

## WIPP Quick Facts (As of 1-23-13)

**11,112**

Shipments received since opening  
(10,483 CH and 629 RH)

**85,498**

Cubic meters of waste disposed  
(85,185 CH and 313 RH)

**165,172**

Containers disposed in the  
underground  
(164,545 CH and 627 RH)



### WIPP employee honored by American Red Cross

WIPP's Bob Walker was among a handful of honorees at the American Red Cross' Southeastern New Mexico Real Heroes Breakfast & Awards held January 10 in Hobbs.

The organization awarded Real Heroes in various categories. Walker received the Military Hero award, recognizing the time and financial assistance he gives to help "his military brothers and sisters" who have served or are currently serving.

A veteran himself, taking care of returning soldiers and their families is something Walker is known for. He participates in the American Legion Legacy Scholarship Fund, which benefits children whose parents lost their lives while actively serving in the military. He also helps local Wounded Warrior efforts to collect money and comfort items for soldiers who are back in the United States recovering from trauma. He has



## Modification seeks efficiency, added safety in waste characterization process

On December 12, 2012, the U.S. Department of Energy and Nuclear Waste Partnership LLC, referred to as the Permittees, submitted a Class 2 Permit Modification Request for the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) Hazardous Waste Facility Permit to the New Mexico Environment Department. The request proposes to revise the methods used so transuranic (TRU) waste characterization is accomplished using acceptable knowledge (AK) and radiography and/or visual examination (VE).

If approved, the generator/storage sites would no longer be required to perform waste characterization through the use of chemical sampling and analysis, as currently required. Chemical sampling and analysis refers specifically to headspace gas and solidified waste sampling and analysis. This proposed change would not affect the ability to provide protection to human health and the environment.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) requires only one characterization method to be used to determine each waste parameter of interest. The EPA also allows waste generators to use AK to characterize their wastes and specifically encourages the use of AK to characterize mixed waste due to the radiological risks associated with sampling and analytical activities.

The Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) standards require that waste analysis plans specify waste parameters for measurement and the characterization methods that will be used to determine the parameters. One of the parameters described in the permit is the identification of hazardous waste numbers (HWNs) applicable to each waste stream.

The permit currently requires AK to be used to determine the HWNs, but it also requires that chemical sampling and analysis be used to verify the HWNs identified. Therefore, the permit requires the use of two methods for determining HWNs: 1) AK and 2) chemical sampling and analysis. There is no RCRA requirement for the verification of HWNs and the HWN assignment does not affect how TRU mixed waste is stored or disposed of at the WIPP facility. The Permittees need only be concerned whether or not the assigned HWNs are allowed by the Permit.

made several trips to San Antonio, Texas to deliver the items directly to those who need them.

The Red Cross Real Heroes awards breakfast honors New Mexicans whose unselfish and heroic actions reflect the spirit and ideals of the humanitarian mission of the American Red Cross. Honorees are chosen by a selection committee from among all those nominated. Above, Walker is congratulated by New Mexico State Senator Gay Kernan, whose district includes the WIPP site.

The proposed modification would eliminate redundancy in waste characterization by removing the requirement for unnecessary chemical sampling and analysis, thereby reducing complexity, cost and most importantly, personnel radiation exposure.

Above, Anthony Stone, of the Carlsbad Field Office, and Karen Day, of Regulatory and Environmental Services, provide information to stakeholders at a recent public meeting about the proposed permit modification.

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## Waste certification milestone reached at the Savannah River Site

A commitment between staff from the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) and the Savannah River Site (SRS) has resulted in the achievement of a waste certification milestone. Efforts by WIPP's Central Characterization Program staff and colleagues at SRS aimed to certify 4,954 cubic meters of legacy transuranic (TRU) waste by December 31, 2012. The milestone was met on December 26, 2012.

A large portion of this remaining legacy TRU waste inventory required remediation and the development of innovative characterization techniques that required Environmental Protection Agency approval. In the end, the effort was completed safely, compliantly and ahead of schedule.



### TRANSCOM Version 3.0 deployed

The Carlsbad Field Office recently deployed a new version of the Transportation Tracking and Communication System (TRANSCOM) that is compatible with mobile devices such as Droid and iPhone.

In operation since 1992, TRANSCOM is used to track the movement of radioactive material shipments for the Department of Energy and the U.S. National Nuclear Security Administration. The MaChis Lower-Creek Indian Tribe, contracted to operate and maintain TRANSCOM, operates the system's communication center 24 hours a day, seven days a week.



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## Planned maintenance projects underway at WIPP

Waste disposal is taking a short hiatus at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP), as a variety of maintenance projects are completed. This is part of WIPP's annual planned maintenance evolution, which enables work to be completed that would otherwise interfere with operations. Projects are underway on the surface and in the underground.

Some of the major surface projects include crane repair in the CH Bay, work



on the fire suppression system, annual preventive maintenance and other work on the platform docks, floor coating in the Waste Handling Building airlocks and restriping in the parking area behind the building (see photo at right).



In the underground, some of the major projects include re-alignment of the Waste Shaft Station rail and steel (photo above), floor mining in the primary waste transport route and other areas, modifications to the underground ventilation system and ground control work in several areas.

The planned maintenance evolution began January 18 and will continue until February 28.



Above, CBFO Manager Joe Franco. At right, CBFO Budget Analyst David Hoffer.



## Federal Budget Process 101

The Carlsbad Field Office (CBFO) recently provided a presentation to WIPP stakeholders about the federal budget process. Budget Analyst David Hoffer walked the group through the process step-by-step and explained how funding to the CBFO and WIPP fits into Department of Energy's budget, as well as within the overall federal budget. CBFO Manager Joe Franco welcomed the audience of about 30 people and joined Hoffer in the question and answer portion of the presentation. CBFO will offer the presentation a second time at 4:30 p.m. on Tuesday, February 12 at their in-town office building located at 4021 National Parks Highway in Carlsbad.



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

To be added to the TRU TeamWorks update notification list or to submit comments or suggestions, please contact us at [TRUTeamWorks@wipp.ws](mailto:TRUTeamWorks@wipp.ws).

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