Los Alamos National Laboratory sponsors 14th Hazmat Challenge

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Competition tests skills of hazardous materials response teams

LOS ALAMOS, New Mexico, July 22, 2010—Fourteen hazardous materials response teams from New Mexico and Oklahoma will test their skills at the 14th annual Hazmat Challenge July 27-30 sponsored by Los Alamos National Laboratory. The challenge provides hazardous materials responders the opportunity to network and learn new techniques under realistic conditions in a safe environment.

Held at the Laboratory's Technical Area 49, the event challenges participants to respond to simulated hazardous materials emergencies involving a rail car, a clandestine laboratory, transportation and industrial piping scenarios, a simulated radiological release, and a confined space, said Chris Rittner of the Laboratory's

Emergency Operations Division. The finale of the Hazmat Challenge is an obstacle course; teams are graded and earn points based on their response skills.

The Laboratory began the Hazmat Challenge in 1996 as a way to hone the skills of its own hazmat team members. The competition now offers a training opportunity for other New Mexico and regional hazardous materials response teams. Winning teams receive a plaque.

A brief video about the 2008 Hazmat Challenge is one of the more popular shows on the Lab's YouTube channel.

For more information on this year's challenge, contact either Rittner at crittner@lanl.gov or Rita Cordova at ritac@lanl.gov by email.