LANL names new head of Plutonium Science and Manufacturing

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LOS ALAMOS, New Mexico, March 2, 2012— Los Alamos National Laboratory Principal Associate Director for Weapons Programs Bret Knapp has announced the hiring of Jeff Yarbrough as the new associate director for Plutonium Science and Manufacturing (ADPSM).

Yarbrough joins Los Alamos from the B&W Pantex plant in Amarillo, Texas, where he led the Pantex directed stockpile work (DSW) and weapons science campaigns. During his DSW tenure, B&W Pantex earned the highest performance evaluation score in the history of the Pantex plant.

His selection was the result of a national search.

“Apart from Jeff’s stellar reputation, rigorous interviews left our selection committee convinced of his outstanding leadership abilities, integrity, deep expertise, and commitment to excellence in science and technology,” said Laboratory Director Charlie McMillan.

Yarbrough succeeds Carl Beard who was promoted to the position of Principal Associate Director for Operations and Business last May. In the interim, Tim George has been acting ADPSM.

“I’d like to say ‘thank you’ and acknowledge the outstanding job that deputy associate director Tim George did as acting ADPSM,” said Knapp. “We look forward to having a knowledgeable and experienced Yarbrough-George team in plutonium science and manufacturing.”

The plutonium science and manufacturing directorate is responsible for world-class, safe, secure, and reliable special nuclear material research, process development, technology demonstration, and manufacturing capabilities that support the nation's defense, energy, and environmental needs.

At Pantex Yarbrough also managed the applied technology/research and development division. He was responsible for high explosives manufacturing, R&D, certified material testing, and waste operations.

From 2002 to 2005, he managed Pantex’s manufacturing division, responsible for nuclear facility management, the assembly and disassembly of nuclear weapons, and special nuclear materials operations.

Yarbrough holds a bachelor of science degree in mechanical engineering from Texas Tech University and a master’s of business administration from West Texas A&M University.

He is expected to start the week of the March 19.