Sandia's 'determined and dedicated' Yucca Mountain team up and running

The performance assessment technical basis effort, managed by Kathryn Knowles (6781), is supported by hundreds of workers from Sandia, subcontractors, other national labs ( principally Los Alamos, Lawrence Livermore, and Lawrence Berkeley national laboratories), the US Geological Survey, consultants, and universities. Andrew's group "member of the workforce" calculations show that the project actually involves contributions from more than 600 people, or perhaps closer to 700.

As an example of the work involved, consider the project's approach to the information technology transition issues for the site, including a shared systems agreement with Bechtel to bridge the gap from early this year, when Sandia's own network will be fully operational. The large workforce, distributed around the world, needs a collaboration and cyber environment, new near completion. (See Tailoring Sandia IT on this page.)

"We were able to reach back into the corporation and get the systems and support we needed to make the Las Vegas office a full-fledged office for Sandia," says Andrew.

License application

Sandia is managing the delivery of a "cradles-to-graves" license application for Yucca Mountain to the NRC by June 30, 2008. "Our position is that it has to be done and that we can do it," says Andrew. "There are numerous technical and political challenges to this project, as there have been in the past, but there is a strong sense that we can, we want to, and we will do it." An essential part of making this happen is Sandia's willingness to accept responsibility and work with the NRC to resolve any issues.

Sandia is responsible for "about half" of a 7,000-page license application. The application prescribes a design, engineering, and operations section, which is the responsibility of Bechtel/VAE. The production assessment section, called the post-closure performance assessment will be Sandia's contribution. The team expects the project to be completed by the end of fiscal year 2008.

Recent regulatory changes have pushed the post-closure performance assessment to the date of 2008 as opposed to 2009, which is what Sandia expected. The team has taken this situation in stride and is working to deliver the required information.

Stories by Will Keener

Lead Lab logo by Nancy Ender

THE LAS VEGAS MANAGEMENT TEAM and its key functions include: Tito Benano, Licensing; Frank Haney, Logistics; Steve Gossage (4336), Network Operations; Will Keener, Technical Support; Ron Stevens, Quality Assurance; Peter Shafran, Chief Financial Officer; Jack James, Operations Deputy; and Doug Weaver, Test Coordinator.

Sandia National Laboratories

Sandia takes lead role in developing post-closure assessment of Yucca Mountain nuclear waste repository

John Ziper, Jerry Elch, and Cindy Huber have accepted a new role in technology challenge working with this new Las Vegas office to adapt corporate systems to the demands of Sandia as lead laboratory for the Yucca Mountain Project.

"We are trying to use existing systems when possible, rather than duplicating or reinventing the wheel," says Elch, senior manager in Computing Systems and Technical Integration Dept. 420. The Las Vegas office has presented numerous challenges to the leaders and staff working on the project. "The Las Vegas site is a slice collaboratively based and we have to move our existing applications into that collaborative environment," says John, Cindy, a technical staff member from Enterprise Database Administration Dept. 4338, who has been traveling to Las Vegas weekly for the past several months. She acts as both point, working to understand the site's IT requirements. "The new team then works to deploy those requirements in existing or new sites.

The team is adapting SharePoint to allow researchers to collaborate on scientific documents and share information with a versioning and a check-in/check-out function. Sandia's familiar training program, TEDS, will also be used in Las Vegas, along with the addition of some specifically designed scientific and administrative tools. People need to be appropriately trained to do the quality work needed to support the license application," says Cindy. As a result, multiple classes designed specifically for Yucca Mountain will be added.

To allow the Las Vegas staff access to Sandia business policies, the team created a new Lead Lab Connect Website (deployed to show Sandia's presence as lead.) Sandia is working on an analysis of existing Yucca Mountain management systems and will submit a proposal to replace the system next year.

The team is working on a new people management application to help close out extensive reporting requirements at the site required by DOE's Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management. Another project addresses a video conferencing capability, critical to the collaborations that are hallmarks to this project. "Our Sandia IT presence here expands, people are contacting us regularly with new requests for IT support," says Cindy.

Sandia will unveil a new computer network at the site this week. In addition to deploying the Sandia common operating environment, Sandia will be drafting three to four full-time dedicated support positions in Las Vegas. "The schedule is happening very quickly," says John. "It's a very tight schedule and then we want to add and there's a lot to do." Also helping on the IT team are: Steve Gossage (4336), Susan Sackinger (4343), Tim Spears (4334), Phil Cox (4329), Cindy Huber (4358), and Mark Larson (4329), and additional staff across Sandia networking, desktop, and software development teams, with involvement from application development groups in Division 6000 as well.

Tailoring Sandia IT systems for the Yucca Mountain effort

John Ziper, Jerry Elch, and Cindy Huber have accepted a new role in technology challenge working with this new Las Vegas office to adapt corporate systems to the demands of Sandia as lead laboratory for the Yucca Mountain Project.

"We are trying to use existing systems when possible, rather than duplicating or reinventing the wheel," says Elch, senior manager in Computing Systems and Technical Integration Dept. 420. The Las Vegas office has presented numerous challenges to the leaders and staff working on the project.

The Las Vegas site is a slice collaboratively based and we have to move our existing applications into that collaborative environment," says John, Cindy, a technical staff member from Enterprise Database Administration Dept. 4338, who has been traveling to Las Vegas weekly for the past several months. She acts as both point, working to understand the site's IT requirements. "The new team then works to deploy those requirements in existing or new sites.

The team is adapting SharePoint to allow researchers to collaborate on scientific documents and share information with a versioning and a check-in/check-out function. Sandia's familiar training program, TEDS, will also be used in Las Vegas, along with the addition of some specifically designed scientific and administrative tools. People need to be appropriately trained to do the quality work needed to support the license application," says Cindy. As a result, multiple classes designed specifically for Yucca Mountain will be added.

To allow the Las Vegas staff access to Sandia business policies, the team created a new Lead Lab Connect Website (deployed to show Sandia's presence as lead.) Sandia is working on an analysis of existing Yucca Mountain management systems and will submit a proposal to replace the system next year.

The team is working on a new people management application to help close out extensive reporting requirements at the site required by DOE's Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management. Another project addresses a video conferencing capability, critical to the collaborations that are hallmarks to this project. "Our Sandia IT presence here expands, people are contacting us regularly with new requests for IT support," says Cindy.

Sandia will unveil a new computer network at the site this week. In addition to deploying the Sandia common operating environment, Sandia will be drafting three to four full-time dedicated support positions in Las Vegas. "The schedule is happening very quickly," says John. "It's a very tight schedule and then we want to add and there's a lot to do." Also helping on the IT team are: Steve Gossage (4336), Susan Sackinger (4343), Tim Spears (4334), Phil Cox (4329), Cindy Huber (4358), and Mark Larson (4329), and additional staff across Sandia networking, desktop, and software development teams, with involvement from application development groups in Division 6000 as well.