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Los Alamos Nuclear Weapons Lab Opens Office in the City of the Santa Fe (“Holy Faith”) of Peace and Environmental Protection

Santa Fe, NM – A Lab press release has announced that “[c]onnections between Los Alamos National Laboratory and the City of Santa Fe will be strengthened with the Laboratory’s opening of a new downtown office” after signing a 10-year lease on a 28,000-square-foot building. The Lab’s press release ignores LANL’s \$2.9 billion nuclear weapons production budget (up 33% in one year), its proposed 46% cut to cleanup to \$120 million, serious groundwater contamination and recent reports how it has neglected wildfire protection. Two catastrophic wildfires in the last 21 years on or near the Lab blanketed a large portion of northern New Mexico with possibly contaminated smoke.

The City of Santa Fe’s official name is the “La Villa Real de la Santa Fe de San Francisco de Asís” (“The Royal Town of the Holy Faith of Saint Francis of Assisi”), in honor of the beloved saint who preached peace and environmental protection and from whom the present Pope draws his name. Pope Francis has repeatedly called for the abolition of nuclear weapons and while in Japan paid homage to the victims of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings. Those atomic bombs were designed and produced at the Los Alamos Lab.

This is not the first time that LANL has tried to make inroads into the City of Santa Fe. The Lab was an original contender to develop the area known as the old mid-town campus but dropped out perhaps due to public controversy. The Lab is currently funding the training of 400 machinists at the Santa Fe Community College, whose likely future employment is for the expanded production of plutonium “pit” bomb cores. This aligns with the Trump Administration’s \$1.7 trillion so-called “modernization” program that will completely rebuild the nuclear weapons stockpile with new military capabilities, along with new missiles, submarines and bombers to deliver them. It is, in short, a program for nuclear weapons forever.

The Lab press release claims that the “[t]he Santa Fe location will be a hub for community and economic development activities.” A recent report by UNM’s Bureau of Business and Economic Research documented how the economic impact of the Los Alamos Lab is a net loss for the county governments surrounding Los Alamos County, which itself receives some \$50 million in gross receipts tax every year from the Lab (Santa Fe County’s net loss is \$2.2 million annually). Further, Los Alamos County remains the fourth richest county in the U.S. in terms of median household income, while New Mexico as a whole remains the fourth poorest state. In other words, the Lab’s economic benefits remain overwhelmingly in an already very rich county.

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Jay Coghlan, director of Nuclear Watch New Mexico, commented, “I doubt Santa Feans will be fooled. We’ve heard before the Lab’s empty promises of economic benefits while it tries to obscure the fact that expanding nuclear weapons production will always be its bread and butter. The Lab may not get what it wants in that a downtown LANL office will likely become a lightning rod for controversy.”

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LANL’s press release is available at <https://losalamosreporter.com/2021/02/10/los-alamos-national-laboratory-signs-lease-on-santa-fe-office/>

UNM’s Bureau of Business and Economic Research report *The Economic and Fiscal Impact of Los Alamos National Laboratory*, August 2020, is available at <https://regionalcoalitionnm.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/LANL-Economic-Impact-Presentation-081720.pdf>

- *This study shows that the county governments surrounding Los Alamos County suffer a net economic loss from the Los Alamos Lab. The exception is Los Alamos County itself, which in terms of median household income is already the 4th richest county in the USA.*

For graphic illustration on what LANL says internally is its “Central Mission” see https://nukewatch.org/newsite/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Little_RPI_April_2011.pdf?x68309, slide 4.