safety in France.

It's generally believed that cleaning of the casks, which are immersed in radioactive cooling water when the spent fuel rods are loaded, has been inadequate. And, noting that utility companies' records show that the levels of contamination have gotten worse over time, the Paris-based World Information Service on Energy's Mycle Schneider, who uncovered the story, suggests that cross-contamination between railcars, trucks and casks is also a factor. In a report prepared for the French prime minister, Lionel Jospin, DSIN's Lacoste blames the utility companies for the transgressions. He also notes that his organization gained responsibility for nuclear waste transportation only last summer; before that, government oversight in France had been scanty.

Nuclear waste shipments will resume only after the cause of the contamination has been determined, and procedures implemented to remedy the situation, say German, French and Swiss officials. **TONI FEDER**

Eastman Exits Argonne

On 30 June, Dean E. Eastman stepped down from the directorship of Argonne National Laboratory to join the physics faculty at the University of Chicago, which runs Argonne for the Department of Energy. Eastman plans to resume research in condensed matter physics after nearly 20 years in technology administration, mostly at IBM Corp, where he worked before moving to Argonne two years ago.

As director of Argonne, Eastman worked to strengthen funding for the lab's core science and technology capabilities, including computer science, nuclear physics, energy and environmental research. He also made changes in administrative practices. "The result was that I moved more than $20 million per year from the administrative side of the lab to the programmatic side," he says.

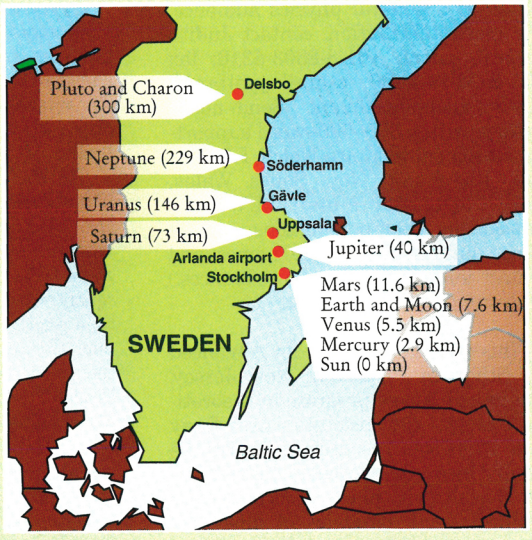
"Maintaining a quality lab with good job satisfaction under the continued pressure on discretionary funding is the greatest challenge in leading Argonne—as with other government-funded research institutions," says Eastman. He introduced new performance-based appraisal and compensation policies, so that Argonne employees now work more closely with their supervisors to define job expectations, and compensation is clearly linked to performance, he says. "To me, coming from the private sector, it was obvious that you want to have a system that both creates performance incentives and is viewed as fair. It helps the quality of the workplace."

Having gotten "pretty far" with his goals for the lab, Eastman says, he decided to step down. "Some months ago I reached the conclusion that I would really like to have a better balance between my professional and personal interests."

An interim director had not yet been named when PHYSICS TODAY went to press.

Sweden Recreates the Solar System

The next time you're in Stockholm picking up that Nobel, you could check out the Sweden Solar System, the world's largest model of our planetary system. Created on a scale of 1:20 million, the SSS is centered at Stockholm's Globe Arena, an 85-meter-high spherical building that represents the Sun and its corona. From there, the planets are arrayed along a mostly northerly line, with Mercury, Venus, Earth and Mars falling within Stockholm city limits, and Pluto lying some 300 kilometers distant.



Scaled models of the planets and accompanying exhibits are being installed at each site, says Gösta Gahm, an astronomy professor at Stockholm Observatory who, with plasma physicist Nils Brenning of the Royal Institute of Technology, has led the project. In May, a 62 cm diameter model of Venus was unveiled during the 250th anniversary celebration of Stockholm's Old Observatory. Last month, at a folk festival in the tiny burg of Delsbo, sculptor Bergsteinn Asbjornsson presented his model of Pluto (12 cm) and its satellite Charon (6 cm). Inspired by the pair's unusual synchronous rotation, he has depicted them as crystal orbs revolving around one another in tiny sandstone and basalt boats. The remaining planets will be completed over the coming year or so. "At this scale, one gets the direct feeling of how empty and desolate space is, how small and far away the planets are," notes Gahm.

The SSS first occurred to Brenning about four and a half years ago, as he prepared to give a talk at his daughter's grade school. Paging through back issues of *Sky and Telescope*, he happened to spot the article "Modeling the Universe in Your Mind," by Hugh Downs. "At that instant, the idea came ready-made into my mind to use the Globe Arena for the Sun," Brenning recalls. "I pulled out a map in the telephone directory and soon found that I could fit the inner planets quite nicely into the city of Stockholm." He continued to toy with the idea, and about a year later, he posed it to Gahm, who's known in Sweden as a science popularizer and served as director of the Swedish Museum of Natural History in the 1980s. As Brenning remembers, "Gösta simply said, 'Nice idea, let's do it!' " And so they set about selecting sites, drumming up interest and, not least of all, raising money.

So far, the project has been budgeted about $750 000 from various sources, with additional costs being borne by each site and defrayed by a lot of volunteering, by Gahm, Brenning and others. Although still unfinished, the SSS has received wide coverage in the Swedish press, and public interest is "already enormous," Gahm says. Indeed, adds Sven Lorentzi of the Stockholm Information Service, it promises to become a major tourist attraction—for those who want to travel the Solar System without leaving Sweden. **JEAN KUMAGAI**

IN BRIEF

The Australian Institute of Physics is accepting nominations for its second annual Women in Physics Lecturer. The award will go to a woman who has made a significant contribution to physics research and who has also demonstrated public speaking ability. The winner will give a lecture tour in Australia for 2–3 weeks next