

TRU TeamWorks

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May 12, 2005



Shipment Numbers

Shipments
scheduled to arrive
05/15/05 - 05/21/05

20

Hanford - 4
INL - 9
LANL - 1
SRS - 6

(subject to change)

3,586
total shipments

received as of
05/11/05



WIPP submits key modification

Revised PMR combines three important initiatives ...



Evacuation preparation

Know where to go during an evac event ...



EXO funded

An update on this "down under" experiment ...



Disposal Numbers

Waste disposed as of
05/11/05 :

4,429
standard waste boxes

1,580
ten-drum overpacks

62,073
waste drums

28,472 cubic meters



It's your call

Make a call, save a life ...



Secure employment

One less worry for retiring soldiers ...



Under (bench) pressure

Find out what your coworkers have been up to lately ...

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TRU TeamWorks is a biweekly e-newsletter for the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant team

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The Big Story



Local Partners

Washington TRU Solutions General Manager Dick Raaz and Laurie Roche, Carlsbad executive director of United Way, shake hands as TRU Solutions' donates \$12,000 to assist local United Way partner agencies.

The Revised §311/RH TRU Waste Permit Modification Request

On April 29, WIPP submitted the Revised Section 311/RH TRU Waste Permit Modification Request (PMR) to NMED for review and approval. Public and regulator comments were considered in the development of the PMR, and at the request of NMED, it consolidates earlier PMRs sent to NMED for review. The PMR contains three initiatives that are vital to WIPP's future. Check *TRU TeamWorks* for updates on its progress through the review and approval cycle.

Here is a summary of this important PMR and the topics it covers.

TRU Mixed Waste Analysis

The revised PMR proposes a waste analysis plan (WAP) to store and dispose of both CH and RH TRU mixed waste at WIPP. In order to store or dispose of TRU mixed waste, WIPP must verify that it only receives waste assigned hazardous waste numbers approved by the Permit and that the waste meets all waste acceptance criteria parameters. The proposed waste analysis requirements rely on the use of acceptable knowledge (AK) to collect the required information. In cases where the AK is not sufficient, the generator/storage sites will perform additional waste analysis activities.

Before WIPP can store and dispose of TRU mixed waste, the waste will be examined by the use of either radiography, visual examination (VE), or the review of VE records on a representative portion of the waste.

The Revised §311/RH TRU Waste PMR also details how workers are protected from unsafe levels of volatile organic compounds (VOC) emissions in the disposal rooms. WIPP proposes to monitor VOCs in the disposal rooms until the waste panel is closed.



Waste examination activities will be employed at WIPP to ensure that AK documentation is accurate before the waste is emplaced in the underground. The revised PMR will make disposal of TRU mixed waste more efficient, decrease worker exposure to the radioactive and hazardous waste in the containers, and reduce overall cost.

Remote-Handled TRU (RH TRU) Waste

The Revised §311/RH TRU Waste PMR allows one waste analysis plan for both CH TRU waste and RH TRU waste. It also details changes to the WIPP facility necessary to safely store and dispose of RH TRU waste.

Increased container storage capacity

The revised PMR would increase storage capacities in the container Parking Area Unit and Waste Handling Building Unit and set staging areas for waste containers awaiting or undergoing waste acceptance verification and examination prior to storage and disposal. Additional staging and storage capacity is needed to implement the Revised §311/RH TRU Waste PMR.

Public meetings on the Revised §311/RH TRU Waste PMR are scheduled for Tuesday, May 17 in Carlsbad and on Thursday, May 19 in Santa Fe.

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Operations



Evacuation areas: know where to go

Change to emergency on-site assembly areas

You're going about your daily work routine and suddenly you hear a piercing, persistent yelp, yelp, yelp. It's the evacuation alarm and you have seconds to act. Where will you go?

Effective immediately there will no longer be multiple assembly areas in various locations at the WIPP site. In the event of a WIPP site building or area evacuation, personnel will now report to one of two assembly areas – a primary or a secondary. The primary assembly area, the first choice, is located in the paved area west of the Support Building (see map below). The secondary assembly area (second choice) is located at the northeast corner of the site.

This directive will simplify the evacuation and accountability process. Training modules and procedures have been updated to reflect the changes. Site office wardens have maps available of new on-site assembly areas.

For a safe and orderly evacuation, it's important to remember the difference between a staging area and assembly area. An assembly area is located inside the perimeter fence at the site, while a staging area is located outside the fence. *There has been no change to the staging areas.*

Immediate response

If there is an actual event or a drill, and the CMR directs you to assemble on-site, proceed to the west side of the paved area between the Support Building and drainage ditch.

Once at the assembly area, check in with your office warden for accountability.

If directed to evacuate the site, personnel should report to their designated staging areas located outside the fence. Again, be sure your office warden knows you are there. If you're not certain who your primary and secondary office wardens are, now's the time to ask.

Maps of the new assembly areas will be posted around the site for employee review. Contact your office warden with questions regarding the assembly areas, sign-out boards or evacuation procedures.

WIPP Blue Mine Rescue Team excels in Louisiana

The WIPP Blue Mine Rescue Team competed at the New Iberia Competition in Louisiana April 29 and 30. In another strong performance, team members captured individual and team honors as follows:

Blue Team: first place overall, first place in the field competition

First Aid Team: second place in the first aid competition

Curtis Sanders III, first place in the bench competition

Greg Sensibaugh, third place in the gas meter competition

Congratulations to the WIPP Blue Mine Rescue Team!



The Blue Mine Rescue team celebrates their victory. Left to right are Dave Sjomling, Curtis Sanders, III, Jim Pierce, Buddy Webb, Craig Herndon, Nadine Kuhn, Doug Steffen, Joel Howrad, Scott Anderson, Ty Zimerly, Subhash Sethi. Not pictured is team member Greg Sensibaugh.

WIPP Evacuation Plan


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Progress

EXO collaborators

Stanford University

CalTech

University of California-Irvine

University of Alabama

Colorado State University

Carleton University,
Ottawa, Canada

St. Lawrence University,
Ontario, Canada

University of Moscow, Russia

University of Neuchâtel,
Switzerland

EXO experiment receives DOE funding

Stanford physicist Dr. Giorgio Gratta is almost as hard to track as a subatomic neutrino. Gratta is involved in a number of international research projects that take him around the world – including southeast New Mexico and WIPP.

For years, Gratta has eyed WIPP as a suitable laboratory for particle physics research. Late last month, DOE's Office of Science gave Gratta and his team of 50 scientists the funds to conduct neutrino research underground at WIPP.

DOE set aside \$1 million in 2004 to transform a former WIPP underground maintenance shop for scientific use. The depth of the new underground laboratory offers researchers a unique setting for particle research due to its low levels of naturally occurring terrestrial and cosmic radiation.

TRU TeamWorks caught up with Dr. Gratta at Stanford last week. He discussed the Enriched Xenon Observatory (EXO) planned for WIPP.

"At this point, we're working very hard to build this thing," said Gratta, referring to the EXO-200, a high-tech, teflon-construction neutrino detector. Canadian engineers are building the detector in collaboration with Stanford.

Gratta says 200 kilograms of ¹³⁶Xenon gas, a detector material, was purchased from Russia and is being stored at Stanford. "It is the largest inventory of highly enriched isotopes in science today," notes Gratta. Also ready at Stanford are five modules assembled as clean rooms that will eventually be moved to WIPP.



Cylinders of Xenon gas stored at the Stanford lab.

Once the detector is up and running, the team will observe the Xenon gas for neutrino-less double beta decay, a rare nuclear process that is thought to occur when a disintegrating nucleus emits two electrons. Gratta says the rate of decay can be translated into a measurement of the neutrino's mass.

The EXO experiment will put the U.S. back on the cutting edge of particle astrophysics, he adds. "The U.S. has been losing its lead in particle astrophysics to experiments such as those conducted at Kamiokande. EXO reverses the trend." Super Kamiokande is a 50,000-ton water detector in Japan.

Gratta says it's disappointing that scientists don't understand something as fundamental as mass. He hopes EXO research will yield secrets about the origins of mass and how mass is produced in nature. Scientists believe large numbers of neutrinos have been present in the universe for as long as it has existed. "Even though they are so small, they may account for a large fraction of dark matter," says Gratta.

EXO engineers will continue to visit WIPP periodically, while the detector is under construction. Installation of the observatory is scheduled for late 2006.



EXO detector to be built in these modular clean rooms.

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Safety



Blood drive times at a glance

Tuesday, May 17
SWB Auditorium
8:00 to 3:00

Wednesday, May 18
WIPP Site
7:00 to 4:00

How to save a life with a single phone call

It might be a coworker. It might be a friend. It might be your spouse, son or daughter. Or it could be you.

You never know when you or someone you love will need blood. But what if when you do, the hospital says, "Sorry, we're out of blood today"? That's where blood drives come in. Their purpose is to make sure that there's enough blood available for everyone who needs it.

A single phone call is all it would take to make an appointment at the upcoming WIPP Blood Drive. Your opportunity to save lives will be on May 17 and 18. The first day of the drive will be in the auditorium at the Skeen-Whitlock Building from 8:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. The second day will be in the Guard & Security Building auditorium at the WIPP site from 7:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. You can schedule your appointment with Mary Williams in Health Services.



Gary Ashford (WTS) was one of many WIPP employees that donated blood in October 2004.

WIPP is no stranger to blood drives. In fact, they've been held at WIPP twice a year since at least 1990.

"We try to make it as inviting an experience as possible," says Anita Self, RN. "We show movies while people are donating blood and try to make it as enjoyable and relaxing as we can under the circumstances."

Self estimates that 70 to 75 percent of the donors at WIPP are repeat customers. "We even have some at WIPP that have earned their 'Gallon Donation Cards' from United Blood Services," adds Self. Each donation is about a pint, which means that person has donated blood about 16 times.

Don't wait until you need it and it's too late. Make the call and save a life.

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Working Smart



The benefits of recycling

- Conserves resources for our children's future.
- Prevents emissions of many greenhouse gases and water pollutants.
- Saves energy.
- Supplies valuable raw materials to industry.
- Creates jobs.
- Stimulates the development of greener technologies.
- Reduces the need for new landfills and incinerators.

Submitted by - Celeste Marsh, WRES WIPP
P2 (Pollution Prevention) Coordinator

Act protects soldiers' jobs at home while they protect us abroad

Thousands of American reservists have served in Afghanistan or Iraq in the last few years, requiring them to leave their families and jobs behind. They know their families will be here for them when they return, but what about their jobs?

Thanks to the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994, they don't have to worry. The act protects the civilian jobs of our nation's uniformed service memers for up to five years. To cover the work that needs to be done, employers can use temporary employees, existing employees or can even hire a replacement. But once back, protected individuals have the right to return to a similar job in terms of seniority, status and pay.

Several WIPP employees have been called up for service and returned to their civilian jobs afterward. One recent example is Robert Brennan, a sergeant in the Army Reserves.



SFPS employee Robert Brennan stands next to a humvee draped with the New Mexico flag while serving in Iraq.

Brennan worked as a security guard for Santa Fe Protective Services (SFPS) for about seven months at several locations around Carlsbad, NM and was installing interlock systems for DUI offenders when he received his orders to report for duty in Iraq. On November 29, 2003, after only a few weeks notice, he left his wife and children in Carlsbad and headed to the Middle East.

For the next 15 months, Brennan's role was convoy security, escorting people and supplies through out Iraq. Speed is safety when traveling in Iraq, but this was a far cry from his race-car-driving days in Texas. How fast did they go? "As fast as the slowest truck in the convoy," says Brennan.

The experience taught him some valuable lessons. "You learn to appreciate the little things in life that you take for granted -- taking the kids to the park, spending quality time with your family," he explains. "It's a sacrifice to serve, but you also realize that spouses and children have to make a lot of sacrifices, too."

While he was gone, he didn't worry about his job with SFPS. And when he came home in February, he was back to work in about a week, but this time it was at WIPP.

"SFPS has been recognized for its support of the reserves," says Charlie Marrs, deputy general manager for SFPS. "That support is not only for employees when called to active duty, but also for the training and drills they participate in throughout the year to maintain readiness."

Protecting jobs for our troops is one way for the nation to thank those who put their lives at risk for our sake, and to say, "Welcome home."

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Our Team



Did you know ...

May 6 - 12 is Nurses' Week. Make a point of telling our WIPP nurses - and all the nurses you know - how much you appreciate them!

WIPP employees honored

Congratulations to Ed Flynn and David Hernandez (WTS) on achieving Safety Trained Supervisor (STS) certification. To achieve the certification, non-safety specialists or safety practitioners must meet minimum safety training and work experience and demonstrate knowledge of safety fundamentals and standards by examination. Those holding the STS certification must renew it annually and meet recertification requirements every five years.



Ed Flynn receives his certification award. Left to right are Scott Anderson, Ed Flynn, Leroy Bostick and Doug Steffen



David Hernandez holds his certification award.



Birthdays

- Steve Kouba (WRES) – May 1
- Lois George (WTS) – May 5
- Tricia Coon (WTS) – May 20
- John Gray (CTAC) – May 23
- Dondee Groves (L&M) – May 25
- Melody Smith (WTS) – May 28

Pressing matters ...



Kevin Miller (white t-shirt) spots Kim Ingram (sitting) during the competition.

Two WIPP employees competed in the "Party on the River Bench Press" competition May 7, in Roswell. The competition was held in conjunction with the Cinco de Mayo celebration at the Spring River Park and Zoo. Kevin Miller (WTS) competed in the Masters-1 age class and 308 lb. weight class. Kevin bench pressed 370 lbs. to win his weight class.

Kim Ingram (WTS) also competed in the Masters-1 age class, but in the 309+lb. weight class. Kim won his weight class by benching 515 lbs. Kim also won the award for the heaviest bench press at the meet. Congratulations to both of these fine competitors!



Congratulations

Congratulations to Bob Kehrman, who celebrated 35 years with the project on April 30!

Wes Nance (WTS) completed his bachelor's degree in Business Administration (General Business) on May 7, 2005 from NMSU in Las Cruces.

WTS May Service Awards

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>15 years
Barry Brown
Gerald Burns
Reymundo Carrasco
John Dorado
Ron Head
Michael James
Dennis Mathieu
Raul Navarrete</p> | <p>20 years
Janet Miehls</p> |
|--|---|

What's cookin' at the SWB?

