

News about the Berkeley, Livermore and Los Alamos national laboratories, which are managed by the University of California for the U.S. Department of Energy

## RESEARCH AND PUBLIC SERVICE NEWS

### HEPATITIS C DATABASE AT

**LOS ALAMOS:** LANL scientists recently launched an Internet-based Hepatitis C virus genomic sequence database similar to the Laboratory's human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) database. The new database is expected to become an important tool for researchers. Transmitted principally via blood transfusions and intravenous drug use, the Hepatitis C virus is carried by an estimated 170 million people — about three percent of the world population — including four million in the United States. It is a major cause of acute hepatitis, cirrhosis of the liver and liver cancer.

### LBLN HELPS COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS USE LESS ENERGY:

Commercial buildings in California are beginning to use less energy, thanks to Berkeley Lab research in the High-Performance Commercial Buildings Project. The project was launched in 2000 in an aggressive effort to reduce long-term energy use by 70 percent in new commercial buildings, and 50 percent in major retrofits. Energy use in commercial buildings currently costs about \$10 billion a year — a third of all the electricity consumed in California. The project involved dozens of researchers at Berkeley Lab's Environmental Energy Technologies Division and at 13 partner organizations. It emphasized the application of information processing tools to help architects, contractors, managers and occupants design and operate buildings more efficiently by such methods as comparing facility operations against common standards, determining when retrofits were worthwhile, and deciding when to use outside air to save on air conditioning costs.

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## Message from the president

The University of California is continuing to take steps to strengthen its management and oversight of the UC-managed laboratories. In recent weeks, the University has appointed S. Robert Foley as vice president for laboratory management, strengthened the UC laboratory management organization, and established a Laboratory Management Council. These are all essential components to strengthening the UC laboratory governance model.

The latest action was taken this week when the University of California Board of Regents voted to create a National Security Laboratories Board of Directors. Reporting to the UC Board of Regents through the UC President, this Board will have significant authority and broad oversight.

Taken together, these steps will continue to strengthen the University's oversight and management of the Labs and is part of our ongoing commitment to ensure that the best and most effective university management is in place.

Since assuming the presidency on October 2, I have had the opportunity to visit two of our three national laboratories. My visits further underscore for me the tremendous work that the UC-managed labs are doing to ensure the safety and security of our nation. You all should take considerable pride in your contributions that, day in and day out, continue to keep the nation on the cutting edge of scientific and technological excellence.



Robert C. Dynes  
*President, University of California*



## MANAGEMENT NEWS

### Regents approve national security labs board

The University of California Board of Regents voted today to create a National Security Laboratories Board of Directors. The vote is the latest step reflecting the University's continuing commitment to improving management quality at the national security labs, said UC President Robert C. Dynes (see Message from the President, above.) Other recent actions include the appointment of S. Robert Foley as vice president for laboratory management and the announcement by Foley last week of a new management organization that includes a strengthened internal organization and a new UC Laboratory Management Council.

The National Security Laboratories Board of Directors will report to the Regents through the UC President and will include outside individuals with credibility and knowledge on a broad spectrum of issues such as science, national defense and business management. The Board will number about 15. External members, appointed by the Regents, will constitute a majority of the Board. The Board will

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**TINY SHELLS HELPED KEEP EARTH HABITABLE:** Tiny marine organisms with shells and skeletons made out of calcium carbonate helped keep the Earth's climate mild enough for human ancestors to survive and evolve, according to a research team that included a Livermore scientist. A climate model used by the researchers indicates that in much older ice ages, as glaciers started to grow, the oceans would suck the greenhouse gas, carbon dioxide, out of the atmosphere, chilling Earth into an even deeper ice age. But this process moderated about 200 million years ago as deposits of carbonate shells and skeletons from marine plankton built up on ocean bottoms and increased ocean carbon content. As a result, the tendency to suck carbon dioxide from the atmosphere diminished and the atmosphere remained warmer, according to the model. "Without these tiny marine organisms, the ice sheets may have grown to cover the earth, like in the snowball glaciations of the ancient past, and our ancestors might not have survived," said Livermore atmospheric scientist Ken Caldiera. The research results were published in Nature magazine.

**NITROGEN RESERVES BENEATH DESERT SOILS:** Challenging conventional belief, a research team including a LANL scientist has found that there may be significantly more nitrogen, in the form of nitrates, than previously estimated in desert landscapes, which cover one-fourth of the U.S. It has generally been believed that in these environments, the nitrates had been leached deep underground. The discovery of vast nitrate reservoirs near the surface could have important implications for groundwater quality worldwide. High nitrate concentrations in drinking water have been linked by the EPA to a blood disease, miscarriages and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. The research was published in Science magazine.

**A LITTLE TLC ENSURES EXPLOSIVE SAFETY:** A kit based on a Lawrence Livermore technology will let the U.S. military check the safety of munitions. Ho'olana Technologies of Hilo, Hawaii has started producing the field-portable kits, which use a technology called thin-layer chromatography (TLC) and were developed by researchers in LLNL's Forensic Science Center. The new kits analyze for the presence and quantity of stabilizers in propellant mixtures found in munitions, thus insuring munitions are safe for handling and storage.

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include Foley and representation from the UC Academic Senate, and will be chaired by an external member.

The UC Regents and their Laboratory Oversight Committee will retain ultimate responsibility and authority for management of the national laboratories, including the approval of contracts with the Department of Energy. The National Security Laboratories Board of Directors will have the authority for the approval of annual performance appraisals and salaries of laboratory directors and senior managers; the approval of major policies and organizational structures; the establishment of performance standards; the monitoring of performance; and to recommend to the Regents the hiring and firing of laboratory directors.

The National Security Laboratories Board of Directors will operate through a series of committees in such areas as: mission; science and technology; operations and administration; audit and ethics; and executive performance and compensation. The committees will include experts beyond the members of the Board of Directors. In addition, some members of the President's Council's Panels will transition into the committees of the Board.

## VPLM briefs labs on Washington activities

Robert Foley, Vice President for Laboratory Management, sent a message last week to employees of the three national labs on recent congressional legislation containing language that will affect the competition for our national laboratories. The legislation has since passed both houses of Congress and is awaiting the President's signature. Following are excerpts of Foley's memo:

"The University of California has been working closely with congressional members to ensure that the FY 2004 Energy and Water Appropriations bill allows for the development of a level playing field among competitors for laboratory contracts...[and] that it allows DOE the flexibility to tailor a competition that will attract both non-profits, such as UC, and for profit entities. We are pleased that the legislation includes these provisions...."

"The Energy and Water Appropriations bill also calls for laboratory contracts that have been in place [at Livermore, Los Alamos, Berkeley, Ames and Argonne] for more than 50 years to be put up for competition.... Under the legislation, DOE has the ability to issue up to a two-year extension to any of these contracts.

"...The University of California is preparing as if we will compete.... In the meantime, I ask that you remain focused on your mission at the laboratories and continue to work on the valuable science and technology that is so important to our nation."

In conformance with applicable law and UC policy, the university is an affirmative action/equal opportunity employer. Please send inquiries regarding the UC's affirmative action and equal opportunity policies for staff to director Mattie Williams and for faculty to executive director Sheila O'Rourke, both at: UC Office of the President, 1111 Franklin St., Oakland, CA 94607.