

## Western joins the team at Los Alamos

The wildfire disaster in Los Alamos, N.M., in May required help from many sources, and Western joined the team to do its part.

When emergency manager for DOE-Albuquerque, Rick Arkin, called Western

Administrator **Mike Hacskaylo** for emergency assistance on May 17, **Mike Cowan**, chief program officer, coordinated with Aviation Office officials and Western pilots to set the mission in motion.

Western was asked to carry local Native Americans, scientists and other professionals to conduct surveys and damage assessments at Los Alamos. Western Pilot **Ken Host** flew the officials over the site to conduct various investigations. Over a seven-day period, the investigators gathered vital information to help them prepare financial and property damage estimates and projections for various agencies, including DOE.

"I flew local Native American residents, hydrologists, ecologists,

firefighters, and engineers over the disaster zone, and the 407 helicopter performed admirably," Host said.

"The purpose of the first flight each day was to fly the Los Alamos fire chief to find smoke in the area, then relay information to firefighters on the ground—distinguishing fires in the forest from those on DOE laboratory land.

"Follow-up flights included those with engineers and other scientists interested in a variety of issues, including the implications of the fire on the topography of the land," Host explained.

Native American tribes live in pueblos, or small villages, in the vicinity of the fire, including parts of the lab's property. "To evaluate the damage to their pueblos and sacred grounds, officials made the availability of the aircraft to these Native Americans a high priority," Host said.

When asked for his impression of the Los Alamos area, the pilot commented, "Due to the extreme temperatures of the fire, the ground was crystallized, rendering it virtually impermeable to water." He added, "When the rains come, runoff from the hills will present some extreme ecological problems."

Determining the long-term ramifications of the disastrous fire in Los Alamos will be an ongoing process, as will finding solutions to the many related environmental and engineering issues. Many resources will be required to renew and rebuild the Los Alamos area, and Western employees and management will continue to support those efforts.



## DOE establishes Los Alamos fund

The Department of Energy has established a disaster relief fund to help Federal and contractor employees of DOE's Los Alamos Area Office and Los Alamos National Laboratory.

"The Department of Energy has an obligation to help our Federal and contractor employees as well as the communities suffering because of the fire," said U.S. Secretary of Energy

Bill Richardson. "While there are relief agencies providing on-the-spot assistance, we know this will be a long and difficult recovery process for our employees and surrounding communities."

"This fund is intended to assist our employees and communities as they will surely face many unforeseen and uncovered expenses in the coming months," Richardson said.

### Forward donations to:

U.S. Department of Energy  
ATTN: Northern New Mexico  
Fire Recovery Fund  
P. O. Box 500  
Germantown, MD 20874

Checks should be made payable to the Department of Energy and indicate they are for the Fire Recovery Fund.