

# TRU TeamWorks

December 18, 2003

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

## The Big Story: It's a wrap - 2003

In 2003, the WIPP team delivered in every mission-essential area. *TRU TeamWorks* wraps up the calendar year with 2003's performance highlights.

Steve Warren, Washington TRU Solutions (WTS) general manager, says, "I view 2003 as a year of teamwork. Together the CBFO, WTS, LANL/CB, SNL-CPG, CTAC and other project partners achieved goals that no single organization could have achieved." WTS employees joined with other project participants to achieve 97 percent of DOE headquarters' shipment goal and completed the INEEL 3100 m<sup>3</sup> project nearly two months early. This team also completed CH-TRU waste cleanup at ETEC and MURR and debris waste from ANL-E.

SNL-CPG successfully brought four conceptual models used in WIPP performance assessment work through rigorous peer reviews. The team worked closely with WTS and LANL/CB on the Compliance Recertification Application (CRA). SNL-CPG, WTS, LANL/CB, CTAC and CBFO also collaborated on the integrated schedule and cost baseline for WIPP – a tool to deal effectively with performance and funding challenges.

SNL-CPG also engaged EPA in technical interchanges on the impacts of emplacing INEEL super-compacted waste at WIPP. "We are delighted that our customer has placed so much trust in us and equally delighted that our good working relationships with other WIPP organizations have been cemented even further," notes Paul Shoemaker, SNL-CPG manager.

CTAC completed the permit modification request directed by Public Law 108-137 for submittal to NMED. The group also prepared three notifications of planned change for EPA related to the RH-TRU waste characterization program implementation plan. Vernon Daub, senior manager for CTAC, states, "Our work demonstrates the confidence that CBFO has in us by entrusting projects of this magnitude to CTAC."

The LANL/CB TRU Waste Inventory team worked with SNL-CPG to update the Transuranic Waste Baseline Inventory Database. Data from 28 DOE TRU waste sites was used to develop the *Transuranic Waste Inventory Update Report, 2003*, a significant WIPP Compliance Recertification Application support document.

The National TRU-Waste Complex Corporate Board was instrumental in WIPP's 2003 success as well. Leading the board's efforts, LANL-CO ensured that each site's input was incorporated into the CBFO baseline. Independent reviewers of the baseline commended LANL-CO on its extraordinary effort.



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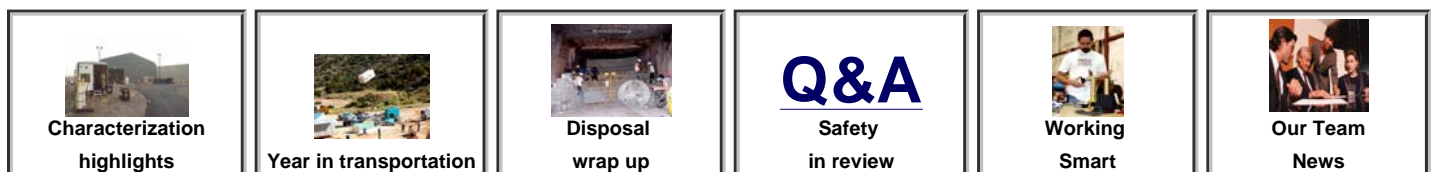
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 mail.

### WIPP Shipments (as of 12/18/03 at 8:14 a.m.)

Shipments  
scheduled to  
arrive at WIPP  
this week  
**23**

Total shipments  
received at WIPP  
**2,226**

### In the news





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**2003 characterization highlights**

A lot was accomplished by WIPP characterization organizations in 2003:

**Ramp up at SRS**

The SRS characterization project team had a remarkable increase in its waste shipment rate. SRS began the year with a shipment rate of two per week. That number was increased to six shipments per week by the end of September. SRS has completed more than 200 shipments this calendar year, an outstanding rate considering the site was originally scheduled to send approximately one shipment per month to WIPP.



*The shipment ramp up from SRS was a major accomplishment in 2003*

“Representatives of all organizations involved demonstrated teamwork and dedication to make this ramp up happen,” says Sue Peterman, SRS project manager.

**Completion of characterization operations at ANL-E**

ANL-E characterization activities came to a successful close in 2003, despite numerous technical challenges early in the year. Ultimately, more than 400 drums of debris waste were characterized and 380 shipped to WIPP. Twenty-nine debris drums added to the team’s workscope in August were also successfully characterized and shipped to WIPP. A group of homogenous solid waste drums were also characterized and will be shipped to WIPP when certification is received from regulators. “ANL-E employees, subcontractors and characterization project team members worked together to accomplish this task in an outstanding manner,” notes Bob Billet, ANL-E project manager.

**CTAC Audit and Assessments Team successes**

The CTAC Audit and Assessments team enjoyed a productive year. Team members completed 25 audits, 13 surveillances and reviewed approximately 800 generator site documents. “The CTAC team is very proud of the role we perform at WIPP,” notes Steve Calvert, CTAC Audit and Assessments task manager. “Our work allows generator sites to become certified and remain certified so that they can continue to ship waste to WIPP.”

**LANL/CB acceptable knowledge progress**

LANL-CO provides a key component to the Central Characterization Project (CCP): acceptable knowledge (AK). The LANL-CO AK team worked extensively at the Savannah River Site (SRS), Hanford, LANL, ANL-E and the Nevada Test Site (NTS). The results of these activities produced nine AK reports, supporting certification of 22 waste streams.

**LANL/CB Mobile Loading**

LANL-COB leads the Mobile Loading team in support of CCP. The team provides the only TRUPACT-II shipping capability with national certification. The Mobile Loading team provided loading/unloading services at seven locations and was responsible for three intersite shipments and 157 shipments to the WIPP.



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WIPP Shipments  
(as of 12/18/03  
at 8:14 a.m.)

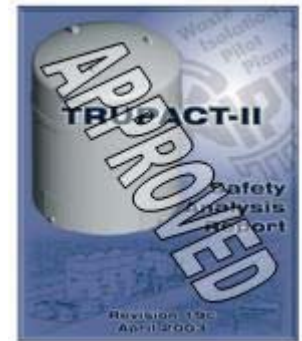
Shipments scheduled to arrive at WIPP this week 23
Total shipments received at WIPP 2,226
Total Waste Disposed Underground at WIPP
CH drums 47,177
CH standard waste boxes 2,336
CH ten-drum overpacks 573
Cubic meters 16,878

The year in transportation

2003 brought innovation to WIPP transportation in the form of Revision 19c, TRUPACT-III and the ARROWPAK. Overall, says Ralph Smith, CBFO Institutional Programs manager, it has been a safe, successful year in shipping. "There have been a lot of safe shipments; it's been uneventful – which is positive." A 2003 highlight, notes Smith, was the closure of MURR in May.

Smith says he is looking for a busy 2004. "Next year we expect to see INEEL resume shipping. There are planned shipments from NTS early in 2004 and Lawrence Livermore around mid-year."

A 2003 watershed for WIPP was Nuclear Regulatory Commission's approval of Revision 19c. The revision paves the way for thousands of already-packaged waste containers to be shipped to WIPP. Revision 19c addressed the issue of hydrogen gas buildup in waste containers. It established rates at which gases would vent through confinement, based on the number of layers of confinement and the closure methods used. Ultimately, the revision will bring "thousands of waste containers one step closer to disposal," comments WTS Transportation Manager Kim Jackson in an August edition of *TRU TeamWorks*.



Drop test on TRUPACT-III

TRUPACT-III may one day be a WIPP shipping heavyweight. The 6' X 6'.5" X 14'.8" container underwent testing this fall. Distinct differences between the TRUPACT-II and TRUPACT-III are: TRUPACT-II is round and offers double containment; TRUPACT-III is rectangular with single-level containment. NRC must still approve TRUPACT-III's application for use at WIPP.

ARROWPAK, a container designed to ship high-wattage TRU waste to WIPP, also underwent testing in 2003. Constructed of high-density polyethylene, three ARROWPAK assemblies fit inside a Type B shipping cask for transportation. The container requires NRC approval, as well as an approved change to the TRUPACT-II SAR.

DOE also completed five RH-TRU waste shipments from California and Ohio to the Hanford Site in Washington using the 10-160B cask. The NRC-approved 10-160B is being considered as an alternative shipping cask for RH-TRU waste. A permit modification request to dispose of RH-TRU at WIPP is currently pending with NMED.



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**Total Waste Disposed Underground at WIPP**

(as of 12/18/03 at 8:14 a.m.)

CH drums 47,177
CH standard waste boxes 2,336
CH ten-drum overpacks 573
Cubic meters 16,878

**2003 disposal wrap up**

Over 7,550 cubic meters of TRU waste were disposed at WIPP in 2003, roughly 1,500 cubic meters more than in 2002. Payload efficiency played a key role, says Casey Gadbury, CBFO's National TRU Waste Logistics team leader. "Around this time last year, we averaged 2.17 TRUPACT-II's per shipment. Once we completed the 3,100 m<sup>3</sup> shipping campaign from INEEL in late 2002, a concerted effort was made to increase the TRUPACT-II per-shipment ratio.



Panel 1 closure wall under construction

Today it's around 2.80 TRUPACT-II's per shipment. For example, we currently maintain 11 shipments a week from Rocky Flats; nine of those are three TRUPACT-II's per shipment."

WIPP beefed up waste handling operations throughout the year as well. Additional radiological control and waste handling personnel were hired and trained. Two new TRUdock cranes were installed to add efficiency to the process.

Rocky Flats was 2003's big shipper. Alan Rogers, Kaiser-Hill deputy project manager, Materials Stewardship, credits teamwork. "Rocky Flats sent its 1,000<sup>th</sup> shipment to WIPP earlier this year," says Rogers. "In 2003 alone we sent over 400 TRU waste shipments. Coordinated efforts between WIPP, Rocky Flats and the National TRU Program have been vital in helping Rocky Flats keep to its 2006 closure schedule."

Lee Fox, WSRC site technical representative for CCP at Savannah River Site, says the 2003 jump in SRS shipping and disposal figures is also the result of team effort. Original SRS legacy waste clean-up plans stretched to 2034 – far too long for enterprising Washington Group divisions, WSRC and WTS. The two divisions joined forces in 2002 to target cleanup by 2006.

Says Fox, "If I had to say why the program has been successful to date, it's been the opportunity for two separate groups with slightly different missions and areas of focus to work together. There has been none of the 'that's your job,' or 'that's my job.' The team has worked seamlessly toward one goal."

July's closure of Panel 1 exemplified 2003 coordination efforts. As underground construction crews mortared the 12-foot-thick wall sealing off Panel 1 waste, disposal was taking place in Panel 2. Meanwhile crews mined out Panel 3 for future disposal. At year's end, Rooms 6, 7 and part of Room 5 in Panel 2 have been filled with TRU waste. Panel 3 mining is 75 percent complete.





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**2003 - Safety in review**

One measurement used to monitor WIPP industrial safety performance is the recordable incident rate. This formula measures the number of injuries sustained by employees who require medical attention beyond first-aid for every 200,000 hours worked. Candice Jierree, WTS Safety and Health, talks about safety at WIPP.

**Q: What was the FY03 total recordable rate?**

A: The total recordable rate for all of WIPP in FY03 was 1.6 injuries per 200,000 hours worked. (OSHA's 200,000-hour factor is equal to 100 employees working for a year of 50 weeks at 40 hours per week.)

WIPP employees worked a total of 352 zero-injury days in FY03 for a zero injury success rate of 96 percent. By the end of the fiscal year, WIPP employees had logged more than 1.25 million consecutive work hours without a day-away-from-work occurrence.

**Q: What is WIPP's goal in FY04?**

A: Certainly, one injury is too many. We don't believe that anyone should be injured on the job. Zero injuries is the only acceptable goal and the one we strive to maintain each day. As you know, we take safety very seriously. It will take a team effort.

**Q: What new actions have been taken to prevent injuries?**

A: WTS is taking aggressive action to correct hazards which could lead to potential injuries.

**Q: What do you mean by aggressive action?**

A: In March, WTS promised to take eight actions to prevent injuries and all have been completed.

"I believe in safe quality performance throughout all activities. Without an effective industrial, mine and radiological safety program that results in positive safety practices, other performance loses its value.

I strongly support the VPP program and involvement of the workforce in work planning – employees will take responsibility for watching out for one another."

**Lloyd Piper**  
Deputy Manager,  
CBFO

<b>WTS committed to an eight-step action plan to enhance safety:</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Formally restate to all WTS employees the goal of zero accidents and corporate commitment that this goal is achievable.</li> <li>2. Conduct two all-hands meetings at the WIPP site this fiscal year to emphasize the WTS corporate commitment to conduct its business in a safe manner.</li> <li>3. Continue to emphasize safety at all levels of staff meetings.</li> <li>4. Move the schedule for presenting hazard recognition retraining for all WTS site employees forward to be completed by September 30, 2003.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Provide a more precise definition of "near miss" to enhance the recognition and reporting of such events.</li> <li>6. Develop a meaningful safe behavior recognition process for routine work.</li> <li>7. Use the Integrated Safety Management System/Voluntary Protection Program integrated self-assessment to emphasize employee responsibility for safety.</li> <li>8. Provide management training this calendar year to improve WTS' ability to manage people in a changing work environment.</li> </ol>

**WIPP and NTP work smartly all year-round**



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**Baseline development FY 2004 – 2035**

One guiding document will direct WIPP and National TRU Program (NTP) work for the next 30 years. The project management process incorporates work scope definition, schedule development, and budget estimating into one blueprint. Ron Head, WTS Project Analysis and Control manager, led a team of 30 who invested 10,000+ hours. “We established a team from all the major participants, focused on a common goal – to put waste in the ground,” says Head.

**Corporate Board: running like a business**

The National TRU Waste Complex Corporate Board is “a more business-like approach to managing something as complicated as the TRU waste complex,” says Dr. Inés Triay, CBFO manager and board CEO. Since 2001, the board has integrated the TRU waste system into a single business entity. The board’s authorization is found in the DOE Performance Management Plan, Section 3.1.3.



*Mike Carriaga of Carriaga Machine, which was nominated for SBA Subcontractor of the Year*

**Two WIPP and NTP teams earn Lion Awards**

A small business utilization team and joint Savannah River Site (SRS)/WIPP Central Characterization Project (CCP) team earned two Washington Group Lion Awards at December ceremonies in Boise, Idaho. The procurement team of Bob Prentiss, WTS; Margaret Rhone, SRS; and Lynn Whiting, West Valley Nuclear Services Company, oversaw \$237.5 million subcontracts – 61 percent of FY02 procurements – far exceeding federally mandated goals for contracting with small, women-owned, disadvantaged and HUBZone businesses. Participants led by Farok Sharif, David Haar, Sue Peterman and J.R. Stroble from WIPP/CCP and SRS Solid Waste Division earned their Lion Award for technical excellence in expediting removal of TRU waste at SRS.

**SBA Subcontractor of the Year Nominee**

Carriaga Machine was selected in December by WTS buyers, requisitioners and engineering staff as WIPP’s nominee for 2003 Small Business Administration Subcontractor of the Year. Fifteen years ago, LaDon Carriaga took the initiative to qualify as a WIPP subcontractor. The precision-machining shop is ISO9000-compliant; HUBZone-certified; and pursuing NQA-1 nuclear standards.



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### Honk for safety

Personnel operating vehicles in the underground are reminded to honk vehicle horns at all intersections. Underground Operations appreciates your compliance with this safety requirement.

### Skeen-Whitlock Building (SWB) support

SWB employees should contact Randy West at Extension 8675 for building maintenance and support from December 22-30.

### North access road notice

For the next couple of weeks, WIPP employees who use the north access road will notice large haul trucks and other construction equipment turning on and off of the road, approximately one mile north of the site. Motorists should exercise caution and heed warning signs when traveling in this vicinity.

### WTS passing out blankets



WTS employees, including Jim (left) and Patty Hollen (middle) along with General Manager Steve Warren (in black/blue jacket), are passing out blankets at the Christmas on the Pecos boat rides each night. After the event ends, the blankets will be donated to local law enforcement agencies.

Anyone wishing to volunteer should contact Rebecca Walker at 7534.

### TRUPACT-II display now at the SWB



The Carlsbad Field Office's Skeen-Whitlock Building has a new display, a full-sized model of a TRUPACT-II shipping container.

WTS Work Control and Facility Planning staff did an excellent job of safely off-loading and placing the unit on December 9. This model was formerly used as a traveling exhibit.