

Meeting Summary
Los Alamos Historical Document
Retrieval and Assessment Project

Public Meeting

Tuesday, July 27, 2004, Pojoaque, NM
Cities of Gold Hotel, 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Charles Miller, Technical Lead

(Statements are NOT direct quotes. All statements are paraphrased. Public comments and questions made during the meeting are preceded by the word “Public.” Response to the questions/comments are preceded by the responder’s name.)

Tonight we will talk about the project (Los Alamos Historical Document Retrieval and Assessment Project [LAHDRA]), which the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has had under way for a number of years. We have met many of you at previous meetings, and we welcome you back.

We will not talk about the shutdown at the lab (Los Alamos National Laboratory [LANL]) because we do not have any information on the subject. We only know that it is shut down—information that is in the newspaper. We do not have any major activity at the lab right now, so we have not been kicked out. We are also not going to talk about the worker’s compensation program, because that is not in our scope of work. We will talk about the LAHDRA project.

We received the final report from ENSR. The first phase of the project is complete, the report summarizing findings from phase one is complete, and the contract is complete. The Project is not complete. We never know how long a project is going to take. We released the final copy of the report from phase one tonight. Sign in if you want a copy of the report and indicate if you want a hard copy, CD, or both. Please mark your choice before leaving.

ENSR prepared a snapshot of what they have captured so far. It is not the final report on the project. Rather, it is a snapshot of where we are now. We have given you as much information as we have—nothing more or less. You have it all. You have access to all the documents we have released. They are housed at the Zimmerman Library at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque. We are trying to make more locations available. But the point is, we will make everything available to you, which is unusual. We want to give you as much information as we can. At the very end, we will give all the information and our recommendations. The report released at this point is just a snapshot. Some of you in this room commented on the draft report. We got some excellent comments from you and from the lab. We will continue to make everything we know available to you. This is a final contractor report.

About a year ago in Espanola, I told you I was concerned because of access issues at LANL. I was wondering if it was worthwhile to go forward. My encouragement level is now much higher. We are getting access to documents and to information we were not getting a year ago. We are going forward with a request for proposals (RFP). That RFP is out now. I cannot and will not

talk about details pertinent to the RFP. This is public meeting, and I must be careful of what I say in relation to a contract. We hope to have received responses to the RFP by the end of September. By the end of the fiscal year, we hope to have awarded the contract.

We are making good strides. There are undoubtedly documents at LANL that we will never see. They are that highly classified. The President of the U.S. is probably the only person who could look at all of the documents. We believe we can look at all documents relevant to our study. I could not say that a year ago.

We do not have handouts, and we have not prepared formal presentations. C.M. Wood will talk about technical issues. Phil Green will talk to you a bit about generalities of the contract.

Public: I am delighted it (LAHDRA project) will continue. I didn't anticipate it was possible for the project to continue.

Charles Miller: I am delighted to tell you it will continue.

C.M. Wood

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At the last meeting we discussed access issues. First, we have three places where we know exactly how much work needs to be done: the Records Center, Archives, and Technical Library. I came out and finished reviewing documents in the Records Center.

There are no paper documents left to look at there. There are 260 drawers of microfiche and 9000 rolls of microfilm left to review in the Records Center. The new contractor and I will complete that work.

The Technical Report Library has 267 shelves which have not been looked at. A shelf has 6000 pieces of paper on it. If a document is an 800-page report about wildlife in Idaho, or if is about Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, if can determine that it can be disqualified as relevant to our study. In this way, I may be able to disqualify whole shelves. There are also more than 1000 drawers of microfiche, which we will talk about how to handle with the new contractor.

The Archives is a mixed bag of movies, documents, and more. We have not even started there yet.

In some cases, the contractor will need to identify, specify, and indicate the most important release points and identify knowledge gaps. In these cases, we will have to do directed searches on the specific topics. For example, a technical report may state plutonium is on the ground right here (pointed toward floor). We must determine where that plutonium came from using a directed search. I found a document that said an explosive test with 5000 curies of a particular isotope was conducted. In the same folder was a blueprint of an underground tunnel. That raises

the question – how many tests were conducted in such a manner--how many tests were conducted in tunnel rather than the atmosphere.

I have here 15 CDs of final report from this contractor to give away.

In regards to access, University of California staff, the National Nuclear Security Agency, the Department of Energy (DOE), and the CDC prefer that contractors do not get access to very sensitive documents. Contractors come and go and are replaced by another set, which is proliferating the number of people looking at sensitive documents. Instead, we want government officials looking at these documents. Contracts come and go. I provide continuity of personnel.

Why is that important? First, in respect to LANL, more than any other DOE facility, there is more nuclear weapon design information. Older information is more sensitive than new stuff. For example, Al Qaeda does not have the technical infrastructure to prepare bomb for a Trident missile. Old plans are what today's bad guys can put together easily.

Back in about 1959, the Air Force dropped a Mark 15 bomb off the coast to Georgia. The plane was damaged, so the crew jettisoned the bomb, and they could not find it. It was just found. This thing has a three-foot diameter and is seven-feet long. How many could you mount in a Trident missile and launch from a submarine? This kind of information you do not ask DOE to declassify. But it is important for me to go through documents that contractors were denied access. In one report about a test, the voltage was turned up, or dropped from a truck, or increased a particular isotope. This is very interesting for dose reconstruction. So I write down the pertinent details for dose reconstruction and copy only the front page of the document to go in the database. I have looked at the document, recorded relevant information, but have not released any weapons information. This is what I will continue to do, even after we award the contract to a new contractor.

Public: You keep saying new contractor. Will there definitely be a change in contractor?

Phil Green: When we use the phrase new contractor, we mean new contract. We do not know who the contractor will be.

Public: Is the CDC still looking at documents? What do you mean by sensitive documents? Are these nuclear weapons documents, sensitive compartmented information? Will this be the purview of CDC and not the contractor?

Charles Miller: C.M. Wood or other CDC personnel will look at SCI documents.

Public: Is this a solution to the access problem?

Charles Miller: LANL can say we can't look at a particular document, but we have an appeal process in place. Having a contractor look at a particular document is one thing, but we are the CDC, government employees with the same clearances as other government officials. We are now at that point where we can appeal to the DOE and have a properly cleared government employee go look at it.

Public: Is there an access issue regarding LANL-related information located at other sites?

C.M. Wood: We are following the same rules. We have personnel with top-secret clearances that can look at information pertinent to environmental releases. Charles Miller, Bob Whitcomb, and I have Q clearances.

Public (Ken Silver): The first time you used “sensitive” it was not clarified with “compartmented.” Just “sensitive” is more general—it could mean “embarrassing.” What is the meaning of “sensitive?”

C.M. Wood: Some information is not supposed to be seen, ever. For example, personal medical information needs to remain private and is not required for an epidemiological study. We verify what information is there, but we don’t need to look at and shouldn’t see. chest x-rays. Another example is proprietary information from other sites, which I have not seen so far. I also have not seen information labeled as sensitive based on potential embarrassment of the lab.

Public (Ken Silver): I fear LANL might use a broader perspective of “sensitive.”

C.M. Wood: I call “sensitive” those classes of information I shouldn’t be looking at (personal medical records, proprietary contract information.)

Phil Green, Project Officer

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We have issued a RFP for continuation of the work. We placed the advertisement July 10 on the web site that functions as the Commerce Business Daily, which is available to all government contractors. We have posted two revisions to our solicitation. They are amendments, a change in wording, deleting a sentence, based on questions from potential contractors. It is possible to go look at the RFP, download and print, or request a copy from CDC procurement. Proposals are due Friday, August 6, no later than 2 p.m. We don’t know who is submitting a proposal package. When the proposals arrive, we will use a proposal team to evaluate them. We expect the contract to be awarded this fiscal year, and will expect the successful contractor to begin soon.

As of June 30, the contract with ENSR has ended. LANL has funding to process the backlog of documents marked for release. All along, the contractor has been producing documents that were being added to the backlog because there were not enough LANL funds to process those documents. LANL now has the money to, and more than 100,000 pages are being released. Currently, more than 300,000 documents are housed at Zimmerman Library and have been scanned and included in the database. The documents that are being released now need abstracted and scanned so that they can be added to the database. We have issued a task order proposal to complete this backlog of work. When the new contractor starts, they will need to

include these documents in their analysis. Eventually, the backlog will be merged into the considerations in preparation for the final report.

Public: What is the period of performance?

Phil Green: Five years, based on our best estimates. It is possible the work can be finished before 5 years, depending on funding, access, and the number of contractor folks participating. The contract includes options to continue up to 5 years. We can't discuss the process except for these generalities, which is the process we go through for all contracts. Procurement will announce the contractor when an award is made.

Public: Will there be funding on the lab side for escorts and clearance reviewers, or do you have a sense that problem has gone away?

Phil Green: Funding is always a problem. What we hear from congressional and senate offices is that there is support for this. I can only guess that funding will be available. It will have to match our effort.

Public: Is the escort requirements still as rigorous?

C.M. Wood: We will always require an escort when at a DOE facility. WE have never been allowed to roam around without supervision. The limiting number on site is based on dollars. If I had enough funds to put 10 people loose, LANL would require 10 escorts that LANL funds can't sustain. When we can increase the number of workers, we will seek permission to have one escort for a group of workers. Then work could go faster. Ask your question again at the next meeting.

Public (Ken Silver): At what level of appropriations will charge codes come available for contractors?

C.M. Wood: The University of California funds come from a different branch of DOE. Part of our effort is based on what they can support. It will be an annual discussion. They are seriously engaged in trying to support us.

Charles Miller: They are trying to seek funds.

C.M. Wood: In fairness to DOE, there have been a of couple times when their level of support was greater than our need. I spent extra time at the lab at one point because they had people to review documents, but we didn't have documents for them to review. We have not been perfect. They got funds just as ours was running out. In a perfect world, both would be funded for the same level of work.

Public: Retrospectively, a lot of hard bumps have been encountered by have been worked out. Looking forward, it seems like things are always coming up, such as fresh security embarrassments. Could access problems be recreated?

C.M. Wood: Current issues at LANL are not having an impact on CDC work. When the lab goes back to work, there could be some modifications that may have an impact on what I said tonight.

Charles Miller: We had a meeting with lab officials today in which they said they would do their best so that access will not be an issue. These are words LANL is telling us: they are committed to backing the project. I believe this will happen. If not, we will be out here negotiating with them. We believe we have the backing to the office of the director. DOE Washington, NSA Washington and site, and LANL staff are all assuring us access will not be a problem. In the last six months, their actions have backed up their words.

C.M. Wood: The commitment to the project was expressed by the person who reports to the head of the site office and acts as acting site manager when the site manager is out of office. We are working with high offices, regularly.

Public (Ken Silver): Are the fully scanned documents available on CD/DVD? Is that a commitment in the new contract?

C.M. Wood: The documents total five gigs on two DVDs. It is user hostile. When we sent a copy to the lab, we had to send an IT guy to load it for the lab. The IT guys at Atlanta are finding it stressful that we want to put it all on server. We have not been librarians. We generally don't do that. We are considering putting it on a computer at Espanola. The full text is available at the Zimmerman Library. It is not secret information, but it is a difficult task to make it available on the Internet resolving browser compatibility issues.

Charles Miller: CDC does not have the resources to act as a library. We are willing to send C.M. and a contractor to make the database available at specific sources.

Public (Ken Silver): Is that work in the RFP?

C.M. Wood: No. We are not making it available on the Internet.

Charles Miller: There are limitations to what can be put on the Internet.

C.M. Wood: We received a quote from Shonka Research Associates to just host the collection. I about choked when I saw the costs and space issues. It is a matter of technology and support, not secret information.

Phil Green: Zimmerman Library is the official federal repository for New Mexico. They have funding and resources to take all the documents related to New Mexico issues. It does not cost the CDC or DOE any money. I have talked with other libraries, and they are interested. We have to get out here to make sure they have the resources and equipment to maintain the collection.

Public (Ken Silver): You will get less of a choke response when you can offer electronic files instead of boxes.

C.M. Wood: When we can show up with an indexed searchable collection of documents, they are excited because it eliminates work for them. This was the first time that Zimmerman received an already indexed, searchable collection of documents. Another thing, you mentioned the new contract. We are hiring people who know environmental health physics. IT does not include a request for IT experts.

Public (SRA representative): If you are government officials with the same clearances, why do you need escorts?

C.M. Wood: It has always been required—they still escort me. Right now that is fine because it doesn't stop me from doing things. If it gets to the point where a lack of escorts is prohibiting progress, we may want to revisit with the National Nuclear Security Agency.

Public: Will we have a chance to here from Tom (Widner)?

C.M. Wood: Tom is no longer a representative of the CDC. If he wishes to speak, it is an act of charity.

Tom Widner (Project Director for completed contract): We have received comments from a number of parties regarding the report. We worked on our own time and with remaining funding to address comments. We have improved the usefulness of the report adding a list of acronyms, glossary, and public meeting summaries. The report provides a good history of the project. We received comments from the lab regarding the initial assessments, but we could not get into a re-analysis of the numbers. A chronology of accidents and incidents will be a useful addition. We are going to provide another version of the CD that will include the reference documents. We could not get them added to today's CD. We could not make all revisions that we wanted, but noted those questions so that they can be addressed with the new contract.

Charles Miller: ENSR and Tom are encouraged to submit a proposal in response to the RFP. Each contractor will be judged on own its merit. No contactors have preferential treatment.

Public: What is the amount of the new contract?

CDC Employee: That information is procurement sensitive.

Public (Ken Silver): The first contract showed a commitment to community involvement. Two women were originally contracted with to provide community facilitation. Is that commitment part of the new RFP?

Charles Miller: I don't remember that being in there. These kinds of activities (public meeting) and the contractor coming out here are definitely in there. Special facilitation is not. Regular meetings with CDC and the contractors will continue.

Public: Does the RFP include more than review of documents?

Charles Miller: Anything we will contract for is in the RFP.

Public (SRA representative): Is there any information that could be gained by taking current soil samples?

Charles Miller: That would be in the scope of recommendations, but doing that work is not in the scope of the RFP.

C.M. Wood: There are things I want to get into that are not funded by the CDC and not in the oversight office. I want to go meet those guys, and also with the soil conservation offices. I will contact the environmental restoration offices. CDC does not have plans for that.

Public: I have found this project useful and encouraging. What is the goal of this upcoming five-year contract? Is it to decide if a dose reconstruction is necessary?

Charles Miller: We will complete the review of all the documents. We will look at what they say, present the findings to the public, and then look at and see what we find. If we find a full or partial dose reconstruction is necessary, we will determine what could be done, what should be done, and sit down with you and the DOE to determine our actions. You will know where we are and what we will do.

Public: Does the CDC make the final decision to proceed with a dose reconstruction?

Charles Miller: CDC makes the final recommendations, but further work is always based on funding.

Public: When you first came out first, you said this was a four-year project. Now you are talking about 10-years to complete the first phase.

Charles Miller: I don't like to say it, but you are right. When we came out here, four years was our best guess. Then we discovered there were a lot more documents than we had anticipated. There were also a lot more things going on that put us behind schedule. ENSR has begun to prioritize the most important sites. Normally, that does not occur until later stages of a study.

Public: What is your reasoning?

Charles Miller: Five years is a contractual limit. That does not prevent the contractor from finishing sooner.

C.M. Wood: We are not as bad off as we sound. At the end of the fifth year of this project we have completed some prioritization. At the Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory (INEEL), that prioritization did not occur until the eighth year.

Charles Miller: When you go home, rent or borrow the movie *Raiders of the Lost Arc*. At the end of movie they show people moving a box into a warehouse. It is just huge. I thought, "that's a DOE facility." That is the kind of repositories we are dealing with. It is uncanny how much what we do looks like that movie. SRS, INEEL, LANL are all like that.

Public (Ken Silver): There exist a social contract between CDC and northern New Mexico. There are thyroid cancer and brain cancer concerns on the pueblos and surrounding area. All those folks are waiting for answers. We need community involvement to put the pedal to the metal. A lot of intelligent people who raised these concerns need to help force this process.

Charles Miller: We do appreciate their involvement.

Public: I am confused by your response about the final decision authority for dose reconstruction. The decision shouldn't be made as a matter of funding; instead, the decision should be based on objectively and scientifically determining a need before discussing money.

Charles Miller: CDC will make its recommendation based on the science we do. CDC doesn't make the final decision. CDC will make a final recommendation as what to do, and then ask for resources.

Public: Speaking hypothetically, if the CDC makes a decision to proceed, New Mexico residents need to lean on their representatives.

Public: This is really good news.

Charles Miller: I feel better coming here this year than last year.

Public: I would like to compliment Tom Widner and his staff on the report. It is a good solid report with much useful information.

Public: I appreciate their assessments and the soil work they have been doing.

Charles Miller: I am glad to know that you find that information useful.

Public: I appreciate the work of Susan, Joe, and Tom. They have been very accessible,

Charles Miller: We will make sure the new contractor is equally accessible.

Public: LANL is hurting people, and we need to know results ASAP.