

WIPP Quick Facts (As of 1-10-07)

5,358

Shipments received since opening

44,755

Cubic meters of waste disposed

85,598

Containers disposed in the underground

In memoriam: Al Alonen

Long-time WIPP employee Al Alonen passed away on December 15, 2006 in Florida.

Al moved to Carlsbad in 1986 to work at WIPP for Westinghouse. In 1994, he went to work for Day & Zimmermann and in 2001, he started working for L&M Technologies. In 2005, he moved to Florida to be with his family.

The WIPP family extends its condolences to Al's wife and family.

WIPP transportation: Safety over schedule

The front gate at WIPP was unusually quiet last week. Unlike the week of December 3-9 when a record 35 shipments arrived, the gates only had to open for a shipment once last week.

What happened? Mother Nature. Wintry weather was widespread last week, causing WIPP shipments to grind to a halt, except for one lone shipment made from the Los Alamos National Laboratory.

"We expected eight arrivals, but we only received one," says WTS

CBFO authorizes remote-handled TRU waste operations startup

WIPP is ready. With only a handful of regulatory approvals remaining, WIPP is poised to start the next phase of its cleanup mission. On Wednesday, CBFO authorized WTS, the WIPP managing and operating contractor, to begin remote-handled (RH) TRU waste operations at WIPP.



Photo: Art Chavez (WRES)

During a demonstration of RH TRU waste disposal, a 42-ton forklift is used to lift a facility cask off of a transfer car. The forklift will then move the cask to the disposal area and will place it on horizontal emplacement equipment.

"Congratulations to WTS and the entire workforce on achieving this long-awaited accomplishment!" said CBFO Manager Dave Moody in a letter to WTS General Manager Dick Raaz. "WIPP is now capable of meeting its entire intended mission for nuclear waste disposal in a deep geologic environment."

The authorization follows CBFO verification that pre-start findings identified during the December 2006 DOE operational readiness review have been corrected. CBFO notified Dae Chung at DOE Headquarters, who approved the startup of RH TRU waste operations at WIPP.

"I don't have to tell you how thrilled I am to achieve this milestone," said Raaz. "We will be able to get on with this very important mission. The significance of your efforts and the benefit to the nation are immense."

Before the first RH shipment to WIPP can take place, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) must approve shipping site audit reports and NMED must also certify that WIPP is ready. Idaho National Laboratory is expected to be the first site to ship RH TRU waste to WIPP.

Transportation Manager Angela Johnson. "At WIPP, we ship safely or we don't ship at all."

Transportation safety protocols at WIPP prevent shipments from departing if there are questionable weather or road conditions along the route to WIPP.

Now that's "one" for safety.

A Thank you for WIPP's efforts in "A Christmas To Remember 2006"

To all WIPP employees,

"A Christmas to Remember 2006" is over. And, boy, was it ever a giant success. A large part of its success is the generosity of each of you! You all did a tremendous job, on very short notice, too. Words are so inadequate to express the appreciation the families and I feel. Without exception, each family thanked us over and over for the gifts they received. Several of the adults said this was the best Christmas they'd had in their entire life. While that is good to hear, it is really pretty sad to think about. I'm so glad you all helped make it possible for them to have a wonderful Christmas.

We had a Santa on one of the days we delivered and the kids were enthralled! The little 9-year-old girl in Family 4 was beside herself with excitement when Santa came in. I thought she was going to pass out! The presents were great, but it was Santa she was so excited about.

It was a great success and your support was vital to that success. To these 23 families, Christmas just doesn't get any better than this!

Please extend and share my most sincere thanks to everyone involved. I can't begin to remember or know everyone's name who helped and I don't want to miss anyone. There really just aren't words enough to thank you all for the great effort you made. The families will never forget it - of that I have been assured! - and neither will I. Let's get ready, A Christmas to Remember 2007 is just around the corner!

Warmest wishes for a wonderful New Year,

Linda Abernathy
School Social Worker
Carlsbad Municipal Schools

EPA gives WIPP "thumbs up" after startup inspection

EPA officials were on-site this week to inspect WIPP's RH operations. The agenda on Tuesday involved morning presentations, but moved quickly to surface demonstrations of various RH processes in the afternoon. Day 2 included underground demonstrations of the RH disposal process and borehole drilling. A closeout meeting was held this morning in the Skeen-Whitlock Building.



Photo: Art Chavez (WRES)

Pictured l to r: Mike Oliver (CBFO), Tom Peake (EPA), Shankar Ghose (EPA), Ty Zimmerly (WTS) and Chuck Byrum (EPA). Zimmerly explains the emplacement survey used for determining the placement of boreholes in the disposal room walls.

Chuck Byrum, who led one part of the inspection for the EPA, said he was evaluating what has changed and how those changes impact the site as a whole.

"It's an elegant dance between CH and RH disposal and it will take some time for everyone to learn all the steps," said Byrum. "The picture I see is that you're ready. Continue what you're doing in RH and CH."

The EPA's Tom Peake led the waste emplacement portion of the inspection.

"We were impressed," said Peake. "We saw that the employees were comfortable and proficient in implementing the procedures. We don't have any observations or findings, so we'll give you the thumbs up."

Another EPA team was also on-site this week. Officials from the EPA's enforcement section came to review WIPP's compliance with the Toxic Substance Control Act and the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System. That review successfully concluded with no findings.

EPA is expected to return to WIPP in June for an annual inspection.

**Department of Transportation and
Department of Homeland Security
seek comments**

The Department of Transportation in coordination with the Department of Homeland Security is considering the need to continue to operate or invest in the North American LORAN-C Radionavigation System beyond fiscal year 2007.

Future investment decisions might include: Decommissioning the LORAN-C system, maintaining the LORAN-C system as currently configured, or developing a fully deployed Enhanced LORAN (eLORAN) system.

Contributing factors to these decisions are (1) whether the Global Positioning System (GPS) and other available back-up systems are adequate for the public's navigation and timing needs, thus making the LORAN-C system redundant, and (2) whether the eLORAN investments made to date provide enhancements that now merit consideration as a complementary capability to GPS, and not merely as a GPS back-up.

The Department of Transportation and the Department of Homeland Security seek public input on the various decisions currently under consideration.

For more information on LORAN, you may visit <http://www.navcen.uscg.gov>.

The link below takes you to the DOT Docket Management System. At the lower left of the document, you can click and view the Federal Register Notice on LORAN, published yesterday Jan. 8, 2007. **Public comment period ends on Feb. 7, 2007.**

[Docket Management System](#)

WIPP 2006 – A year to remember

WIPP had a great year in 2006. The project achieved many “firsts” that laid the groundwork for an equally impressive 2007. While receiving a record 1,142 shipments and disposing of 10,397 cubic meters of waste, WIPP employees made 2006 one of the best to-date. Below is a chronological review of five top stories that helped shape WIPP in 2006.

January 9, 2006

Voluntary Protection Program recertification

In a ceremony at the WIPP site, DOE presented a framed certificate and a Voluntary Protection Program (VPP) flag to WTS in recognition of its recertification as a VPP Star Site. Dr. Ines Triay, chief operating officer for DOE's Environmental Management Program, was on hand for the event.

“I can't tell you how proud Headquarters is of this project,” said Triay before turning the podium over to CBFO Manager Dave Moody for the presentation.



WIPP was the first DOE site to be recognized as a VPP Star Site in 1994 and has maintained that designation for more than a decade.

The VPP program promotes safety and health excellence through cooperative efforts among labor, management and government at DOE contractor sites.

March 29, 2006

Environmental Protection Agency recertifies WIPP

Six months after declaring WIPP's Compliance Recertification Application (CRA) administratively complete, the EPA announced its decision to recertify WIPP. The recertification process occurs every five years, as required by the WIPP Land Withdrawal Act, and this was the first time WIPP has been recertified since opening in 1999.



“EPA's recertification reinforces the important mission of WIPP to safely dispose of defense-generated TRU waste from across the nation,” said James Rispoli, DOE's assistant secretary for environmental management.

The CRA was submitted to EPA on March 26, 2004, exactly five years after the first waste was received at WIPP. In it, DOE updated or provided new technical and scientific data to demonstrate that the WIPP will continue to safely isolate TRU waste from the human environment. The next CRA is due to EPA by March 26, 2009.

September 10, 2006

WIPP receives 5,000th shipment

Seven and a half years after opening, WIPP celebrated the safe arrival of the 5,000th waste shipment.

“This has been a real team effort,” said CBFO Manager Dave Moody. “Everyone involved in the cleanup, transportation and final disposal of this waste is to be congratulated for making safety the priority.”

The shipment originated from Idaho National Laboratory and was driven by the team of Glen Little and Tim Worden of Tri-state Motor Transit Company. The trucked traveled more than 1,390 miles to reach WIPP, which took about 30 hours.



File photo

Happy Birthday Wishes!

Jorge Alva (WTS)
January 1

Mark Friend (WTS)
January 1

Dennis Hofer (WTS)
January 1

Jo-Ann Garcia (CTAC)
January 5

Abraham Romo (WTS)
January 7

Bob Prentiss (WTS)
January 8

Leslie Aragon (WTS)
January 12

Randy Chatfield (WTS)
January 12

Joel Siegel (WRES)
January 12

Doris Rodirquez (L&M)
January 14

Candace Nance (WTS)
January 16

Amy Fierro (WTS)
January 20

Ernest Preciado (CBFO)
January 21

Rose Scott (WTS)
January 23

Miriam Whatley (WRES)
January 23

Jim Hollen (WTS)
January 25

Beverly Crawford (LANL)
January 27

Linda Pastorello (WRES)
January 27

Rick Salness (WRES)
January 27

Jerry Osborne (WTS)
January 28

Ross Kirkes (SNL)
January 30

Is your birthday on our list?

Employee birthdays are submitted once and must be re-approved for publication by you every year. Please submit birth dates to the TRU TeamWorks staff at: TRUTeamWorks@wipp.ws.

As a follow-up to this milestone, WIPP received a record 35 shipments in a single week from December 3-9.

October 16, 2006

Governor Bill Richardson and NMED Secretary Ron Curry sign revised permit
Before a standing-room-only crowd, Governor Bill Richardson and NMED Secretary Ron Curry signed the revised WIPP Hazardous Waste Facility Permit. The Governor called the permit a tribute to the safety efforts of WIPP employees and thanked Secretary Curry, his staff, the DOE, WIPP contractors and New Mexico environment groups for "a product of careful review."

The modified permit:

- ⌘ Allows WIPP to receive RH TRU waste
- ⌘ Establishes a comprehensive plan for analyzing both CH and RH TRU wastes destined for WIPP
- ⌘ Establishes a dispute resolution process for citizens, the state and federal agencies for resolving audit issues related to waste characterization
- ⌘ Provides an e-mail notification system to inform the public of WIPP permit activities
- ⌘ Provides public access to non-security sensitive information in the WIPP waste database
- ⌘ Increases requirements for the monitoring of volatile organic compounds in the WIPP repository
- ⌘ Increases temporary waste storage on the surface at the WIPP facility
- ⌘ Establishes conditions for how capacity in the WIPP underground disposal units is used for RH waste

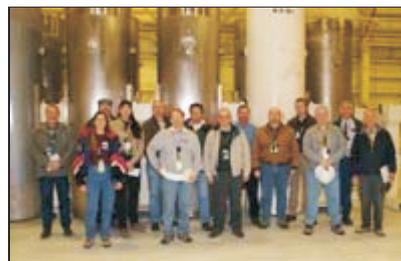


The provisions of the permit went into effect on November 16.

December 13, 2006

DOE Operational Readiness Review a success

A DOE operational readiness review (ORR) began on December 4 and ended nine days later with the issuance of a report recommending authorization to begin RH waste operations at WIPP with only a minimal number of pre-start findings. The 12-person team was led by Ed Ziemianski of DOE Idaho.



"Getting on with the RH mission is key to WIPP's ability to achieve the TRU waste disposal milestone," said WTS General Manager Dick Raaz.

The DOE ORR was the final step in a lengthy process to evaluate whether the WIPP facility is ready to begin RH operations.

Panel 5 mining continues



WIPP employees continue to mine Panel 5 in the WIPP underground. The above photograph was taken on December 13, 2006 in Room 1.

Santa Fe Protective Services Reaching for the DOE VPP Star

Santa Fe Protective Services, Inc. (SFPS), the security provider at WIPP, recently applied for the DOE Voluntary Protection Program (VPP), with plans to attain STAR status.

The VPP program was established to recognize superior performance in the field of safety and health by contractor management and their employees. As the name reflects, the program is voluntary. Each company that wishes to present its safety program for review must complete an application with safety incident rates attached. The DOE then conducts a review to determine whether the elements of the program are represented by the company in a way that is above and beyond ordinary compliance with safety and health practices.

STAR status is awarded to companies that demonstrate outstanding levels of employee protection in terms of safety and health. This status is the heart and soul of the DOE VPP program. It is the highest level that can be achieved. Participants must strive for continuous improvement at the highest level of safety and health excellence, as all program participants are re-evaluated every three years.

SFPS has been working on its application for over a year. In preparing its application, SFPS has improved many safety and health programs to become leaders in the field of protective force safety.

New programs, such as the development of an elite physical training program, are now considered second-to-none in the DOE complex. The implementation of safety concerns and reporting systems has also increased employee safety awareness. The new programs make SFPS a good candidate for admission as a Star Status company in the DOE VPP program.

Interested in WIPP?

If you would like to be notified when TRU TeamWorks is updated with the latest information about WIPP, send an e-mail message to TRUTeamWorks@wipp.ws.

Submitted by Clint Cassingham (SFPS)

The U.S. Department of Energy
Waste Isolation Pilot Plant

Please send comments and/or
suggestions to: [TRU TeamWorks](#)

