

VLA SITE NEWSLETTER

All the News that is News on the San Augustin Plains

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Congratulations! Willie and Trish Zamora welcomed 4 lb. 4 oz. Thomas to their family on October 11. Mom and baby are home and doing fine now, according to Dad.

Pat Chavez will be retiring on November 27. We wish him a long and happy retirement.

RFI REDUCTION MEASURES

Because the portable radios on the site cause interference with some observations, we are requested to keep site radio transmissions to essential communications. Safety rules should always be followed, but whenever possible we should use telephones or wyecom to communicate. Also, please avoid using cellular phones and 2-meter amateur radios while at the VLA.

Bill Brundage is providing a monthly schedule of P band observations as part of the RFI

reduction program. Radio use and the use of other equipment that can cause interference should be minimized as much as possible during the periods shown on the schedule. If you did not receive a schedule and would like to have one, contact Jo or Patty and we will send a copy to you.

VLA UPGRADE

Rick Perley came out to the VLA and gave a talk on the much hoped for upgrade. He explained that the VLA is still the premier centimeter-wave synthesis radio telescope on Earth but major improvements can be made in resolution, sensitivity, speed, frequency coverage, and other areas by taking advantage of modern technology. New receivers are capable of lower noise levels, for example.

A detailed proposal for a VLA upgrade is planned for next year. Initiation of the project is very much up to funding and the status of the MMA project

which has priority. As a pilot project for the upgrade, a separate smaller proposal has been prepared to tie in the VLBA Pie Town with the VLA using a fiber optic cable installed recently by WNM Telephone Company. The proposal for special funds for implementing the fiber optic connection is shortly to be submitted to the NSF. During A array, the Pie Town connection would double the resolution of the array.

VEHICLES

Site vehicles driven to the AOC must be locked and the keys left on the key board in the AOC lobby. The driver should use a red tag (available on the key board) to label the keys. A message such as "site vehicle-return to site," or "site vehicle-hold for (name)," etc., should be written on the tag. Also, personnel needing transportation to the VLA are invited to check the keyboard and drive any vehicle tagged, "site vehicle-return to site."

AROUND THE VLA

The video on retirement, "Save-Your Future Depends on You," has been shown in the Cafeteria Conference Room and is being made available to be taken home for viewing at your convenience. If you are interested, please check with Lew Serna.

Cleanup around the site is continuing. The Division Head must approve removal of scrap or other disposal property from the site. To avoid problems with consistency, fairness, and identifying value of property, no property is to be removed for personal use.

The Track Crew continues to bail out CN8 and CN9 after the previously reported flooding. It's been a lot of work, but great job, guys.

OUR PURPOSE HERE

There are times when we who work here at the VLA are asked what exactly it is that we actually do here. I am sure we all answer in somewhat different ways. To help with this perplexing problem, the following is our official mission statement.

"The National Radio Astronomy Observatory is a

facility of the National Science Foundation operated under cooperative agreement by Associated Universities, Inc.

NRAO Socorro operates the Very Large Array (VLA) and Very Long Baseline array (VLBA) radio astronomy observatories for use in conducting astronomical research by any qualified person whose research proposal is deemed meritorious by a panel of distinguished scientists. Operation includes scheduling, maintaining, controlling, data collection reduction, and making improvements.

The Engineering Services (E & S) Division is an element within the NRAO Socorro operation. The mission of the E & S Division is to help obtain the best possible quality and highest possible quantity of astronomical data by supporting in a safe, efficient, and economical manner the physical plant at the VLA and VLBA observatories and providing technical services to the radio antennas that comprise the VLA and VLBA.

Supporting the physical plant includes providing water, electricity, heating and air conditioning, waste disposal, emergency response, road and building repair, vehicle and equipment repair, painting, waveguide cathodic protection,

track repair, grounds maintenance, janitorial service, and site security to the VLA and many of the same services to the VLBA. Technical services includes maintenance of the antenna except for cryogenic equipment and most of the electronics equipment; engineering, drafting, and construction for antenna and physical plant repairs and upgrades; and the scheduling and execution of antenna moves."

Now you know exactly what to answer when people ask you what the VLA does. Whether or not they believe you is a whole other story.