective Actions Program has begun a legacy-contaminant soil cleanup project at the former Technical Area 61.

Located on the south side of East Jemez Road adjacent to the county landfill, the project began on Aug. 11 and will last until mid-September. Crews will excavate about 120 cubic yards of soil contaminated with polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), which are common in industrial sites, from a utility corridor where a leaking transformer was staged in the past. The contamination is underground, covered with clean soil, and poses no human health risks.

“This is yet another step in a larger effort to clean up sites around Los Alamos that are more accessible to the public,” said Corrective Actions Program Director Dave McNroy. “We hope to increase this type of work during the next two years.”

Crews will use an excavator to remove contaminated soil and replace it with fresh fill. The work will occur behind temporary fencing and is not expected to impact traffic.

“We look forward to doing this work safely and returning the site in good environmental condition which will not restrict future use,” McNroy said.

Environmental exhibit opens at Bradbury Science Museum

A new exhibit on environmental research and monitoring opened Sept. 17 at the Bradbury Science Museum in Los Alamos.

The exhibit covers the extensive research being conducted by scientists to study and protect historic archaeological sites, local wildlife and fragile ecosystems.

The exhibit opened Sept. 17 and provides interactive opportunities for the public to learn how to identify ancient artifacts, wild animals and climate change patterns.

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