



# Los Alamos National Laboratory opens new waste repackaging facility

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## Box line facility is largest of its kind ever built

LOS ALAMOS, N. M., March 7, 2013—Los Alamos National Laboratory has brought a third waste repackaging facility online to increase its capability to process nuclear waste for permanent disposal.

The “375 box line facility” enables Los Alamos to repackage transuranic (TRU) waste stored in large boxes.

Built inside a dome once used to house containers of waste at the Laboratory, the facility is the largest Perma-Con© structure ever constructed. A Perma-Con© is a modular structure typically used for radiological or hazardous containment. Contaminated items such as equipment and protective clothing, used during past operations at Los Alamos, are removed from their containers inside the structure and then are repackaged for shipment to licensed, permanent disposal facilities.

The record-setting structure is 110 feet long by 48 feet wide.

“We needed to build a structure big enough to accommodate these waste boxes, some of which are 40 feet long,” said Jeff Mousseau, associate director of environmental programs at LANL. “These are the largest, most contaminated boxes of waste at Los Alamos, and this facility will give us the capability to repackage them safely.”

The Perma-Con© structure was provided by Radiation Protection Systems, Inc.

“The 375 box line facility is the largest, most technically challenging and complex containment facility RPS has produced to date,” said Bill Rambow, Radiation Protection Systems CEO. “The RPS team is very proud to have contributed to the LANL TRU waste disposal effort.”

The facility is part of an effort to accelerate removal of 3,706 cubic meters of TRU waste currently stored above ground at Los Alamos. As part of an agreement with the State of New Mexico, the National Nuclear Security Administration and the Laboratory have made removing this waste one of their top environmental priorities. In the first year of the accelerated work, Los Alamos shattered its former nuclear waste shipping records, with more than 230 waste shipments resulting in the disposition of 920 cubic meters of TRU waste.

“This new repackaging facility will allow us to dispose of even greater volumes of TRU waste during the coming months,” said Pete Maggiore, assistant manager for

environmental operations at the National Nuclear Security Administration's Los Alamos Field Office.

### **What is transuranic, or TRU, waste?**

TRU waste consists of clothing, tools, rags, debris, soil and other items contaminated with radioactive material, mostly plutonium. Transuranic elements such as plutonium have an atomic number greater than uranium, so they are labeled transuranic, for "beyond uranium" on the periodic table of elements.

About 90 percent of the current TRU waste inventory is a result of decades of nuclear research and weapons production at the Laboratory and is often referred to as "legacy" waste.

### **About Perma-Con® Modular Containment Structures**

The Perma-Con® structure built to process TRU waste at Los Alamos National Laboratory was provided by Radiation Protection Systems, Inc. A description of the modular enclosures, as well as company contact information, is provided [here](#).

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