

100 evacuated as NM fire threatens Los Alamos lab

June 27 2011

(AP) -- Federal forest officials say a wind-driven wildfire has forced the evacuations of about 100 people in northern New Mexico and the closure of the Los Alamos National Laboratory.

U.S. Forest Service officials said early Monday that the fire has burned at least six square miles and is threatening buildings, power lines and natural gas lines. They say it is about one mile southwest of the government laboratory.

Lab officials has closed the facility and say all radioactive and hazardous materials were being protected. The site was founded during World War II to develop the world's first nuclear weapons.

Gov. Susanna Martinez toured the lab's emergency operations center late Sunday.

Los Alamos County authorities have issued voluntary evacuation orders for the towns of Los Alamos and White Rock. Residents from the rural towns of Cochiti Mesa and Las Conchas were evacuated after the fire started Sunday.

Smoke from the fire could be seen in Santa Fe, more than 30 miles to the southeast.

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Citation: 100 evacuated as NM fire threatens Los Alamos lab (2011, June 27) retrieved 23 June 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2011-06-nm-wildfire-evacuations-govt-lab.html>

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