

## LOS ALAMOS NATIONAL LABORATORY TO CUT 557 WORKERS



The odds are good that those of you who know about the Los Alamos National Laboratory remember it from history class. Yes, the one that was the site of the now famous Manhattan Project. The labs are about much more than blowing people into their atomic particles, but that has not exempted them from the conditions that are impacting all aspects of employment in the current economy. This week the Los Alamos National Laboratory made an announcement that they are letting go of staff in a voluntary layoff program. The program, which will impact about 557 workers, is slated to help the lab save serious cash in the long term. Interestingly enough the numbers actually hit within their target. As you can imagine a voluntary layoff program is really not popular with the workers, as few people are keen to volunteer to be out of a job. The program's target was between 400 and 800 people, and they managed to achieve that target. While this is by no means a huge reduction, percentage wise, for the organization, which has about 7,600 workers, it will still be enough to qualify as a mass layoff action under the guidelines set by the federal government. Those employees who did choose to go now have been given 39 weeks of severance pay and an extension of their health insurance benefits in order to help them get through the transitional period. Thanks to the [press release](#) put out by the labs, we have an unprecedented amount of information about who is going to be out of a job and what percentage of the workers in that area those cuts represent. "A breakdown of employees who volunteered to leave looks like this:

- 258 from professional fields, such as finance, information technology, and records management
- 152 from research and development fields
- 74 managers
- 59 technicians, and
- 14 support employees

The distribution of volunteers largely mirrored the overall Lab population, with

- 36% of applicants coming from the science, technology, engineering areas,
- 25% from operations and business services
- 16% from the weapons programs
- 15% from global security, and
- 4% each from capital projects management and departments reporting directly to the Office of the Director."

In the same release the company expressed regrets over having to let go of their workers. "I would like to thank each and every employee who volunteered for the program. Some of them devoted their entire careers to serving the nation during a truly historic time for the country and the Lab. They set the example that we will continue to follow," said LANL Director Charlie McMillan. "The loss of hundreds employees will be painful, but the program did accomplish what it set out to do. This VSP, and other actions that started late last year, are necessary to preserve our capabilities during uncertain economic times." So as the lab looks to cope with a smaller budget who knows, more cuts may be right around the corner for the labs.