

WIPP Quick Facts (As of 01-24-08)

6,389

Shipments received since opening

53,001

Cubic meters of waste disposed

97,560

Containers disposed in the underground

Thanks to Blanket Brigade Volunteers

WTS employees, family and friends contributed nearly 400 volunteer hours to make the 2007 Blanket Brigade a success. The community service project provides support to the Carlsbad Chamber of Commerce's Christmas on the Pecos event by handing out blankets to visitors as they board the boats.

About 17,000 people visited the Christmas on the Pecos this year.

NMSU-C Distance Learning Opportunity

The College of Engineering Distance Education Program at New Mexico State University is

WIPP receives 100th RH shipment



File photo

What a difference a year makes. Less than a year ago WIPP received its first shipment of remote-handled transuranic (RH-TRU) waste. On January 5, the site began receiving waste for the new year with the arrival of the 100th RH-TRU waste shipment.

"Years of preparation went into the RH-TRU program before the first shipment ever arrived at WIPP," said Dr. Dave Moody, Carlsbad Field Office manager. "Thanks to the diligent efforts of the RH team the program has been a success and we've made great progress."

To date, all RH-TRU waste shipments to WIPP have come from the Idaho National Laboratory (INL). INL is one of the nation's larger TRU waste generator sites and a prime shipper to WIPP. The first RH-TRU shipment was received on Jan. 23, 2007. Last fall, WIPP received a record of six RH-TRU waste shipments in one week.

Two categories of TRU waste are disposed underground at WIPP: contact-handled and remote-handled waste. RH-TRU waste has a higher dose rate at the surface of the disposal container, requiring it to be shielded and remotely handled by workers. WIPP began receiving contact-handled TRU waste in 1999. A revision to the WIPP hazardous waste facility permit in 2006 paved the way for RH-TRU waste operations.

WIPP: A look back at 2007

WIPP employees know how to rise to a challenge. To prove that statement, take a look back at 2007 and see what the team has been able to achieve. The challenges we continually face are not easy ones, but time and time again this team steps up and gets things done.

now offering an on-line graduate certificate in systems engineering, providing working professionals an opportunity to integrate their work experience with advanced class work. The program has two required courses and two electives. The required courses are Electrical Engineering 461: Systems Engineering and Project Management, and Industrial Engineering 537: Large Scale Systems Engineering. Students can choose one of three separate tracks for their elective courses: Modeling, Simulation, and Decisions; Applications; or Systems Analysis. The certificate courses are applicable to a Master's degree in engineering at New Mexico State University.

Students should have a bachelor's degree in engineering, science or a related field to enter the program. Complete program information as well as information about the NMSU Engineering Education Distance program may be found at <http://de.nmsu.edu>. You may also contact the Program Director, Dr. Edward Pines, at 575-646-2730 or epines@nmsu.edu.

WIPP received 993 shipments in 2007 and disposed of more than 7,900 cubic meters of waste. Here's a quick look at some key accomplishments from 2007.

January 23, 2007

First receipt of RH-TRU waste at WIPP – This much anticipated milestone represented the ability of WIPP to fulfill its mission of disposing of all defense-related TRU waste.

January 23, 2007

Receipt of 10 shipments in less than four hours – Due to weather-related delays, shipments were backed-up and when the roads cleared, they headed in to the site one after another.

March 26, 2007

Eight years of operation – WIPP has safely operated since March 1999.

August 17, 2007

Retrieval project completed – After an uncertified drum was inadvertently shipped to WIPP, crews planned, trained and safely completed an operation to retrieve the waste and return it to Idaho.

August 29, 2007

The 6,000th shipment of waste arrives at WIPP – This milestone shipment arrived without fanfare, but the achievement this represents is worth cheering. WIPP trucks have traveled more than 1.3 million loaded miles, the equivalent of driving 13 round trips to the Moon.

Johnson and Oliver retire from DOE

Harold Johnson and Mike Oliver, two long-time faces at the DOE Carlsbad Field Office, have retired. Their contributions to WIPP can't be overstated. They will be greatly missed.



Johnson

Johnson's 30-year career with the federal government began in 1977. He began as an attorney for the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) unit of the Interstate Commerce Commission. He transferred to DOE in 1991 and served as the NEPA compliance manager for the Carlsbad Field Office since 1995.

Retirement for Johnson means a move back home close to family in Macon, Georgia. He is an avid rock hound and one of his first challenges of retirement has been moving his collection across the country!

Oliver, CBFO's facility systems engineer, retired on December 31. He worked at WIPP since 1992. His retirement comes after a 40-year career of government and military service. Prior to WIPP, Oliver was a Lieutenant Colonel in the Air Force overseeing civil engineering.



Oliver

He and his wife plan to spend time visiting their daughter, son-in-law and grandchildren in Colorado.

Congratulations to both!

DOE ships 20,000th cubic meter of nuclear waste out of Idaho

On December 11, DOE announced it has shipped 20,000 cubic meters of nuclear waste out of Idaho. More transuranic nuclear waste has been safely shipped from the Department's Idaho site than any other site in the DOE complex. The amount of waste shipped has allowed DOE to meet and exceed its transuranic waste shipping commitment to the state of Idaho, contained in the Idaho Settlement Agreement, and has put the Department nearly three years ahead of the schedule in the Settlement Agreement.

"DOE is delivering on its promise to cleanup its Idaho site as evidenced by the record amounts of waste safely being shipped out of the state," said DOE Idaho Operations Deputy Manager Rick Provencher. "Waste from our Idaho site accounts for more than 40 percent of all waste disposed at the Department's Waste Isolation Pilot Plant, located near Carlsbad, New Mexico. It's an accomplishment that the Department and the state of Idaho can both be proud of."

Employees at DOE's Advanced Mixed Waste Treatment Project (AMWTP) have been responsible for the safe shipping of transuranic nuclear waste, as well as mixed low-level waste that is composed of hazardous and radioactive waste. Managed and operated by Bechtel BWXT Idaho, operations at AMWTP are currently averaging 15 shipments of nuclear waste out of Idaho each week. Looked at in another way, it would take nearly 100,000 55-gallon drums to contain the amount of waste now permanently disposed at WIPP.

Santa Fe Protective Services achieves VPP Star status

Santa Fe Protective Services Inc (SFPS) at WIPP has become only the third current security service provider to achieve Star status in the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Voluntary Protection Program (VPP). The company was notified of the honor in a letter from DOE Headquarters on November 13.



Pictured left to right: SFPS General Manager Larry Barela, SFPS President Christina Maki, CBFO Manager Dave Moody and WTS General Manager Farok Sharif.

The purpose of the DOE's VPP is to recognize superior performance in the field of safety and health by contractor management and their employees. Star status is the highest level that can be achieved in the VPP. This recognition is reserved for companies that demonstrate outstanding protection of employee safety and health.

"We're thrilled to receive Star status," says Larry Barela, SFPS General Manager. "Our job is to keep the WIPP site safe primarily through our physical security presence, but we are also strongly committed to the everyday safety of each and every one of our coworkers."

In addition, Christina Maki, SFPS president adds, "I am very proud of the WIPP SFPS personnel who worked so hard on this achievement. I know first hand that there was a tremendous amount of energy and work that went into this effort, particularly by our safety officer, Clint Cassingham. Our team at WIPP has a lot to be proud of. This award is a celebration for the entire company."

The VPP criteria include five main elements: management commitment, employee involvement, worksite analysis, hazard prevention and control and safety training. Evaluators from DOE headquarters conducted an in-depth, on-site evaluation prior to recommending Star status to the DOE Assistant Secretary for Health, Safety & Security. Star sites are re-evaluated every three years to ensure continued compliance with the program's safety requirements.

"I applaud SFPS on this great safety achievement," says Dr. David Moody, manager of the DOE Carlsbad Field Office. "The VPP Star status is not easy to achieve, but they have risen to the challenge and that benefits the entire project."

SFPS was mentored during its application process by WTS, which was the first company to receive DOE VPP Star status in 1994 and it has maintained that status ever since.

**Lunchtime Colloquium:
Permanent Underground
Repositories for Radioactive
Waste**

On February 6 at 12:00 p.m. in the Skeen-Whitlock Building's Weart Auditorium, Norbert Rempe will conduct a colloquium about permanent underground repositories for radioactive waste.

Rempe has visited many around the world and has offered to share his perspectives and review the current and projected radioactive waste repositories that he has studied.

This talk was also given at an American Nuclear Society chapter meeting (see article at right) to an enthusiastic standing-room-only audience.

The colloquium is open to the public.

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.

Local ANS chapter concludes a busy year

Carlsbad's American Nuclear Society (ANS) section finished a busy year with talks on underground waste repositories worldwide and the Enriched Xenon Observatory (EXO) recently assembled at WIPP.

During 2007, the section offered the community a series of six speakers, who addressed a variety of subjects from nuclear energy to neutrinos.

November's meeting at the Carlsbad Environmental Monitoring and Research Center (CEMRC) featured Norbert Rempe, WIPP's principal engineer geologist, who has traveled extensively as part of his work-related and independent research in the area of international cooperation in repository science and technology.

Rempe spoke about radioactive and chemical waste repositories around the world. Together with natural analogues — such as hydrocarbon reservoirs, uranium deposits, and fossil fission reactors — they show that geologic isolation is a safe, environmentally sound, and permanent waste solution, he said.

Solid radioactive waste (low- and intermediate-level) first entered a deep geologic repository in 1959 (existing limestone mine in Czechoslovakia), and liquid radioactive waste has been injected into confined underground reservoirs since 1963 (sandstone layers in Russia). Solid wastes with chemically toxic constituents that have infinite half lives have been isolated underground since 1972 (existing potash mine in Germany).

Rempe said performance of these repositories has not caused any of their owners or operators to contemplate transferring the waste.

In an interesting side note, Rempe pointed out that the mines of Jachymov, Bohemia, provided the uranium ore from which Marie Curie isolated radium. Jachymov is just a short distance north of Carlsbad (Karlový Vary), Carlsbad's namesake.

In December, Dr. Lisa Kaufman, of the University of Maryland, gave a talk at CEMRC on the EXO project, an advanced high energy particle physics experiment that seeks to measure the mass of the most elusive elementary particle in the universe, the neutrino.

An international particle physics collaboration, led by Stanford University, has developed the EXO-200 detector, which includes a special pressurized chamber of enriched Xenon gas. DOE has made WIPP's unique underground facility available for this type of research, which requires low background radiation.

For more information about ANS activities, contact Dr. Jean-Francois Lucchini at 234-5556.

Submitted by Victoria Parker (LANL-CB)

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

Please send comments and/or
suggestions to: [TRU TeamWorks](mailto:TRUTeamWorks@wipp.ws)

