



EM Recovery NEWS FLASH

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Manhattan Project Truck Unearthed in Recovery Act Cleanup

Remnants of 1940s military truck buried in a Manhattan Project-era landfill

LOS ALAMOS, N.M. – A Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) excavation crew working on an American Recovery and Reinvestment Act cleanup project has uncovered the remnants of a 1940s military truck buried in a Manhattan Project landfill.

The truck was unearthed inside a sealed building where digging is taking place at Material Disposal Area B (MDA-B), the Lab's first hazardous and radioactive waste landfill. MDA-B was used from 1944 to 1948.

The rusting hulk is believed to be a Chevrolet military truck. It's barely recognizable, but a fender, an inline six-cylinder engine block, a steering column, and part of the cab are visible. The truck bed is missing — either still in the trench, or cut off prior to disposal.

According to persistent Lab legend, a truck used for the first atomic bomb test in 1945 near Alamogordo, New Mexico, was driven back to Los Alamos and buried at MDA-B. LANL officials say it could also be a truck that went from building to building, collecting trash from Manhattan Project labs.

"We may never know what the truck we found was used for," said Bruce Schappell, LANL's deputy associate director for Environmental Programs. "It's in pretty bad shape."

The truck will be crushed, packaged in a waste bin, and sent to a low-level radioactive waste disposal facility.

The six-acre site along DP Road in Los Alamos contains a series of trenches used to dispose of hazardous and non-hazardous trash from Manhattan Project labs and buildings. Excavation is scheduled for completion this summer. The trenches will be filled with clean soil and the site will be made available for reuse.

The project is funded by \$110 million from the Recovery Act.

“ It’s in pretty bad shape. ”

Bruce Schappell, LANL's deputy associate director for Environmental Programs, referring to the truck unearthed in the excavation of Material Disposal Area B



A member of a Los Alamos National Laboratory excavation crew inspects the remnants of a 1940s military truck unearthed at the Material Disposal Area B cleanup site.



The remnants of a truck uncovered from the Material Disposal Area B cleanup site is believed to be a Chevrolet pickup truck like the one pictured here.



The excavation of Material Disposal Area B is occurring inside large metal enclosures shown here.

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