

# TRU TeamWorks

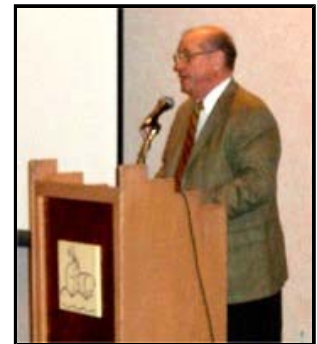
February 5, 2004

A weekly e-newsletter for the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant team

## The Big Story Southeastern NM Legislative delegation WIPP update

The New Mexico legislative session is in full swing at the state's capital, and WIPP joined the activities last Thursday by hosting the project's annual update. Each year the Southeastern New Mexico Legislative delegation sponsors the WIPP update breakfast for legislators, cabinet members and other invited guests as an opportunity to brief government officials on the project's status. The update also gives delegates a chance to meet directly with WIPP leaders and ask questions about important WIPP issues.

CBFO Acting Manager R. Paul Detwiler and WTS General Manager Steve Warren were on hand to meet with the elected officials. The update was well-attended, according to Rose Scott, WTS Communication, saying "We had approximately 60 guests this year."



**Right: Senator Don Kidd introduces R. Paul Detwiler to the gathered delegates and government representatives.**

Notable guests included representatives from New Mexico tribal governments, New Mexico Attorney General Patricia Madrid, Environment Department Secretary Ron Curry and Energy Minerals & Natural Resources Department Secretary Joanna Prukop. "Governor Richardson was not able to attend, but did send a representative," Scott says.

Senator Don Kidd opened the event by introducing Detwiler, who took the CBFO helm last month. Representative John Heaton and Senator Carroll Leavell also spoke to the assembly. "The WIPP information update is an excellent opportunity for state officials to learn more about WIPP in the midst of the busy session," comments Scott.



**Representative Heaton takes a moment to note that WIPP has been an asset to southeastern New Mexico.**

The legislative session is ongoing and will end at noon on February 19.



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### Feedback

Contact us with feedback or submit your e-mail address for updates. Click [here](#) to e-mail.

WIPP Shipments  
(as of 2/9/04 at  
8:21 a.m.)

Shipments scheduled to arrive at WIPP this week  
20

Total shipments received at WIPP  
2,332

Total volume disposed at WIPP  
17,875 m<sup>3</sup>

FY04 Performance Metrics

### In the news



ANWTP status



Single containment



Another angle



Awards



Stunning knockout



Our Team News

**It's all about the process**



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BNFL Inc.'s Advanced Mixed Waste Treatment Project (AMWTP) at the Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory, is preparing to become a major player in the WIPP success story. As the Treatment Facility is undergoing a rigorous start-up and commissioning process, there are a number of regulatory steps that must be taken, such as EPA approval of a revised performance assessment that includes AMWTP waste. Upon completion of these regulatory steps, AMWTP is scheduled to begin shipments later this year.

The AMWTP is responsible for retrieving, certifying and preparing 65,000 m<sup>3</sup> of TRU waste for disposal at WIPP. Approximately 54,000 m<sup>3</sup> of the waste is retrievably stored in earthen berms and 11,000 m<sup>3</sup> is stored aboveground at INEEL's Radioactive Waste Management Complex.



***An operator observes test drums as they are transported on a conveyor in the characterization facility at the AMWTP.***



***An operator removes a drum from an unburied berm stack.***

AMWTP personnel will accomplish their clean-up mission by processing a large portion of the site's TRU waste through a production line within the AMWTP treatment facility to optimize all WIPP transportation and disposal criteria. The process begins with waste retrieval. Box and drum waste containers are "mined" out of earthen-covered berms or taken from above-ground storage areas. Characterization follows, during which the containers are tested using RTR, NDA and headsapce gas sampling to determine content properties. Some containers can be sent directly to WIPP after characterization. Others, such as those containing organic sludges, must be treated before they can meet WIPP requirements.

Approximately 70 percent of the waste is opened and sorted remotely by technicians. Restricted items are removed and large items are reduced in size to fit into 55-gallon drums. The waste is then loaded into a new, bagless drum. This drum is then compressed to further reduce the waste volume. The AMWTP's high-force press can compact an entire 55-gallon drum and its contents to about one-fifth the original size (approximately 11 gallons in size).

Depending on weight and wattage, three to five of these drums are then remotely loaded into 100-gallon barrels specifically designed for transportation in the TRUPACT-II. A TRUPACT-II will then be loaded to carry up to six 100-gallon barrels at a time. "The AMWTP personnel will load-manage shipments to achieve maximum efficiency," notes Phil Gregory, WTS Senior Technical Advisor. "They can accomplish this because the waste properties are well-documented before and confirmed by characterization as the containers are processed."

"The AMWTP is working to accelerate clean-up at INEEL," continues Gregory. "In the process they are fulfilling a commitment DOE made to the state of Idaho."

## Single containment - NRC news



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Recently, the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (USNRC)\* approved a revision to the Code of Federal Regulations (10 CFR Part 71) that addresses the packaging of radioactive materials for transportation. The revision, which will become effective October 1, 2004, allows greater than 20 curies of plutonium to be transported in single-containment packages.

USNRC initiated the change to mirror regulations of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). IAEA serves as the world center for nuclear cooperation and international nuclear security. Radioactive payloads of 20 curies of plutonium or more are commonly shipped throughout Europe in single containment packages.

In its decision to revise 10 CFR Part 71, the USNRC determined that plutonium is no greater risk to the environment or human health than other radionuclides that do not require double containment.

As stated in USNRC's position on the final rule (7590-01-P): "The USNRC has made a finding that single containment of radioactive material provides an adequate level of safety for all radioactive shipments."

USNRC will continue to require single containment packages to meet stringent standards for normal conditions of transport, as well as hypothetical accidents. Requirements for single and double containment packages are identical. Single containment packages have to successfully pass a series of analyses and/or tests before being certified for use by the USNRC.

What effect will the revision have on WIPP transportation? "None, for the time being," says CBFO Chief Scientist Roger Nelson. "WIPP will continue to use the TRUPACT-II to meet TRU waste cleanup schedules."

Packaging Technology, Inc. of Washington designed the TRUPACT-III, a single containment, horizontal load package for possible use in shipping large-boxed TRU wastes to WIPP. The company plans to submit an application to USNRC for TRUPACT-III in the near future.

***\* In past publications, TRU TeamWorks has referred to the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission with the acronym NRC. To eliminate confusion between the National Research Council, part of the National Academy of Sciences, TRU TeamWorks will hereinafter refer to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission as the USNRC.***



**WIPP - from a UK angle**



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As the world's first deep-geologic repository for permanent disposal of radioactive wastes. WIPP has a lot to offer the nuclear waste management industry. Last year, WIPP hosted 95 foreign visitors from Finland, China, South Korea, Japan, Sweden, Canada, Germany, France and the United Kingdom. Most came to benchmark WIPP for fledgling programs in their own countries.



**WTS Principal Scientist Norbert Remppe (second from right) explains WIPP's roof support system to visitors.**

WIPP's unique underground repository, safety programs, facility and transportation engineering never fail to impress. To get the WIPP perspective from a UK angle, Alan Edwards responds to a short list of questions regarding his December visit to WIPP. Edwards is the director of the United Kingdom's Department of Trade & Industry's Liabilities Management Unit and the forerunner, says Edwards, of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority. His organization is responsible for preparing "the way ahead for the discharge of nuclear liabilities in the UK."

**Q. What did you expect of WIPP, based on information you had seen prior to visiting the facility?**

**A.** I was expecting to be impressed – and I was not disappointed. It is very encouraging to see such a facility and to see it in operation. While in the UK we currently have no such disposal facilities as WIPP, we do have plans to address this in due course. It may take a while for a consensus to emerge regarding the right course for the UK.

Of particular interest was the transportation side and to understand a little of the history, the licensing and permitting, and the interfacing with the local community, etc.

**Q. What was your impression of Carlsbad?**

**A.** Carlsbad and its surroundings are very attractive from a visitor's perspective – if something of a challenge to get to. I regret that I was not able to take more time to enjoy them while I was there; perhaps next time.

**Q. How might your visit benefit your organization?**

**A.** As we in the UK move down the path toward a disposal facility of some kind, I would hope that we maintain a dialog with WIPP in order to avail ourselves of the benefit of the wealth of experience you are gathering. For me, it was both a memorable and rewarding visit that met my objectives and exceeded my expectations.

WIPP continues to demonstrate that radioactive wastes can be safely managed, transported and disposed – a story worth sharing with the nation and world.



WIPP earns safety excellence award



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WTS recently received the State Mine Inspectors Safety Excellence Award for its outstanding safety record in site operations. The award was presented during the 13<sup>th</sup> annual New Mexico State Mine Inspectors Safety and Health Conference, January 22, at New Mexico's Institute of Mining and Technology in Socorro.

Subhash Sethi, WTS Repository Development Project manager, who accepted the award on behalf of WTS, says: "WIPP has a great safety program. I want to congratulate the employees who make each day a safe work day; this award was earned by them. I am proud to be a part of this group, where every person works toward achieving our common goal of quality job performance with zero injuries."



Last November, WTS was honored by the New Mexico Mining Association with a similar award, the "Mine Operator of the Year," based on the company's consistent record of mining safety. WTS, management and operating contractor for DOE at WIPP, has earned the award 17 years in a row.

**Left to right: R. Paul Detwiler, Mike Lipscomb, Ron Galbraith, Lloyd Piper, Scott Anderson, Billy Beeman, James Cobb, John Garcia, Richard Farrell, and Steve Warren**



Commenting on the recent safety award, Bruce Lilly, assistant manager, CBFO Office of Safety and Operations, says "The heartbeat of any good organization is its people, and the people at WIPP prove that point by demonstrating on a daily basis what safety is all about. Congratulations to all the workers at WIPP that made this award possible."

**Left: Scott Anderson, WTS Operations manager, accepts the Voluntary Protection Protection Star of Achievement award from Lloyd Piper, CBFO deputy manager.**



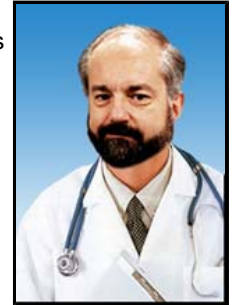
On Wednesday, WIPP site employees gathered for an "inside the fence" celebration of their collective achievements, which include the Mine Inspectors Safety Excellence Award, Voluntary Protection Program Star of Achievement Award and Washington Group International's President's Award. Employees were also recognized for their extraordinary support during holiday maintenance outages.

**Left: WTS General Manager Steve Warren proudly displays the Washington Group International's President's Award.**

**Dr. DeVito vs. Mr. Doom! It's a K-O!**

*... And the winner is Dr. DeVito in a stunning knockout!*

It was the morning of January 29 in WIPPnet cyberspace. No less than 500 incoming virus-laden e-mails were knocked cold in a crushing blow from WIPP's own Dr. DeVito (aka Paul DeVito, WTS Cyber Security).



The sinister Mr. Doom (aka W32/Mydoom@mm mass mailer e-mail worm) was vanquished. DeVito and his deadly Tumbleweed e-mail sniffing software saved the day for the WIPPnet metropolis. So goes the daily saga, as DeVito quietly defeats vicious cyber-viruses attempting to break through our firewall and content-scanning software. Boom! Another K-O!

Like any good doctor, DeVito can prescribe the cure, but we must take the medicine. Employees can weaken our IT system by failing to virus-scan disks and CDs before opening them on the network. The McAfee virus detection signature file on our desktops should be within one to two weeks of the current date to be effective. Right-click your mouse on the McAfee V-shield down on the system tray and left-click on the "About ..." menu to check the date. Contact TechSupport at 7422 to update your software if needed.

More than 81,000 virus threats exist today in cyberspace. Network Associates, Inc. (NAI), and its McAfee AVERT site (<http://www.nai.com/us/index.asp>) post detailed information about where viruses come from, how they infect computer systems, and how to remove them. Mydoom was assigned high-risk outbreak warning recently. This destructive worm spreads via e-mail as a binary attachment that masquerades as a text file. NAI says the virus attacked as many as 25 companies in the Asia Pacific region, Canada, Europe, Japan, Latin America and the United States.

DeVito works to save WIPPnetters from pesky hoaxes, too. He debunks e-mail warnings about disk-eating attachments allegedly poised to invade our inboxes like Trojan horses. Before acting on any virus warning that doesn't come from WIPPnet sources, alert DeVito and/or TechSupport. "Our system is safe," says DeVito. We exercise a lot of care to identify the latest viruses."

**DeVito's best advice for WIPPnet users:**

- 1) Update virus-scanning software
- 2) Know the sender
- 3) Question unexpected or out-of-character messages
- 4) Pre-scan files before opening
- 5) Be aware that .exe files can be hazardous

**Mydoom Symptoms**

Mydoom Internet worm activates and opens Windows Notepad, filling it with nonsense characters. It tries to spread via e-mail, copying itself to shared directories. Users should immediately delete any email containing:

**From: (Spoofed)**

**Subject: (Random)**

**Body of email: (Varies)**

**Attachment: Varies, but often arrives as .exe, .PIF, .CMD or .SCR in a ZIP archive that is 22,528 bytes**

**The Cure**

NAI McAfee AVERT site has the cure for Mydoom at [http://vil.nai.com/vil/content/v\\_100983.htm](http://vil.nai.com/vil/content/v_100983.htm). Users of McAfee Security anti-virus products may update their system from that page.



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### CBFO welcomes new management staff

**Deborah Howard** joined CBFO in November as the Contact-Handled (CH) TRU Waste Program Manager. Prior to joining WIPP, she worked for the Department of Defense on alternative treatment processes for demilitarization of conventional weapons. She has also worked at DOE/NV and the Nevada Test Site. Howard's role with CBFO is to manage the acceptance of CH TRU waste at WIPP.



*Debra Howard*

**Russell J. McCallister** is CBFO's new Remote-Handled (RH) TRU Waste Characterization and Certification Program manager. He is responsible for establishing RH-TRU characterization requirements and criteria and ensuring compliance.

McCallister came to WIPP from the Rocky Flats Field Office where he was a subject matter expert in environmental compliance and restoration. He was involved in the development of environmental restoration programs, characterization of potential spill sites, the evaluation of resource requirements, waste management activities and radionuclide cleanup standards for RFETS.



*Russell J. McCallister*

He holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Colorado in chemistry and mathematics. An outdoor enthusiast, McCallister enjoys skiing, rock climbing, hiking and backpacking. He is a Level IV-certified ski instructor and has assisted as a part-time ski patrolman in Colorado for the past seven years.