

July 2015 SPSE-UPTE Monthly Memo

Society of Professionals, Scientists, and Engineers – University of Professional & Technical Employees Local 11, CWA Local 9119, AFL-CIO is committed to building a Lab that is well managed and accountable; one that will provide secure jobs with fair wages, along with high quality research and accessible education.

De-privatizing the Labs

By Jeff Colvin

SPSE-UPTE Legislative Director and UPTE Executive Vice President

In February 2014 a sealed drum containing low-level radioactive waste that was shipped from the Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP), a radioactive waste underground repository near Carlsbad, New Mexico, caught fire and exploded, exposing some 23 workers to radioactive contamination. The accident closed WIPP, and the whole facility remains closed to this day.

Another consequence of the WIPP accident, in addition to the large fine levied against Los Alamos National Security, LLC (LANS), the private company that manages LANL, was the poor performance rating that LANS received from the Department of Energy (DOE)/National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) and having one year lopped off the management contract. Thus, the contract that LANS has to manage the laboratory for DOE/NNSA now expires 30 September 2017.

If no further contract extensions are awarded (a distinct possibility, especially since several serious electrical accidents have occurred recently, one leading to a serious injury and the most recent leading to a work stand-down at several technical sites), then the contract may be re-bid. If that happens the whole process, which starts with writing a Request for Proposal (RFP) could begin as early as this Fall with notification to LANS. Although the LLNS contract to manage our lab here in Livermore expires at a later date, there is sure to be political pressure to re-bid that contract also, especially since LANS and LLNS are in essence the same corporate entity with the same board of directors.

If the lab management contracts are to be re-bid, we want it done right this time. University Professional and Technical Employees (UPTE) has believed for a long time that the real problems plaguing both labs stem from careerism and profiteering by corporate management, leading to everything from the failures to meet unrealistic programmatic goals set to earn the maximum management bonus at LLNL to the WIPP accident at LANL. These issues were discussed at a public forum UPTE leaders held in Los Alamos last spring.

At the forum, UPTE announced the launch of a new RFP Committee to put together a plan to influence the RFP process. UPTE's RFP Committee has now expanded to include participants from both Labs, and is holding monthly meetings via conference call. Our success is tied to engaging as much of the workforce as we can at both labs. Accordingly, we urge you to join UPTE (if you are not already a member), and participate in the work of the RFP Committee. We want to hear your ideas and comments. To join us please contact either Eileen Montano of SPSE-UPTE LLNL at spse@spse.org or 925-449-4846 or Richard Espinosa of UPTE-LANL at respinosa@upte-cwa.org or 505-603-9034.

SPSE-UPTE Quarterly General Membership Meeting
Wednesday, July 29, Noon – 1pm in B125 Jade Rm166



360 Performance Review

A series of constructive critiques of LLNS and SPSE-UPTE.

Want sleep?

Try evenings without digital displays!

By Bill Smith, SPSE-UPTE President



Until this spring, with each birthday, I found it harder to stay alert throughout the day. Like many, I wrote my insomnia off to aging, rather than to my lifestyle. Nearly every day I eat healthy foods, exercise as I bicycle to work, and spend at least six, normally seven or more, hours in bed.

Then Amy Coo in Health Services suggested that I check my personal e-mail earlier and avoid staring at video displays for a couple of hours before bedtime! I also turned down the blue in my home displays and within two days I was sleeping through the night and more alert throughout the day than I have been in years.

Within the last five years science has begun to document both the causes of sleep deprivation, including blue light in video displays, and the many associated problems. These problems include a starring role as a contributor to both obesity and heart disease.

According to Health Services, about one in five of us at the Lab habitually have problems sleeping – and a recent Lab seminar on sleep hygiene I attended drew over 50 attendees. The sleep therapist who presented the seminar also summarized the mounting evidence that in the evening staring at blue in our computer and smart-phone displays can disrupt our Circadian rhythm, which controls when we sleep.

If all of us at LLNL slept soundly more of the time, we'd be more cordial, exhibit better judgement and perceive our surroundings more keenly. Sleep may improve our performance rankings, but more importantly we will all be safer in our work place, our clients will be more satisfied, and our spouses and teenagers may actually be glad when we come home after work!

If you are having trouble sleeping, don't sleep on it! Go to Health Services *Working Well* website *Got Sleep* at <https://healthservices-int.llnl.gov/ww/sleepstep1.php> at least two hours before bedtime! Or better yet, go to the calendar on the site and follow the directions to schedule an appointment with a health coach.

Join Us

For four decades we in SPSE-UPTE have worked to make our Laboratory a better place to work by helping fellow employees and demanding fairness and transparency from Lab management. Our effort has never before been more important, and if you share this belief please go to <http://spse.org> and click on "Join Us."

If a colleague helped you with a personal or professional problem, we encourage you to send us an e-mail or give us a call to tell your story. If your experience could help others in the LLNL community, and with your permission and that of all involved, we'll include your story in a 360 Performance Review as we do with our President's story here.

