

VLA SITE NEWSLETTER

All the News that is News on the San Augustin Plains

SCHOLARSHIP WINNER

Julian Serna, son of Lew Serna, our Deputy Head of Engineering Services, is one of the winners of the AUI Trustee Scholarship. Julian has many scholastic achievements at Socorro High School. He also participated in track and football, earning All-District his senior year. He plans to attend the University of New Mexico, majoring in Biochemistry.

HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

During the week following the Memorial Day holiday on May 26, the work schedule for the VLA will be 6:30 a.m. to 2:30 a.m. Tuesday through Friday, with a van leaving at 4:30 for painters or others working overtime.

AWARDS DINNER

Lew Serna and Steve Troy will be honored at an awards dinner May 18 for 20 years of service to NRAO, all at the VLA. Santiago Chavez, Tommy Montoya, Tom Olney, Tony Perreault, Jim Ruff, Guy Stanzione, and Steve Tenorio all will be honored for 10 years of service.

SAFETY VIDEOS

In Room 111 of the Control Building there is a library of 23 videos on various topics, mostly having to do with safety practices. They range in

length from 4 to 73 minutes, and include retirement, general safety, OSHA regulations, CDL Preparation, and safety in various different applications such as forklift, welding or heavy equipment.

If you are interested in viewing any of the videos see Patty, Jo or Gene. You can view them on the VCR in the Cafeteria Conference Room or take them home to view. Work crews are encouraged to watch a safety video when the weather prevents other activities.

TAILGATE SESSIONS

Regular group sessions or "huddles" on work details provide excellent opportunities for presenting all types of information, especially safety concerns. It gives supervisors and employees a forum to openly exchange ideas about working conditions and/or problems and receive feedback from one another. The advantage of tailgate sessions gives each person in a group time to think about what was discussed and actually use it in a working situation. It also reinforces safety awareness through review and practice and can be a very effective tool toward communicating work activity if done on a regular basis.

E. Cole

CPR COURSE

On April 22 a large group of VLA employees participated in an American Heart Association HeartSaver Course

for cardiopulmonary resuscitation and emergency cardiac care. They were instructed by Pat Madigan and Tom Olney. Those employees now certified in CPR are: Jo Cason, Gene Cole, Charley Chavez, Frank Dobson, Lisa Foley, Chris Garcia, Samuel Guerro, Clint Janes, James Julian, Jimmy Latasa, Martin Lopez, Jeremy Martinez, Jaime Montero, Tommy Montoya, Richard Murillo, Chris Naranjo, Jim Rexrode, Joe Sanchez, Mary Ellen Sanchez, Linda Saulsberry, Paul Savedra, Laco Torres, Michael Torres, and Pat Trujillo.

ANTENNA MAINT IN AMERICA'S PARADISE

A maintenance team visits each VLBA antenna every three years to perform tasks that require special equipment or expertise that is not available to the on site technicians. The teams also give the telescopes a top to bottom inspection, checking for worn, corroded or damaged parts, bad bearings, cracked welds, loose bolts, poor wire connections and bad circuit cards. Along with the site technicians, the team repairs or replaces all items that require restoration. The maintenance team also performs major upgrades on the antenna systems.

A VLBA maintenance team recently visited the antenna located at St. Croix, U.S.V.I. The team consisted of Steve Aragon, Tom Frost, Ramon Gutierrez, Steve Troy, Jon Thunborg and Pete Ulbricht. Because of corrosion from the salt water environment, several

bolts and brackets and two drive motors had to be replaced. We also upgraded the antenna and control building HVAC systems and performed detailed tests on the Servo and electrical systems. The work schedule was very ambitious and required long hours and hard work to accomplish all of the assigned tasks. In spite of this, several team members were able to use their evening hours to snorkel and sample the island rum.

The maintenance team found that both bearings on one of the azimuth drive wheels were broken. Since the Team did not have the necessary equipment on hand to repair the bearings, a maintenance team is scheduled to return to St. Croix in May to replace the drive wheel and bearings.

J. Thunborg

CATTLE DRIVE

A cattle drive scheduled for mid June from Datil to Magdalena will follow the original Magdalena Stock Driveway that was used by many ranches in the olden days to get their cattle and sheep to the shipping pens in Magdalena. The drive will be going by the VLA on the second day. There will be more information in the next newsletter.

J. Cason

RETIREMENT

If you were not able to attend the TIAA-CREF retirement workshops on April 17, a video will soon be available for employees. The folders handed out at the workshops filled with informative brochures are still available from Patty Lindsey. Also, there is a new "Agreement for Salary Reduction" form for changing supplemental retirement allocations or amounts. Now, instead of once a year, one change per month is permitted.

P. Lindsey

SNAKES!

Please be cautious - snakes are out and about.

VEHICLES

Maintenance check off forms have been placed in all NS vehicles. They should be used to make daily checks on vehicles, initiated by the operator of the vehicle for that day, and turned in to the Auto Shop on Mondays. They should be filled out every day.

P. Lewis

VLBA CONTEMPO MODS

Steve Troy recently developed a way to improve temperature control in the VLBA station buildings. Using the same digital controller used in VLA and VLBA antenna vertex rooms, he was able to reduce temperature fluctuations by a factor of ten. Data quality improvements have been measured at Pie Town, where the new controller has been operating since February.

The other VLBA Sites will be outfitted over the next few years during Tiger Team visits.

J. Ruff

VLA FEED CONE

You might have noticed a new wedge shaped tower among the feeds in antenna 9. It's a prototype "Feed Cone Segment" to house new K-Band receivers being built in the AOC.

This represents one of the first visible signs of the VLA Upgrade. One change included in the Upgrade is a feed cone similar to the VLBA antennas. The segment on antenna 9 can be enlarged by adding more segments, eventually resulting in a complete feed cone.

The prototype segment combined novel materials and weird geometry for a real fabrication challenge. Congratulations to Steve and Mel in the weld shop for making it work!

J. Ruff

CDL POLICY

The policy provides that NRAO will pay the costs of a regular employee to get a CDL if the employee is required to have a CDL as part of his/her current assignment. All others must study for the CDL on their own time and pay for all the costs. An employee studying and/or practicing for the CDL on his/her own time and who is doing so to better his/her position at NRAO may use NRAO equipment (on-site only) by making the necessary arrangements with Pat Lewis. A test is scheduled for June 1.

L. Serna

TRASH

We really need everyone's help in reducing the amount of trash going into the dump. Since it no longer "catches fire" occasionally, trash must be buried and a new pit dug when it gets full. You can help by recycling everything possible. There are boxes and containers for recycle paper in strategic locations around the Site and if you know of somewhere there needs to be more, please let Alison know.

Also, being set up are recycle bins for soda cans. These currently are located in the Coffee Room in the Control Building and new ones at Tech Services and the Antenna Barn break rooms.

A. Patrick

TRACK CREW PROJECTS

The Track Crew has been busy this summer! So far they have completed lining and leveling the mainline from CE7 to CE8, rebuilt the intersection at CE8 and built a crossing at CE8. They also removed the old spur rail from the old master pad near the Generator Building.

P. Savedra