



Nevada Site Office News

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Bacchus Subcritical Experiment Conducted at Nevada National Security Site

Bacchus, a subcritical experiment, was successfully conducted at 5:35 pm on September 15, 2010, at the Nevada National Security Site. The experiment, conducted by Los Alamos National Laboratory, gathered scientific data that will provide crucial information to maintain the safety and effectiveness of the nation's nuclear weapons without having to conduct underground nuclear tests.

Bacchus was the 24th subcritical experiment to date. The previous subcritical experiment, **Unicorn**, was conducted on August 30, 2006.

Subcritical experiments examine the behavior of plutonium as it is strongly shocked by forces produced by chemical high explosives. Subcritical experiments produce essential scientific data and technical information used to help maintain the safety and effectiveness of the nuclear weapons stockpile. The experiments are subcritical; that is, no critical mass is formed and no self-sustaining nuclear chain reaction can occur; thus, there is no nuclear explosion.

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