

VLA/VLBA NEWSLETTER

From the World's Premier Centimeter Wave Radio Synthesis Telescopes

PERSONNEL

Adrian Morris is our new co-op student. He is a student at New Mexico Tech and will be working with the Servo group.

Farewell to Lisa Foley, who is leaving February 9 to go to the AOC to take a Correlator Operator position.

David Alderman started as the new Servo Tech on February 2.

Alison Patrick recently obtained a license to be a Notary Public, and Patty Lindsey expects to receive hers at any time ("it's in the mail").

BUDGET

There has been a delay at NSF in allocating the 1998 budget to NRAO. As a result, the NRAO director, Paul Vanden Bout, decided to freeze most new employment until he sees what this year's budget looks like. Hiring a Machinist, two more Servo Techs, and summer temporary workers is now on hold until a budget is received. The machinists are working overtime in attempt to keep up with the VLBA AZ drive wheel fabrication, K-band and 86 GHz work, 74 MHZ dipoles, and a number of other projects. The start of summer construction work is expected to be delayed one week for every week past February 9 that the freeze is extended.

C. Jones

SUMMER SCHEDULE

After careful study of possible summer schedules, we have decided to continue with the 4/10 schedule, the same as last

year. The majority of employees will work Monday through Thursday, while a skeleton crew works on Fridays. The 4/10 schedule begins on April 13 and ends on October 2. The Socorro bus departs at 5:30 a.m. and the Magdalena bus departs at 6:00 a.m. As usual, both buses will depart from the VLA at 4:30 p.m.

L. Serna

VLBA PINTLE BEARINGS

The Kitt Peak Site Techs found broken bolts in their pintle bearing. This is the large central bearing that keeps the antenna on the track. Ramon Gutierrez, John Wall and Jim Ruff went to the site to inspect the bearing and replace the broken bolts. We found a total of nine bolts either broken or loose, as well as indications that the bearing is not flat in its mounting. We replaced the bad bolts and came home to figure out a permanent fix. If left in its current state, the bearing could eventually be damaged by high loads due to the wavy mounting. Current plans are to jack up the whole antenna and shim the bearing flat. There is a good chance that KP is not the only site with this problem. The Tiger Team will be checking the other sites.

J. Ruff

DRUG & ALCOHOL TESTING

Initial testing of all CDL drivers for drugs and alcohol is complete; all NRAO drivers tested negative, congratulations! Per federally mandated requirements, all CDL drivers will now be scheduled randomly for monthly tests. As well, supervisors have been trained to watch for signs of impairment among the drivers, and are instructed to send for testing any driver suspected of being

under the influence. Such "probable cause" testing is arranged with a local private contractor by contacting Jon Spargo or Gene Cole.

J. Spargo

AAB NEWS

We have changed oil in all but seven antennas. The elevation gear boxes are harder to change because the oil is heavier and during cold weather it won't flow through the hoses. We have to pressurize the gear boxes to force the oil to drain through the hoses. The crew has fixed the drain lines to allow us to drain both boxes at the same time. What has really helped speed up the job has been the weather. This has been a warm winter so far and it has allowed us to work almost daily on the oil change. We can change oil in five antennas and then we have to stop for a day to filter the oil to be reused, saving NRAO thousands of dollars. The rest of the antennas will be serviced in the A Array. We serviced the antennas that would be furthest out first so the ones needing oil changes will be close.

R. Molina

SITE & WYE NEWS

The Track Crew has been inspecting trackage on all three arms in preparation for antenna moves into the A Array. East and West arms needed to have few bolts replaced, but they had to replace a large number of bolts and some rail on the North Arm.

The Grounds Crew extended the visitors' area parking lot fence along the spur extension at the Antenna Assembly Building and installed "Authorized Personnel Only" signs at each end. Tourists have been climbing onto the transporter when it is parked there. They are also preparing to start trenching for the fiber optic network.

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