Laboratory hosts 12th annual HAZMAT Challenge

July 14, 2008

LOS ALAMOS, New Mexico, July 14, 2008 — Fourteen teams are scheduled to participate in the 12th annual HAZMAT Challenge taking place July 15 – 18 at Los Alamos National Laboratory's HAZMAT Training Facility at Technical Area 49.

At the Laboratory-sponsored event, teams from New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Arizona demonstrate their hazardous materials response skills and learn new HAZMAT techniques under realistic conditions in a safe environment. Participants also get a chance to network with other hazardous materials professionals. "The HAZMAT Challenge is an event where you can have fun and forget you are learning at the same time," said Emergency Response Group Leader Jeff Dare, who is coordinating the event.

The first day of the Challenge, July 15, is training day, when teams have the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the props and ask questions. Teams compete on July 16 and 17, and the Challenge wraps up on July 18 with an obstacle course and awards.

News media interested in attending the HAZMAT Challenge should contact the Laboratory's Communications Office at (505) 667-7000 to make arrangements.

Old cars, trucks, tankers, and rail cars are some of the props used to mimic real-life hazardous material situations. Participants compete in chemical hazard identification, a complex valve tree, confined space rescue and procedure, compressed gas leaks, a leaking rail car dome, pressurized drum opening, a stinger operation, and a damming and diking exercise from an overturned tanker.

Last year's HAZMAT Challenge was won by Oklahoma's Midwest City Fire Department. More than 150 people participated including team players, evaluators, volunteers and sponsors, in addition to officials from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the U.S. Department of Transportation, the University of Oklahoma, and the New Mexico 64th Civil Support Team.

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