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# Nevada National Security Site

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The primary mission of the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) is to maintain the safety, security and effectiveness of the nation's nuclear deterrent through surveillance programs and life extension campaigns. Exercising the skills and capabilities required to accomplish that mission provide the nation with a unique capability to support a wide variety of additional national security missions.

To maximize this potential, NNSA is exploring ways to expand the mission of the Nevada Test Site. To reflect this expanded mission, NNSA is renaming the Site the Nevada National Security Site (NNSS). The NNSS will fully utilize the inherent capabilities and remote location of the Site to support all of our Nation's nuclear, energy, and environmental security efforts. The following summary outlines current capabilities and missions at the NTS and highlights possible activities that can be pursued under the new national security mission of NNSS.

## Current Missions and Programs

- **NNSA Defense Programs:** NNSS's primary mission is to support the nuclear stockpile. Several major facilities at the site support that mission, including the Device Assembly Facility (DAF), the U1a underground complex (U1a), the Big Explosive Experimental Facility (BEEF), and the Joint Actinide Shock Physics Experimental Research (JASPER) Facility.
- **NNSA's Nuclear Nonproliferation Programs:** NNSS also provides a test location for evaluating sensor technologies, as well as for methods of detecting, characterizing, and monitoring nuclear weapons related activities that are useful for arms control and nonproliferation purposes.
- **NNSA Nuclear Emergency Response Capabilities:** NNSA assets deployed in Nevada currently play a critical role in the management of NNSA's National Nuclear Emergency Response efforts. These include the execution of Aerial Measurements, Consequence Management and Crisis Response, and provides program direction for the receipt, staging, assessment, disassembly, and/or destruction of nuclear or radiological devices during emergency scenarios.
- **Other Government Agency Programs:** NNSS currently supports other federal agency activities, such as remote imaging, chemical/biological projects, military training, and special projects. The NNSS also oversees and administers the conduct of training for first-responders in the prevention, protection, and response to possible terrorist use of radiological or nuclear material as a WMD.

## Possible Future NNS capabilities

- **Nonproliferation Testing and Evaluation:** The Nonproliferation Test and Evaluation Complex (NPTEC) is used by a number of government agencies to conduct low-level, controlled chemical releases in the open environment to simulate emissions from nuclear weapons production plants. Expanding this capability has potential applicability to a variety of missions.
- **High Explosive Testing and Experiments:** NNSA's Big Explosive Experimental Facility (BEEF) is currently used for weapons physics experiments and shaped charge development. The facility could also support High Explosive (HE) tests to discriminate specific weaponization activities, as well as additional stockpile stewardship, counterterrorism and nonproliferation experiments.
- **Radiological/Nuclear Countermeasures Tests:** The Radiological/Nuclear Countermeasures Tests and Evaluation Complex (RNCTEC) currently supports technology development, test, evaluation, and demonstration of radiological/nuclear countermeasures for Homeland Security applications. These missions could be expanded to include testing of special nuclear material in a variety of configurations.
- **Expanded Arms Control and Nonproliferation Verification Initiatives:** Certain arms control and nonproliferation verification capabilities currently being used by multiple government agencies could be expanded to allow NNSA to support broader missions. For example, Source Physics Experiments (SPE) could provide the opportunity to gather precise seismic data from well-designed small explosive experiments to allow new computer codes to be developed for the monitoring of low yield foreign nuclear tests.
- **Emergency Response and Nonproliferation R&D.** The Area 12 Tunnel Complex and surrounding camp are currently used to conduct experiments and training in support of military and intelligence entities, as well as small amounts of NNSA emergency response and nonproliferation R&D activity. These activities could be expanded.
- **DOE Environmental Management Programs:** Some of the facilities at NNSA could be useful to the Department's efforts to better understand and mitigate the environmental legacy of nuclear waste and storage, and provide technologies and facilities useful in the nation's effort to manage our response to climate change.

## Path Forward

On August 23, 2010, NNSA announced the renaming of the Nevada Test Site. Consistent with NNSA's goals for expanding the mission of the Site and incorporating guidance contained in Public Law 111-118, NNSA is expected to complete a report of the expanded capabilities of the Nevada National Security Site by the end of 2010. This report will also examine any potential site improvements that would be required to support a change in the Site's mission.



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