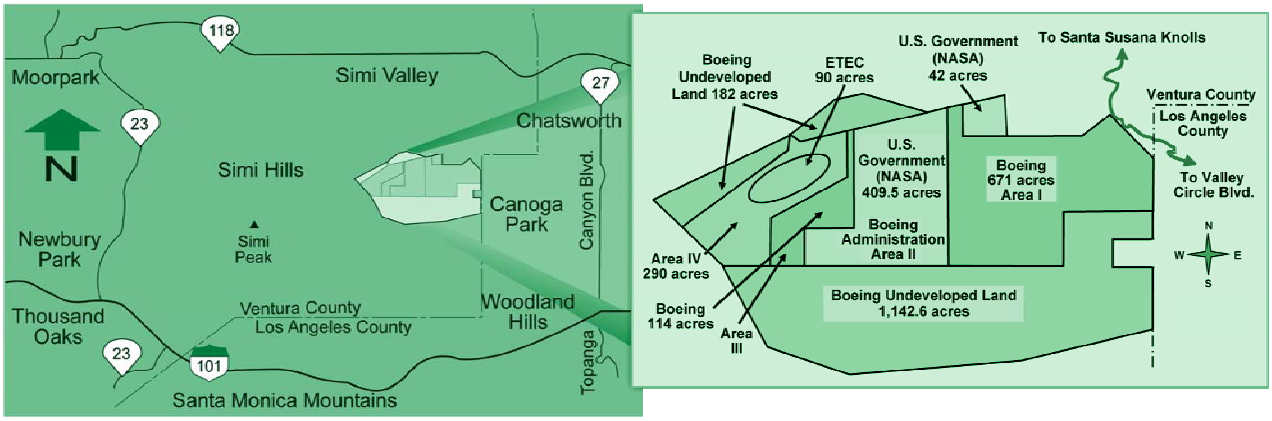
Introduction to Santa Susana Field Laboratory and the Energy Technology Engineering Center

The Santa Susana Field Laboratory is located approximately 29 miles northwest of downtown Los Angeles, California, in the southeast corner of Ventura County. The SSFL occupies approximately 2,850 acres of hilly terrain, with approximately 1,100 feet of topographic relief near the crest of the Simi Hills.

The SSFL is jointly owned by The Boeing Company (Boeing) and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), and is operated by Boeing. The site is divided into four administrative areas (Areas I, II, III, and IV) and areas of undeveloped land to both the north and south. Areas I, III, and IV and the undeveloped land are owned by Boeing. Area II is owned by NASA. Ninety acres of Area IV were leased to the United States Department of Energy (DOE) to conduct a broad range of energy-related research and development. The undeveloped lands of the SSFL have never been used for industrial activities.



Prior to development, the land at the SSFL was used for ranching. During 1948 North American Aviation (NAA), a predecessor company to Boeing, began using (by lease) what is now known as the northeastern portion, or Area I of the SSFL. The majority of the SSFL was acquired with the purchase of the Silvernale property in 1954, and development of the western portion of the SSFL began soon after. Undeveloped land parcels to the south of the SSFL were acquired during 1968 and 1976 and to the north during 1998. No site-related operations were conducted in these undeveloped portions of the SSFL.

Starting in 1948, activities at SSFL included research, development, and testing of liquid-fueled rocket engines and associated components such as pumps and valves. Since 1996, Boeing has conducted operations at the SSFL. Predecessor companies to Boeing have included the Rocketdyne Propulsion and Power Division (Rocketdyne) of NAA and the Rockwell International Corporation. The majority of rocket engine testing and ancillary support operations occurred from the 1950s through the early 1970s. These were conducted by Rocketdyne in Areas I and III in support of various government space programs and in Area II on behalf of NASA. Rocket engine testing frequency decreased during the 1980s and 1990s, and ceased in 2006. Currently, no rocket engine test areas are in operation. In addition to the primary facility operation of rocket engine testing, the SSFL was used for research, development, and testing of water jet pumps, lasers, and

liquid metal heat exchanger components; nuclear energy research; and research and development of related technologies.

Nuclear energy research, testing, and support facilities were located within the 90-acre portion of Area IV that was leased to DOE and designated as the Energy Technology Engineering Center (ETEC). Atomics International (AI), a division of NAA, and Rocketdyne conducted operations on behalf of DOE, with operations occurring primarily from the 1950s through the 1980s. Area IV was inactive prior to 1953, when the land was purchased by NAA. From the mid-1950s until the mid-1990s, DOE and its predecessor agencies sponsored nuclear energy research and energy development projects within Area IV of the SSFL. The research and energy development activities included nuclear energy operations (development, fabrication, disassembly, and examination of nuclear reactors, reactor fuel, and other radioactive materials) and large-scale liquid sodium metal experiments for testing liquid metal fast breeder reactor components. Nuclear energy activities within Area IV ceased in 1988.

When it terminated all nuclear research in SSFL Area IV in 1988, DOE shifted its focus at the facility to facility decontamination, and demolition (D&D), and environmental cleanup.

In May 2007, the U.S. District Court of Northern California ruled (in response to a legal challenge) that DOE must prepare an Environmental Impact Statement prior to cleanup and closure of its operations of ETEC at SSFL. Before evaluating alternatives for cleaning up the site, the US Environmental Protection Agency will conduct a thorough radiological investigation. Before that begins, DOE will conduct a cultural resources survey. The purpose of the December 3, 2009 tour will be to share EPA's plans for its investigation as well as DOE's plans for the cultural resources survey with Native Americans. DOE invites you to submit your suggestions for the cultural resources survey.