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LANL SEEKING 800 WORKERS FOR VOLUNTARY LAYOFFS

Charlie McMillan, the director or the Los Alamos National Laboratory has announced that the Lab has sought approval of a plan to reduce its staff by 400 to 800 employees. The plan submitted to the Nuclear Security Administration asks employees to leave through a voluntary separation program this spring. McMillan said, "*We are taking these actions now in an attempt to reduce the risks of involuntary layoffs… When combined with a suppressed attrition rate for the past three years, our current budget and future outlook require significant cost-cutting. The plan we are submitting will position the Lab to continue executing our missions today and in the future.*" However, the plan requires approval of the National Nuclear Security Administration before being put into effect. McMillan, while speaking in a meeting with employees pointed out that the factors that contributed to the proposed action included the following:

- The Lab's Fiscal Year 2012 budget is more than $300 million lower than that of 2011
- Future budgets are expected to be flat or lower
- For a variety of reasons, attrition rates have been lower than normal in the past few years

The director of LANL further said that "*With a smaller workforce possessing the essential skills, we will be better positioned to deliver on current and future national security commitments. Allowing employees to apply for voluntary separation is a prudent step.*" It seems the misfortune of LANL workers that the question of keeping their job has become related to the ability of the organization in fulfilling national security requirements. The argument's implication is quite new for an employer to pull: *National security is threatened if you keep your job and don't agree to voluntary retirement.* That's really an eye-opener. McMillan further said "*I'm very hopeful we can achieve the savings we need without an involuntary workforce reduction. We were successful when we took similar action in 2008.*"

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