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By the Numbers

Shipments scheduled to arrive at WIPP for the week 4/18 - 4/24/04: **25**

Total shipments received at WIPP: **2,488**

Total volume disposed at WIPP: **19,339 m³**

FY04 Performance Metrics

State legislators tour WIPP

Members of the National Conference of State Legislators (NCSL) Radioactive Waste Program toured WIPP on Tuesday. Visitors included state legislators Senator Karen Fraser, WA; NM Representative John Heaton; NM Senators Carroll Leavell and Richard Martinez and other invited guests from Washington, Idaho, Nevada and New Mexico.

The group's purpose in touring WIPP was to gain a better understanding of facility and transportation operations, as well as characterization issues. While some members had toured the facility before, it was a first-time experience for others. CBFO Acting Manager R. Paul Detwiler and others accompanied the group to answer questions related to WIPP operations and how DOE TRU waste cleanup initiatives affect the legislators' respective states.

Prior to the facility tour, CBFO Chief Scientist Roger Nelson briefed visitors on the status of WIPP operations and the project's accomplishments in five years of operation. Detwiler then presented DOE's evaluation of Hanford tank wastes and the issues involved in the recent debate over whether some of those wastes could legally and technically be disposed of at WIPP.

"Members of this subcommittee of the NCSL are very interested in understanding the debate on high-level waste vs. tank waste vs. TRU waste," says Nelson. "Mr. Detwiler communicated that the disposal of high-level waste is specifically prohibited at WIPP. However, some Hanford tank wastes, though managed conserva-



CBFO Acting Manager, R. Paul Detwiler, briefs members of the NCSL on Hanford tank wastes.

tively as high-level waste, may fit the definition of TRU waste. This evaluation is based on the wastes origins and radioactive components. As such, these wastes would then be potentially eligible for disposal at WIPP. Some at Hanford believe that up to 20 of the tanks may be justifiably demonstrated to contain TRU waste."

The group enjoyed a full tour of WIPP, including the underground and surface waste handling facilities, CMR and TRANSCOM operations. While on tour, the visitors had an opportunity to observe TRUPACT-II off-loading as two Savannah River shipments arrived within minutes of each other.

"The legislators had many questions about WIPP, and we were pleased to further their understanding of our mission," comments Nelson. "The tour was arranged for precisely this purpose. A deeper understanding of our operations enables them to respond to legislative activities regarding WIPP."



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Shipment Summary Report					
Waste Isolation Pilot Plant					
Package/ICV Closure Date:	03/30/2004	DOT Description:	RQ, Radioactive Material, Fissile, N.O.S., 7, UN2918		
Container Number	Total Dose Rate (mR/hr)	Hazardous Codes	Radionuclides	Total Activity (TBq)	PE Curies
RFS03319	2		AM-241 AM-243 CF-252 CS-137 NP-237 PU-238 PU-239 PU-240 PU-241 PU-242 SR-90 U-233 U-234 U-235 U-238	9.771E-01	6.069E+00
			Assembly:	9.771E-01	6.069E+00

It's in there

You've probably heard the spaghetti sauce ad that claims "it's in there," suggesting that all the right ingredients are included. The same can be said of WIPP's Waste Information System (WWIS). If you want to know what's in a TRU waste shipment, it's in the WWIS.

Checking a sample shipment summary report, one sees an array of data: shipment number; shipper; date container closed; dose rates from two meters, one meter and at the container surface; radionuclides; hazardous contents and container weights – just a few of the hundreds of report entries.

WWIS, the only WIPP data system designated as mission critical, "contains lots of data" according to Steve Offner, WWIS database administrator, "and we can access all of it." Offner spends a good part of his workday verifying data and querying the system for information requests such as total volume of waste disposed, total curies contained in the waste, etc.

Part of the WTS Transportation Department, Offner and the WWIS team didn't miss a beat during last month's five-day building evacuation (see March 18 edition of *TRU TeamWorks*) – the WWIS team can securely access the WWIS from any location that has an Internet and/or telephone connection. Offner says the system is backed up nightly on a WIPP site server.

The importance of WWIS to WIPP cannot be overstated. Once a waste container is characterized and prepared for shipment, the generator site

will enter container contents information — including physical, chemical and radiological waste properties – into the WWIS. The WWIS system and its six software modules run cursory checks on the data, which are then reviewed by WWIS data administrators to determine if the waste contents conform to WIPP waste acceptance criteria, the hazardous waste permit and other applicable requirements.

On occasion, the group finds data discrepancies or non-compliant waste containers. According to Dan Standiford, WWIS data administrator, "If we find errors in the data, we usually reset the data to allow the generator site to make corrections. Waste that is found to be non-compliant will be rejected."

The system also catalogs and tracks cumulative radionuclides, headspace gas analytes and fourteen material parameters to ensure that waste emplaced in the repository complies with regulatory limits.

WWIS checks continue at the WIPP gate and beyond. Information on the driver's payload manifest must match that generated by the WWIS. Each container's barcode is then verified against the WWIS during waste handling. WWIS becomes the final epitaph for disposed TRU waste: date of container disposal, disposal room and location in the waste stack – it's all in there.

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			Assembly:	9.771E-01	6.069E+00

2,500 shipments and counting

Late last month WIPP marked five years of operation. "By week's end," says Kim Jackson, WTS transportation manager, "WIPP will have received its 2,500th shipment." A quick calculation would indicate that WIPP averages 500 shipments per year - not so quick. Working closely with the TRU waste generator/storage sites, WIPP has increased its shipping rate by more than 500 percent since 1999. Following is the breakdown in annual WIPP shipments since WIPP became operational:



The number of shipments to WIPP has steadily increased each year.

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Year	Number of shipments
1999	44
2000	84
2001	365
2002	942
2003	805
2004	226 to date

In five years' time, approximately 19,339 cubic meters of TRU waste have come from temporary storage facilities – temporarily stored in some cases for decades – and safely disposed deep underground at WIPP.

Barring schedule delays, the milestone 2,500th shipment will likely come from Rocky Flats Environmental Technology Site – WIPP's largest shipper. In fact,

Rocky Flats has sent 40 percent more waste shipments in the first four months of this year than in 1999 and 2000 combined. The Colorado site is on schedule for cleanup and closure by 2006.

Other TRU sites sending waste to WIPP (in descending order by cumulative number of shipments) are INEEL, Savannah River, Hanford, LANL, ANL-E and NTS.

And what about those WIPP drivers! With increased shipment numbers, WIPP drivers have logged more than 2,500,000 loaded miles, totaling more than 5 million roundtrip miles without a serious injury – roughly the equivalent of 10.5 roundtrips to the moon.

Mine rescue competitors meet in Carlsbad

The Southwestern Regional Mine Rescue Association (SRMRA) competition began late yesterday at the Pecos River Village Conference Center (PRVCC) in Carlsbad and continues through Friday. This year, five eight-member teams are participating in the competition. Local contenders include WIPP Blue and Silver, Intrepid Potash and two teams representing IMC Potash. Visiting teams are Doe Run from Rolla, MO, and Cargill Salt, from New Iberia, LA.

The event kicked off with a team captain meeting and the written test competition. According to WTS employee and SRMRA president Buddy Webb, "The written test requires all team members to demonstrate their knowledge of mine gases, ventilation, survivor rescue, mine recovery and firefighting. Team members that also serve as first aid responders must take an additional test on first aid knowledge." Webb notes that the tests consist of 35 questions and play an important part in determining the team's overall score.

"This year's competition will be highly exciting for the Silver Team," says WTS employee and Silver Team captain Greg Sensibaugh. "The Silver Team is excited and ready for the competition," he comments. "We have several new members, though some of us have had mine rescue team experience at other facilities. The competition will test our ability to work together in a high pressure situation." Sensibaugh joined the Silver Team last year. Previously he had served as the mine rescue team captain at Mississippi Potash for four years.

A new communication requirement should also spice up the competition for

the teams. "This year the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) is requiring teams to carry along a communication system and cable," says Gary Kessler, WIPP Blue Team captain. "The system is tied into the 'fresh air' base of operations, manned by one of the team members. That person must map the team's progress through the mine. At the end of the competition, the fresh air base map and the team map will be compared and points will be

given or taken away based upon the comparison. Also, the team must relay their intentions to the fresh air base team member before they take action. Failure to do so will count against the team."



Ben Zimmerly (left), Ed Keyser and Joe Baca of the WIPP Blue Team test their communication system before the field competition.

"The Blue Team is tense but ready to compete," Kessler continues. "We picked up one new member, Ed Keyser, from the Silver Team, but the rest of the members are the same. We haven't had as much time with the new communications system as we'd like, but we feel good about our ability to navigate the problem."

The competition continues today with the field problem, which prepares teams to handle actual rescue situations. Friday's events include the first aid, gas and bench contests. Events conclude Friday evening with a banquet and presentation of trophies at the conference center's Carousel House.

The public is invited to observe competition portions of the event, which take place from 7:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. today and Friday, between the Riverwalk Recreation Center and the PRVCC. Watch for competition results in next week's issue of *TRU TeamWorks*.

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Safety in the asphalt jungle

Make no mistake about it, it really is a jungle out there. An asphalt jungle, that is.

out and will help protect all of us from an injury.

All parking lots, including those at WIPP and the Skeen-Whitlock Building (SWB), have the same hazards. They combine a high concentration of vehicles in a relatively small area, poor visibility and distracted drivers that are sometimes in a hurry.



The speed limit in town and at the WIPP site is 10 mph.

Sights, sounds and technology

Our modern world is filled with natural and technological wonders. Unfortunately, it's all too easy to be distracted from our primary task of safely driving. We're distracted by bad weather and good weather alike. The tunes on the radio tend to prevent us from hearing the sound of approaching cars or perhaps even

honking horns. And who can resist using the time in the car to make a quick call on a cell phone?

So what can you do about distractions? For starters, put the phone down. There will always be unanticipated distractions, but those that are under our control can be minimized. Keeping your eyes on the road and your hands on the wheel are sure fire ways to minimize unnecessary distractions.

Focus on driving safely and chances are good that you'll make it out of the asphalt jungle with your safety and your bumper intact.

The crowded jungle

In town at the SWB, the parking lot can accommodate up to about 300 vehicles belonging to employees, vendors and visitors. That translates into a lot of metal on wheels and a lot of pedestrians walking to or from the building. At the site, buses and WIPP trucks hauling waste add to the traffic. So what's the fix? Be defensive. Whether you're walking or driving through the parking lots, keep an eye on those around you. Your alertness can prevent an injury, not to mention save your fender.

Low visibility terrain

Visibility is typically low in a parking lot. Backing out of a parking space in any vehicle, but especially in a low profile sports car, can pose a real challenge when surrounded by today's taller trucks and sport utility vehicles. The best advice is to back out slowly until you are able to see around the larger vehicle. That way, if another vehicle is coming, you both have time to brake.

Speeding through the jungle

Tarzan made speeding through the jungle look easy, but in our world, speeding is dangerous. The posted speed limit in parking lots at WIPP and the SWB is 10 miles per hour. That may be slower than most school zones, but it gives other drivers a chance to see you coming or backing



The visibility issue: Can big and small vehicles peacefully coexist in the asphalt jungle?

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Asphalt Jungle Survival Tips

- Walk and drive defensively
- Back out slowly to combat poor visibility
- Obey 10 mph limit
- Put the phone down
- Focus on driving

Joint Information Center recruiting members

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What you can do:

1. Consider joining the JIC
2. Ask your manager for permission
3. Contact Rebecca walker by E-mail or phone.

No matter what role you play at WIPP or what organization you work for, the Joint Information Center (JIC) may be in need of your skills and abilities. The WTS Communication Department is recruiting new JIC members to serve in a variety of administrative, logistical and technical positions. Like service on WIPP’s Mine Rescue Teams, JIC members work regular jobs, but can be called upon in the case of an emergency.



“This is a vital service,” says Rebecca Walker, WTS’ JIC coordinator. “The people that serve in the JIC have a real impact on the project and our stakeholders. Accurate communication is one of the most important aspects of handling an emergency situation.”

The origins of the JIC, which is required by DOE Order, can be traced to the Three Mile Island incident, where public fears were fueled by misinformation. Here’s a refresher on what WIPP’s JIC is all about.

In the event of a WIPP-related emergency, the JIC is the communication center for providing accurate and timely information to employees, employees’ families, the news media and the public. It is tied in to the Emergency Operations Center at the site and is set up to jointly operate with representatives from the city, county, state, federal and oversight organizations.

The JIC’s structure includes:

- A management team – comprised of a DOE spokesperson, the JIC

manager and assistant manager, the technical spokesperson, the news media information manager and the public information manager

- A JIC writer – to prepare news releases, the first of which must be released within 25 minutes of a JIC activation
- Independent spokespersons – representing organizations participating in the JIC

- An EOC public affairs coordinator – to relay information from the EOC’s crisis management team to the JIC
- Phone teams – to answer calls from the media and the public
- Media escorts – to assist media staff in the public areas of the Skeen-Whitlock Building
- Support staff – to set up for news conferences, make copies and distribute information among other JIC members

JIC members are trained to successfully meet the requirements of their position, and drills are held a few times a year.

While not WIPP-related, the JIC was most notably activated to support the New Mexico State Police and the National Transportation Safety Board in August 2000 after the tragic gas pipeline explosion that killed 12 members of a local family. Among those lost was a member of the WIPP family, Glenda Sumler, who worked at the Carlsbad Technical Assistance Contractor (CTAC).

Your help is greatly needed. Training for new members begins on April 22.

Governor Richardson set to visit Carlsbad

Governor Bill Richardson will be in Carlsbad on Wednesday, April 21, for a Town Hall meeting. The meeting, to be held at the Civic Center from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m., will update citizens on the recent New Mexico legislative session. The public is invited and there is no charge for this event.

WIPP employees who plan to attend must do so on their own time and make arrangements with their manager.

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DOE badge responsibility review

WIPP Security would like to remind employees about the proper use and care of DOE identification badges. The following requirements are taken from DOE Manual 473.1-1:

- Security badges are the property of DOE and are issued for use only during the performance of official duties.
- Always protect your badge from theft, loss or misuse by others. Report a lost, stolen or misused badge to WIPP Security within 24 hours of discovery.
- Maintain the badge in good condition and protect its integrity by ensuring that the badge is not altered, photocopied, counterfeited, reproduced or photographed.
- Return the badge to WIPP Security when it is no longer valid or required.
- Surrender the badge when requested by your manager or WIPP Security in accordance with site procedures.
- Wear the badge conspicuously, photo side out, in a location above the waist and on the front of the body while having access to DOE facilities.
- Do not use the DOE security badge outside of DOE facilities for other than government purposes.
- Do not leave your badge in a vehicle that is going into the shop for repair or maintenance.
- Do not take the badge with you while on travel, vacation, etc., if it is anticipated that the badge will not be required.
- Do not place your badge in your luggage (to prevent badge loss in case your luggage is lost, stolen or misplaced.)
- Control and secure your badge during windy events.

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Birthdays

Gary Strong (SFPS) - April 1 (belated)
Charlie Riggs (CTAC) - April 9
Shari Cullum (WTS) - April 12
Lolly Espinoza (L&M) - April 12
Judy Lanier (WTS) - April 17
Patty Williams (WTS) - April 18
Phil Gregory (WTS) - April 19

In Memorium

Lonnie Graves, a CAST Transportation truck driver, passed away in Albuquerque Tuesday, April 13. Graves had worked for CAST since July 2000 and had safely completed many WIPP shipments during his four-year CAST

career. Lonnie was a dedicated and faithful employee who will be missed by the WIPP family. Funeral arrangements are pending. CAST Transportation and the entire WIPP team offer condolences to the Graves family.

Blood drive success

Thanks to all of the employees that came out for the blood drive last week. The drive was a huge success with 73 employees donating 92 units of blood!

Your support and dedication is truly appreciated!

-- Submitted by *Mary Williams, WIPP Health Services*