
Crystal J. Rodarte-Romero—Engineering safer structures

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Keeping history intact

Not long after the Manhattan Project, the Los Alamos Canyon Bridge was erected, connecting the isolated small town to the Lab's technical areas. Also called the Omega Bridge, the steel arch stretches across a deep canyon that once contained the world's first enriched uranium reactor and is now home to wildlife in its watershed. Today, more than 13,000 people cross this bridge daily by bike, foot or car. And Crystal J. Rodarte-Romero's job is to ensure that the 63-year-old bridge remains safe.

The Lab's bridge engineer, Rodarte-Romero is a proud steward of the historic bridge (largest in the Energy Department's complex), honored to extend its life with design modifications and forthcoming modeling, including examining how the structure can withstand seismic shifts.

As part of the Lab's Civil, Structural, and Architectural (CSA) Team, she helps ensure that buildings, systems, utilities and infrastructure are designed and constructed to be safe.

The quest to become an engineer

Not long after high school, Rodarte-Romero began her engineering-degree quest. She knew she loved science, loved to build stuff and was good at math; thus, she said, it was engineering, and she now has a master's degree in it.

Recently named one of the Lab's Women Who Inspire, Rodarte-Romero volunteers extensively with organizations that promote science, engineering, math and computing education. She also donates her time to nonprofits that feed the hungry.

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