

WIPP Quick Facts

(As of 01-18-06)

4,263

Shipments received since opening

34,840

Cubic meters of waste disposed

74,213

Containers disposed in the underground

WIPP Home Page address has changed

WIPP's address on the Internet has changed to meet an Office of Management and Budget requirement. The WIPP Home Page's new address is:

www.wipp.energy.gov

As always, TRU TeamWorks will be accessible from the main page.

WIPP Hazardous Waste Facility Permit Modification update

CBFO and WTS completed their comments on the draft Section 311/ RH TRU Waste Permit and submitted them to the New Mexico Environment Department on January 17. The public comment period for the draft permit runs through February 22.

Assistant Secretary Rispoli visits WIPP



CBFO Manager Dave Moody points out operational details to Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management James Rispoli (center) and policy advisor Steve Cuevas (right) during a tour of the WIPP underground.

DOE Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management James Rispoli and policy advisor Steve Cuevas made a first visit to the DOE Carlsbad Field Office and WIPP site January 12. Their day began in early morning meetings with CBFO senior staff, followed by a DOE all-hands meeting.

"Jim is a people person," notes CBFO Manager Dave Moody. "He values employees and their opinions. He particularly enjoyed the one-on-one time spent with staff." Later, Rispoli toured the Skeen-Whitlock Building and new TRANSCOM Center, where Security Consultants Group personnel briefed him on TRANSCOM's shipment tracking capabilities.

The Assistant Secretary and Mr. Cuevas then left for the WIPP site, where they were met by contractor managers and DOE site personnel. They toured the Waste Handling Building, followed by an underground tour through the mine where they observed crews laying blocks at Panel 2, waste emplacement in Panel 3 and mining activities in Panel 4. The experimental area was the last stop on the underground tour.

"The Assistant Secretary is proud of WIPP's success and remarked that the project's emphasis on safety came through loud and clear," Moody adds. Taking a break from

The focus of CBFO-WTS comments was:

- Confirmation at the WIPP
- Radiography/visual examination requirements
- NMED-proposed alternative dispute resolution procedure
- Miscellaneous proposed changes to the draft permit

A public hearing on the draft permit has not been set.

Josey admitted to the NM Bar Association

Raeburn S. Josey, WTS associate general counsel, successfully passed the New Mexico Bar Examination in July and subsequently completed the required Professional Responsibility Exam in November. On January 6, Josey traveled to Santa Fe to be sworn into the New Mexico Bar, with all of the rights and privileges to represent WTS in New Mexico courts.



Raeburn Josey (right) was surprised by well-wishers after being admitted to the New Mexico Bar Association. Also pictured (l to r) are Sharleen Strong (WTS), Elizabeth Rose (CBFO) and Gloria Johnson (WTS).

Josey joined WTS' Legal Department in January 2000, relocating to New Mexico from his hometown of Atlanta, Georgia where he previously worked as an assistant solicitor with the Atlanta

schedule, the Assistant Secretary asked Moody to take him on a side-tour through the city before attending a reception with city leaders. "He is very interested in this community and was pleased at the opportunity to meet city leaders who have been so supportive of the project."

Corporate Board focusing on the future

Over 120 leaders of the TRU waste community spent two days meeting in Carlsbad to discuss the current status of projects at their sites and to plan for the future. The next few years look like busy ones for WIPP.

The National TRU Waste Corporate Board, led by Dr. Inés Triay, Chief Operating Officer for the DOE's Environmental Management Program, and Dr. Dave Moody, CBFO manager, had a full agenda. They led discussions on strategies and priorities for safely reducing risk, and increasing characterization, transportation and disposal efficiencies. Both listed sustained shipping, implementing remote-handled (RH) waste disposal, improving operational efficiencies and continued excellence in safety and compliance as top priorities.



Bright lights, bright minds. The National TRU Waste Corporate Board met in Carlsbad on January 11-12. Above, Dr. Inés Triay leads the discussion.

"Our continuing challenge," explains Moody, "is to reduce risk to workers, the public and the environment, while increasing efficiencies."

The Board also discussed strategies for expanding the transportation envelope and sustaining 25 to 30 shipments per week to WIPP. Shipping schedules from FY06 through FY12 were discussed to ensure the strategies would allow the generator sites to meet their regulatory milestones and clean-up schedules.

The meeting also offered the Central Characterization Program (CCP) a chance to celebrate its successes. CCP completed TRU waste cleanup at five small quantity sites during the past year. That brings the total sites with waste remaining down from the original 30 to 18.

Municipal Court and was a sole practitioner in employment and general law.

Food drive successful



The Safety Awareness Committee's food drive to benefit the Carlsbad Community Soup Kitchen was a huge success. Above, committee member Leo Estrada prepares to deliver a truckload of food that was collected at the WIPP site and at the Skeen-Whitlock Building.

The committee appreciates the generosity of all WIPP employees who participated.

Coalition seeks volunteers

The Carlsbad Community Anti-Drug/Gang Coalition needs your help to put an end to drug and other abuse problems in Eddy County.

Volunteers are needed for the following action groups:

- | Faith-based
- | Legislation
- | Prevention/intervention
- | Law enforcement
- | Treatment
- | Crime/drug stoppers
- | Student committee
- | Budget/grants
- | Information/communication

To join the coalition or for more information, please call the Mayor's office at 887-3798.

Because a drug-free community – makes a great place to live.

The second day of meetings was devoted to a workshop on CBFO plans to implement the disposal of RH TRU waste. The regulatory framework and requirements of both the EPA and the NMED were discussed along with information about what help the sites could expect from CCP in getting ready to ship their RH waste to WIPP. The draft Hazardous Waste Facility Permit issued in November includes provisions for the disposal of RH-TRU waste, but implementation must wait until after the final permit is issued.

The Corporate Board integrates the activities of TRU waste sites and WIPP. The meetings provide a forum to discuss complex-wide issues, make recommendations to resolve issues and develop priorities for limited resources.

Contributing writers:

Stephie Jennings (LANL)

Carla Mewhinney (SNL)

Low Dose Radiation Effects Summit held in Carlsbad

How do low-level exposures to ionizing radiation affect humans? What basis do regulators use for setting acceptable exposure limits for radiological workers? For the public? A group of preeminent international researchers gathered this week in Carlsbad to discuss the subject, and WIPP's possible role in future low-dose effects research.

Currently, regulators use the Linear Non-Threshold (LNT) hypothesis to set administrative standards. LNT is based on extrapolated data from Japanese survivors of the A-bombs who were exposed to high doses of radiation.

As a result, various regulators set different standards. According to a Summit report, the most stringent standards, without scientific basis, lead to high regulatory and clean-up costs. At this time, there is no conclusive evidence of any effects to humans from low total exposures up to 10,000 millirem.

The three-day scientific summit, hosted by ORION International Technologies, Inc, an Albuquerque-based technology service firm and DOE's Carlsbad Field Office, included a tour of the WIPP facility. The scientists are considering the possibility of locating a research laboratory in WIPP's underground experimental area, where background radiation levels are 25 times lower than at the surface. A lab shielded from naturally occurring cosmic radiation would offer scientists an ideal setting to study biological effects from radiation at sub-normal levels.



All eyes were on CEMRC Director Jim Conca at a session on Tuesday.

Team to review Earned Value Management System

A team of 11 DOE reviewers will be on site the week of January 23 to evaluate the WTS Earned Value Management System (EVMS).

An EVMS correlates costs, schedules and technical aspects of a project. Ideally, the system allows users to measure progress, accumulate actual costs, analyze deviations from plans and forecast the completion of project activities. The EVMS provides current cost-to-value information that allows for timely adjustments, if needed.

The team will assess the following WTS systems for compliance to EVMS criteria established in DOE Order 413.3 and ANSI/EIA 748-A-1998:

- | Accounting
- | Estimating
- | Planning and budgeting
- | Reporting and analysis

Reviewers also plan to interview WTS cost account managers to determine how effectively the organization has implemented five EVMS categories: 1) organization; 2) planning, scheduling and budgeting; 3) accounting considerations; 4) analysis and management reports, and 5) revisions and data maintenance.

The week-long review is scheduled to end Friday, January 27.

Three types of biologic research are being proposed by attendees: cell and molecular studies, whole animal studies (mice), and environmental research using other organisms such as bacteria and insects. "The primary question is: what type of experiments do we want to do?" says Ray Guilmette of Los Alamos National Laboratory and past president of the Health Physics Society. "The "decision tree" has to be gone through."

Other discussion centered around the challenges of constructing an underground research lab, whether one could be built in place or portable clean rooms or vans could be fabricated elsewhere and downloaded into the underground experimental area. Summit participants say a sterile, dust-free environment would be required for lab work.

To maximize return on taxpayer dollars, Congress provided for additional use of the federally-funded WIPP facility in the Land Withdrawal Act, on condition that such use would not interfere with WIPP's primary waste disposal mission. In 2001, DOE offered WIPP's available underground space to the scientific community.

At summit's end, Guilmette says the scientists will draft summary reports, then determine how to proceed. He says low-level radiation effects research is promising: "There's a big toolbox biologists have now that could be used here." The summit was held January 16 -18 at the Pecos River Village .

Lock her up and throw away the key?



"Don't cry for me, WIPP," pleaded WTS employee Kim Greer as she was handcuffed by Carlsbad Policeman Scot Naylor. Okay, that didn't happen. Actually, Greer was participating in a fundraiser for the Muscular Dystrophy Association. Her "arrest" at the Skeen-Whitlock Building raised over \$300. The association's entire event raised \$12,000.

WIPP initiates fuel conservation

Recent directives by President Bush and the Department of Energy require federal agencies to conserve fuel. WIPP, too, will be affected by the measures.

WIPP has identified four vehicles that will be placed on stand-down until April 30, 2006. The restricted use of these vehicles and emphasis on fuel conservation awareness will help WIPP meet conservation goals.

As an added conservation measure, WIPP will no longer provide fuel for site personnel who fail to ensure that they have sufficient fuel to return home from the site. However, if employees are called out for emergencies or during off-hours and are in need of fuel, the three-gallon rule will be strictly enforced.

Ater and Strait published in ASQ Quality Engineering Journal

A paper written by WTS employees Ed Ater and Anne Strait will be published in the January-March 2006 edition (Vol.18, No.1) of the Quality Engineering Journal-American Society for Quality (ASQ). The joint effort, "Graded Approach to Application of Quality Assurance Controls at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant," documents the WTS re-engineering initiative for the application of a graded approach and functional classification at WIPP.

Click [here](#) to review the paper abstract and biographical sketches.

Successful TRUPACT-II recovery the result of careful planning

On the morning of December 27, 2005, years of WIPP training were put to use by a number of organizations. At approximately 5:15 a.m. a WIPP truck transporting three empty TRUPACT-II shipping packages en route to the Idaho National Laboratory overturned on Interstate 15 just outside of Blackfoot, Idaho.

As designed, the TRUPACT-II tie downs allowed the packages to break free and separate from the trailer. Two packages came to rest on one side of the Interstate and the third package on the other side. The packages received scratches and minor dents, but remained intact as expected.

The driver of the WIPP shipment immediately notified the Central Monitoring Room, which in turn notified the proper authorities in both Idaho and Carlsbad. CBFO and WTS on-call personnel were informed and immediately reported to the Skeen-Whitlock Building to begin making additional notifications to key agencies and individuals. Working with Idaho State Police, the group soon had a recovery plan in place. "This is the type of training you never want to actually use; however, things went as practiced," said Mike Brown, CBFO Transportation Packaging manager.

Part of the extensive training WIPP drivers receive includes recovering a TRUPACT-II shipping container. Although neither driver sustained serious injury in the accident, both were transported to a local medical facility for evaluation and released. Due to the examination, they were unavailable to perform recovery operations. Instead, WIPP on-call personnel and carrier management diverted another WIPP shipment carrying empty TRUPACT-IIs to the accident scene. Those drivers assumed responsibility for recovery operations.

The carrier arranged for a crane and flatbed truck to load the TRUPACT-II packages and transport them to a local facility for temporary storage. The packages have been returned to Carlsbad for further evaluation.

"Recovery operations went extremely well. The diverted drivers did an excellent job, as did the crane operator, ensuring a safe recovery. However, the Idaho State Police deserve the credit. They not only ensured the safety of other motorists and recovery personnel, but were instrumental in recovery operations," Brown added.

January Birthdays!

Mark Friend (WTS)
January 1

Dennis Hofer (WTS)
January 1

Bill Bartlett (CEHMM)
January 1

Kimberly Green (LANL)
January 4

Jo-Ann Garcia (CTAC)
January 5

Dave Hughes (WRES)
January 7

Bob Prentiss (WTS)
January 8

Ron Reeves (WRES)
January 8

Randy Chatfield (WTS)
January 12

Leslie Aragon (WTS)
January 12

Joel Siegel (WRES)
January 12

Doris Rodriguez (L&M)
January 14

Candace Nance (WTS)
January 16

Parrish Roush (WRES)
January 18

Amy Fierro (WTS)
January 20

Ernest Preciado (CBFO)
January 21

WIPP receives safety accolades

Three safety accolades in a single day is one milestone that will be difficult to surpass. Dignitaries from DOE Headquarters, Washington Group International and the community were on-hand for the January 9 presentation of some prestigious safety awards.



Above - CBFO Manager Dave Moody presents a VPP recertification certificate to Dave Sjomeling, Steve Castro and Dick Raaz. **Below left** - Castro, Sjomeling and Raaz accept the Washington Group International President's Award for Safety Excellence from Brad Giles, Washington Group vice president, Safety and Health. **Bottom right** - Giles and Washington Group's 2005 safety slogan contest winner Martin Keithley.



Brad Giles, vice president, Safety and Health, from Washington Group International, first presented an award to Martin Keathley (WTS). Keathley's safety slogan "Safely Building the Future," was chosen from among more than 700 entries to win the 2005 Washington Group International safety slogan contest.

Giles then presented Washington Group International's President's Award for Safety Excellence. WTS achieved the award by working more than 1.5 million hours since the last injury causing days away from work. WTS General Manager Dick Raaz, WTS Safety Manager Craig Herndon and WTS employees Dave Sjomeling and Steve Castro accepted the award.

Rose Scott (WTS)

January 23

Miriam Whatley (WTS)

January 23

Ron Richardson (WRES)

January 27

Gail Ellet (L&M)

January 27

Linda Pastorello (WRES)

January 27

Beverly Crawford (LANL)

January 27

Rick Salness (WRES)

January 27

Cliff Stroud (LANL)

January 28

Jerry Osborne (WTS)

January 28

Ross Kirkes (SNL)

January 30

David Ramirez (WTS)

January 31

Dr. Inés Triay, chief operating officer for DOE's Environmental Management Program, returned to Carlsbad for the event. "I can't tell you how proud Headquarters is of this project," said Triay to the applause of employees. She then introduced CBFO Manager Dave Moody, who presented a framed certificate and a Voluntary Protection Program (VPP) flag to WTS in recognition of its recertification as a VPP Star Site.

WIPP was the first DOE site to be recognized as a VPP Star Site in 1994 and has maintained that designation for more than a decade. The VPP program promotes safety and health excellence through cooperative efforts among labor, management and government at DOE contractor sites. The total recordable case rates for DOE-VPP sites are significantly below private industry rates and have demonstrated significant improvements in reducing injuries and illnesses.

Carlsbad Mayor Bob Forrest and State Senator Vernon Asbill were also in attendance. In their remarks, they congratulated employees on their safety achievements and emphasized the great asset WIPP has been to the city and the state.

Is your birthday on our list?
Employee birthdays are submitted once and must be re-approved for publication by you every year. Please submit birth dates to the TRU TeamWorks staff at:
TRUTeamWorks@wipp.ws.

The U.S. Department of Energy
Waste Isolation Pilot Plant

Please send comments and/or suggestions to: [TRU TeamWorks](mailto:TRUTeamWorks@wipp.ws)

