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By the Numbers

Shipments scheduled to arrive at WIPP week of 4/25/04 - 5/1/04: **27**

Total shipments received at WIPP as of 4/21/04: **2,509**

Total volume disposed at WIPP as of 4/21/04: **19,550 m³**

FY04 Performance Metrics

Second quarterly meeting held in Carlsbad

The second WIPP quarterly meeting for 2004 took place in Carlsbad this week. It was the 86th meeting between the state of New Mexico and DOE on WIPP, as stipulated in the DOE and New Mexico Consultation and Cooperation agreement. Representatives from NMED, EEG, Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance (CVSA) and interested stakeholders joined CBFO personnel on Tuesday for this important WIPP update.

Meeting highlights included:

- Status of EEG operations
- EPA approval of WIPP characterization plan for INEEL's Advanced Mixed Waste Treatment Project
- EPA approval of WIPP remote-handled waste characterization plan
- CVSA analysis of WIPP's transportation safety inspections from 1999-2002.

The CVSA develops and implements highway inspection procedures and out-of-service criteria known as the North American Standard (NAS). Larry Stern, CVSA-DOE program director, presented a summary of the organization's in-depth analysis of WIPP shipments. Areas addressed in the report include:

- Type of violations by state.
- A comparison of the data between point-of-origin inspections and en route inspections.

- An evaluation of the number of miles between inspections.

"The CVSA report noted that the states, shippers and WIPP can be proud of the excellent transportation safety program that keeps driver and vehicle out-of-service rates very low," says Roger Nelson, CBFO chief scientist. "The report also concludes that the WIPP rate of inspections with no violations is three times better than the national average, even when the standards that WIPP has to meet are significantly more stringent than common carriers."

The CVSA report encouraged states to honor the CVSA point-of-origin inspections and to refrain from repeating the inspections on a regular basis while the shipments are en route, unless an obvious defect is noted. The report recommends that if states do decide to inspect WIPP shipments at ports of entry en route, a random inspection program would ensure a continued high level of safety.

The next quarterly meeting has been tentatively scheduled for July.



Characterization operations at LANL take center stage for CCP

What's the big push in the Central Characterization Project (CCP) these days? It's the integrated characterization program at LANL.

WTS employees have been at work at LANL since January to incorporate the site's existing waste characterization program into CCP. Managed by WTS project manager Sue Peterman, the integrated operation merges employees and equipment from both programs. This is the first time CCP has so completely integrated another site's characterization program into our operations," notes Dave Haar, CCP manager. "CCP and LANL personnel are not just working side by side, we are now one team."

Top priority for the integrated team has been preparation for LANL's certification audit, which is scheduled to begin Monday, April 26. Working on a tight schedule that was developed jointly by CCP and LANL personnel, the team prepared operational procedures, trained personnel, performed self-assessments on new activities and obtained approval for the on-site movement of TRU waste drums. The team has since been conducting characterization operations and is on target for the audit.

"Sue led the highly successful CCP team at the Savannah River Site," notes Tim Hedahl, NTP manager. "We knew we could count on her to repeat that success with the LANL team. Together, CCP and LANL personnel have developed the integrated program in a very short time."

Peterman attributes the program's progress to teamwork. "We could not have accomplished so much within four months without the dedication and support of LANL's Facility Waste Operations and the Risk Reduction and Environmental Stewardship (RRES) groups," she comments. "Teamwork is the key," agrees "Beverly Ramsey,

RRES division manager. "The results of the CCP-LANL combined effort are the key to a successful resumption of TRU characterization, certification and shipment."



Characterization activities are ongoing at LANL

So who does what? The integrated program works in this way: Characterization activities include non-destructive examination on two machines; non-destructive assay on two machines; headspace gas sampling and analyses in two process lines; glove box operations at two locations; and solids coring and analysis in Idaho. Some of the equipment is owned and operated by LANL, some by CCP vendors. All follow CCP procedures.

The teamwork continues. TRUPACT-II loading will be performed jointly by mobile loading units operated by the LANL-Carlsbad Operations Group, (LANL's satellite organization in Carlsbad) alongside the LANL loading team, which will make use of the site's existing TRUPACT facility.

When the team completes the certification audit successfully, WIPP could begin to see debris and homogeneous solids waste shipments from LANL by early August. "LANL is on target to become a significant source of TRU waste shipments for WIPP over the next decade," concludes Hedahl. "The CCP integrated team is working to characterize the site's waste safely, compliantly and productively. Everyone involved is looking forward to an effective characterization program at LANL."

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WTS LANL Project Employees

Sue Peterman
Israel Aragon
Woodrow Briels
Randy Fitzgerald
Joe Garcia
Tom Mojica
Wesley Root

THIS IS AN EXERCISE THIS IS AN EXERCISE THIS IS AN EX

(This story represents a mock training exercise held Monday, April 19)

Monday 10 a.m. - Sullivan Crane Company, Hobbs, NM

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The specialized group circled around external Emergency Management coordinator David Lewis, listening intently as Lewis laid out the exercise scenario. Three vehicles were involved in an accident near Pecos, Texas: a WIPP truck is overturned and two of three TRUPACTs are reported on the ground, a tanker hauling hazardous materials is damaged and leaking, and a passenger vehicle is involved.

WIPP Incident/Accident Response Team (IART) members needed more detail. What local emergency responders have been dispatched to the scene? Has DOE's Radiological Assistance Program (RAP) been notified? What are the current highway conditions? Are other WIPP shipments headed in the direction of the accident?

Recovery planning began. Casey Gadbury, CBFO IART team leader, questioned transportation packaging engineers, "What TRUPACT-II recovery method would you recommend in this situation?" Making the circle, he asked transportation engineers, "What DOT notifications are required for this type of situation, and how long would it take to get DOT approval to move the TRUPACT-IIs?" Public Affairs members briefed Gadbury regarding public communication and interface with incident command representatives.

Questions continued as transportation managers and engineers reviewed procedures and CAST trucking representatives contemplated replacement tractors and trailers. Emergency

responders calculated on-scene response capabilities near Pecos, and public affairs personnel wired remote computer equipment into vehicle cigarette lighters and tested satellite phones.

Within a half-hour, the collective IART team had developed preliminary recovery plans. Gadbury asked members to determine if additional resources were needed. It may have been an exercise, but you wouldn't know it by the intensity of team "players" as they factored potential safety issues and protective actions.

Meanwhile, a lone TRUPACT-II demo lay on its side in the Sullivan Crane yard (simulating the accident scene).

Soon, a crew and 70-ton crane moved into position to set up the TRUPACT-II and reload it onto a trailer as part of exercise recovery operations. After completing a safe horizontal load, Roy Sullivan, owner of Sullivan Crane, invited IART members to observe rigging methods to secure the TRUPACT-II to the trailer. The crane crew then demonstrated a successful vertical load. Finally, a CAST driver went through procedures to verify tie-down integrity before transport.

"Although we do not expect an accident of this nature to occur, we must be ready to respond to recover a TRUPACT-II or other Type B TRU waste package and safely transport it to its destination," said Gadbury. "These annual training exercises are extremely valuable to the IART and the National TRU Waste Program."



The IART team prepares to recover this TRUPACT-II

WIPP teams fare well in competition

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The Southwestern Regional Mine Rescue competition was held in Carlsbad on Thursday, April 15, and Friday, April 16. Five local and two visiting teams competed in the event including two teams from IMC Potash, the WIPP Blue and Silver Teams, Intrepid Mining, DOE RUN Corporation, Rolla, MO and Cargill Salt, New Iberia, LA.



Edgar Keyser and Joe Baca of the WIPP Blue Team check their communication system at last week's mine rescue competition in Carlsbad.

WIPP Blue walked away with first place in the field competition. Joe Baca, WTS Operations says, "The team made some good decisions during the field competition. It was a case of doing the right things at crucial moments."

Adding to the Blue Team's overall performance, David Sjomeling, the map person, performed his job perfectly. All Blue Team members achieved very high written test scores as well.

WIPP Silver placed second in the field competition. "Overall our team performed well," notes Robert Rhoades, WTS Operations. "We identified areas for improvement and as we continue to train together, we feel positive that we will work those issues out."

Jamey Smith, the Silver Team's fresh air base map person completed his map with no discounts during the field competition. Other standout performances were turned in by Silver Team Captain Greg Sensibaugh, who placed second in the gas instrument contest and the Blue and Silver first aid teams, that garnered second and third places, respectively, in the first aid competition.

The Southwestern Mine Rescue competition is sponsored by the Southwestern Mine Rescue Association, which is comprised of individuals involved in emergency response activities from local mining companies and administered by the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA). Full competition results are listed below:

Field Competition

- First place - WIPP Blue (Captain- Gary Kessler, Joel Howard, David Sjomeling, Ben Zimmerly, Edgar Keyser, Joe Baca)
- Second place - WIPP Silver (Captain – Greg Sensibaugh, Robert Rhoades, David Ripley, Mike Proctor, Andy Cooper, Jamey Smith, Curtis Sanders, III)
- Third place - DOE RUN Corporation (Captain – Steve Stenzer)

Multi-gas Instrument Contest

- First place - IMC Green (Kevin Cummins)
- Second place - WIPP Silver (Greg Sensibaugh)
- Third place - IMC Green (Joe Parker)

Benchman Contest

- First place - Intrepid Mining (Rudy Dominguez)
- Second place - IMC Green (Kevin Cummins)
- Third place - IMC Green (Paul Mager)

First Aid Contest

- First place - IMC Green (Fernando Santana, Fabian Carrasco, Tommy Williams)
- Second place - WIPP Blue (Nadine Kuhn, Ben Zimmerly, David Sjomeling)
- Third place - WIPP Silver (Mike Proctor, Jamey Smith, Deena Cantrell)

Safety, science and technology

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At WIPP, safety, science and technology go hand-in-hand. Perhaps the best example of this is the use of health physics equipment to ensure the safety of our workers and the public. Some of the technology used today has roots that date back to the 1940s.

“Although one might expect technology to have improved beyond that of the original inventors, the physics have not,” says Robert Hayes, WTS Senior Radiological Engineer. “Typically, improvements have been in detector efficiency, performance, durability and ease of use.”

As an example, the original “cutie pie” hand-held survey instrument was first commercially available in 1948 and is very similar to the R03C dose rate meters used by WIPP radiation control technicians today. Likewise, the HP260 probe tips primarily used for measuring gamma and beta contamination is almost indistinguishable from the pancake Geiger Mueller (GM) tubes shown at the right that were commercially offered by Lionel Electronic Laboratories around 1961.

Not all survey equipment has enjoyed such longevity. The continuous air monitors (CAMs) used by WIPP are substantial improvements over historical air monitoring equipment. One of the more ingenious early inventions for monitoring airborne radioactivity was the Hanford design, which did enjoy many features similar to modern CAMs.

With the Hanford design (from the mid 40s to early 50s), the detector could be hooked (like a car mechanic’s portable work light) to a desired place in the work area. A piece of filter paper was placed on the brass grid under the retractable holder through which air was pulled. Under the grid is a GM tube which monitored the radioactivity on the filter paper caused by the flow of air through it. Modern CAMs have

Radiological survey equipment

Then & Now



Tracerlab Model SU-1 (1948) “Cutie Pie”*



Today's R03C dose rate meter



Geiger Mueller tubes (1961-62)*



Today's HP260 probe tip



Hanford continuous air monitor (Mid 40s to early 50s)*



Today's continuous air monitor

*Historical photos courtesy of Dr. Paul Frame, Oak Ridge Association of Universities.

computers which enable the instrument to differentiate naturally occurring radioactivity from manmade sources. In addition, digital technology has offered many more improvements.

The physics may have stayed the same, but as technology improves we all benefit from the added safety.

Earth Day 2004

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Save the Earth! What may sound like the rallying cry in a science fiction movie is actually the celebration of Earth Day. Earth Day is an annual event to remind us of the importance of preserving our planet. Not from invaders from another world, but from inefficient use of resources and energy! The day is an opportunity to focus on ways we can protect the environment and conserve energy at home, school and work.

At WIPP, these ideals are put into practice daily. Our very mission is one way that we protect Earth, with the isolation of transuranic waste. In addition, employees save energy by turning off lights and computers at the end of the day. And, because large organizations like ours produce large volumes of

paperwork, there are recycling bins throughout WIPP buildings and at just about every desk.

“Many employees have taken their energy-saving experiences at WIPP and applied them at home, as well,” says Mike Oliver, CBFO systems engineering manager. “The idea of preserving Earth’s resources not only makes good business sense, but in some cases can become a family project.”

WIPP will also be participating in an Earth Day event at Living Desert State Park on Saturday, April 24, from 9 a.m. until 2 p.m. Samples of salt rock will be given away at the WIPP display while supplies last.



Kids fishing and boating clinic

Time: 9:30 a.m. - 2 p.m., Saturday, May 8, 2004, with registration beginning at 8:45 a.m.

Place: Brantley Lake State Park, east side day-use group shelter

For: Open to all children and their parents – especially for kids 6 to 15 years old, with little or no fishing or boating experience.

Program: 9 a.m. – Learn about fishing and boating skills, followed by a free lunch at noon, afternoon fishing and a casting contest.

Topics:

- Casting
- Boat Safety
- Fly-tying
- Fish ID
- Hooks & Knots
- Aquatic Insects
- Boating Basics

- Lure Making
- Conservation Ethics
- Fish Biology
- Water Quality

Cost: The \$5 per vehicle day-use fee will cover full participation in the clinic. Kids 12 or older need a New Mexico fishing license. The Fishing Proclamation has more information about licenses and regulations. Licenses and Proclamations are available at sporting goods stores.

Bring: Fishing gear. Lunch and snacks will be provided. Free fishing goodies for the kids, fishing maps, posters and more!

Registration: Each participant must pre-register by calling Brantley Lake State Park at 457-2384. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

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Joint Information Center volunteers needed

Joint Information Center annual training has been scheduled for Tuesday, April 27, at 1pm. in T-111 of the Skeen-Whitlock Building (SWB).

have supported the JIC in the past. JIC volunteers are still needed. SWB employees who would like to volunteer or need more information may contact Rebecca Walker at 234-7534.

This training will assist our new volunteers and be a refresher for those that

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