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Public meeting will discuss vision document

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Contact: Linn Tytler, ltytler@lanl.gov, (505) 667-7000 (03-161)

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LOS ALAMOS, N.M., Dec. 23, 2003 -- Los Alamos National Laboratory and the Department of Energy's Los Alamos Site Office, will host a public meeting at 5 p.m., Wednesday, Jan. 7, 2004 at the Cities of Gold Hotel in Pojoaque to discuss the draft risk-based end-state (RBES) vision document.

The RBES vision describes site conditions that are protective of human health and the environment for the planned land uses in and around the Laboratory after the environmental restoration project completes its mission. The vision document is not a decision document; all current environmental laws and regulations will be followed in its implementation. The vision establishes a framework for accelerating completion of the remediation project at the Laboratory.

The Department of Energy's environmental management mission is to evaluate areas where past Laboratory practices have contributed to contamination in the environment. After evaluation, some sites require remediation or cleanup while others do not. In some cases the cleanup levels implemented at a site will support unrestricted land use, including residential use scenarios; in other cases levels will allow continued industrial use of the land. Remaining use will require institutional controls such as fences, land restrictions, etc.

The vision document also describes the types of controls that may be used to reduce the potential for exposures in areas where contamination may remain after cleanup. The Laboratory's goal is to ensure that risks from

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legacy waste sites are reduced or eliminated.

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The draft document describes a view of what end-state risks to human health and the environment may be 20 years after cleanup. The end-states are identified by:

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- Contamination levels that may remain following environmental restoration;
- Potential exposure pathways to humans, plants, and animals and locations where people might be exposed to contamination; and
- Future land use and exposure scenarios.

The RBES approach provides a way to ensure that there is a plan for the protection of the public after the environmental restoration project is complete, and that there are guidelines and requirements for long-term protection of human health and the environment.

The draft document, required by the Department of Energy's Policy 455.1, "Use of Risk-Based End-State," was completed Nov. 3 and is now being reviewed by the Department of Energy, the Laboratory and the Northern New Mexico Citizens Advisory Board. As part of the review process, public input is being sought through the Jan. 7 meeting. Written comments are being accepted through Feb. 27, 2004.

The Jan. 7 public meeting will include a poster session beginning at 5:15 p.m. and a formal presentation at 6 p.m., followed by an open question and answer session.

The draft vision document can be found at <http://erproject.lanl.gov/> online. Comments on the draft document can be mailed to the Remediation Services Project, P.O. Box 1663 MS M992, Los Alamos, N.M., 87545 or E-mailed to remediation@lanl.gov by Feb. 27, 2004.

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