

WIPP Quick Facts
(As of 12-11-11)

10,214

Shipments received since opening
(9,682 CH and 532 RH)

79,468

Cubic meters of waste disposed
(79,200 CH and 268 RH)

155,269

Containers disposed in the
underground
(154,737 CH and 532 RH)

Photo at right: CBFO Interim Manager Ed Ziemianski (far right) presented the awards to several of the participants. Also shown from left to right are Debra Hicks and Randy Pettigrew of Pettigrew & Associates; Owen Lofton of the Bureau of Land Management; Hank Carey and Ronnie Crockett of URS Washington TRU Solutions; Dan Ferguson of CBFO and Judy McLemore and Bob Kehrman of Regulatory and Environmental Services (RES). Other members of the team not pictured are Susan McCauslin and Bernie Rodriguez of CBFO; Jaron Singleton and Bill Barnhardt of Washington TRU Solutions; Frank Bush of URS; Mel Balderrama and Dona Dewey of RES; Cory Burnett and Gene Stouidt of Constructors, Inc. and Lonnie Riley of Pettigrew & Associates.

Carlsbad Field Office Recognized by New Mexico and DOE for Environmental Excellence at WIPP



The Department of Energy (DOE) Carlsbad Field Office (CBFO) was selected for top recognition for environmental stewardship and for reducing energy, water and paper usage at the DOE's Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP).

The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) recently selected CBFO for a Bronze Award under their Green Zia Environmental Leadership Program, which recognized New Mexico businesses or organizations for their commitment towards environmental stewardship by implementing pollution prevention practices and for excellence and long-term environmental and economic sustainability.

In place since 1996, the Green Zia Environmental Leadership Program is a part of the NMED Pollution Prevention Program. WIPP was the only organization to be singled out, along with four businesses, in New Mexico for the honor. The program, which is based on the Malcolm Baldrige Business Performance Excellence Criteria and the Quality New Mexico program, is the only initiative of its kind nationally and helps participants incorporate environmental decision making into core business practices.

"As a result of these worthwhile efforts, these businesses (or organizations) are both saving money and reducing impacts on the environment," NMED Secretary David Martin said. "The New Mexico Environment Department is pleased to recognize these environmental leaders and we encourage all New Mexico businesses (or organizations) to take steps to promote conservation."

In addition to the state award, CBFO also received recognition as a winner of the 2011 DOE Sustainability Awards. The awards are presented to individuals, teams, and organizations for improving energy, water and fleet efficiency while reducing pollution and waste across the DOE complex.

"Today's Sustainability Award winners are leading by example, showing what's possible when employees bring creativity, innovation and dedication to their efforts to make the Department of Energy more sustainable," said Deputy Secretary of Energy and Senior Sustainability Officer Daniel Poneman.

Both awards recognize the WIPP team most significantly for the environmental



Enriched Xenon Observatory reports results in scientific journal

In a paper published in Physical Review Letters, a scientific journal of the American Physical Society, the Enriched Xenon Observatory (EXO) team has reported its first results.

The paper reports the world's first measurement of a two-neutrino double-beta decay for xenon-136. This rare process had previously only been theorized for xenon and had not been observed.

Measuring it helps theorists confirm they understand the initial and final states of the two-neutrino process. Those states are the same as those involved in the neutrinoless decay process, which is the primary focus of experiments at EXO.

The results allow scientists to better understand the fundamental nature of neutrinos.



Mining begins for Salt Disposal Investigations project

Crews have begun mining access drifts in the vicinity of the North Experimental Area for scientific study. After recently completing work on drifts that are part of the main transportation pathway to WIPP's disposal area, mining crews have now turned their attention to this new project.

achievement of the WIPP South Access Road project. In addition to CBFO, the WIPP team included members of Washington TRU Solutions (WTS), LLC, the WIPP management and operating contractor, WTS Sub-contractors Constructors Inc. and Pettigrew & Associates, and the U.S. Department of Interior Bureau of Land Management.

The WIPP South Access Road is used daily by employees commuting to and from the WIPP site. The project team identified sustainable options early in the planning of the 4.5-mile road's reconstruction, including reducing fresh water and reusing existing materials for construction. Rather than use the city's water sources, the team reused clean storm water held in the evaporation ponds at the site. For road base materials, the team used caliche, a hardened deposit of calcium carbonate, from a salt storage evaporation pond on site. For paving, 7,800 tons of recycled asphalt product was used. Together, these actions resulted in saving \$150,000 in construction costs, 9.7 billion British Thermal Units of energy, 340,000 gallons of fresh water, and the equivalent of 640 million tons carbon dioxide.

"The project enhanced the safety of the road and allows for a shorter delivery route, saving fuel and preventing additional associated greenhouse gas emissions," said CBFO Interim Manager Ed Ziemianski. "These awards reflect favorably on the entire WIPP Team of the Department of Energy and the DOE's contractors and laboratories.

In addition to the WIPP road project, environmental performance recognition included the following:

DOE started a recycling program for slip sheets, a plastic/polymer material that is used between waste containers. DOE contacted the slip sheet manufacturer and quickly determined that it was possible to return the used slip sheets for recycling, which eliminated the need for disposing of the material.

Personnel also implemented mitigation actions, including increased monitoring, use of barriers, and filtration systems, to manage carbon tetrachloride levels in the WIPP underground. These mitigation actions resulted in the stabilization of carbon tetrachloride levels below those permitted by the WIPP Hazardous Waste Facility permit.

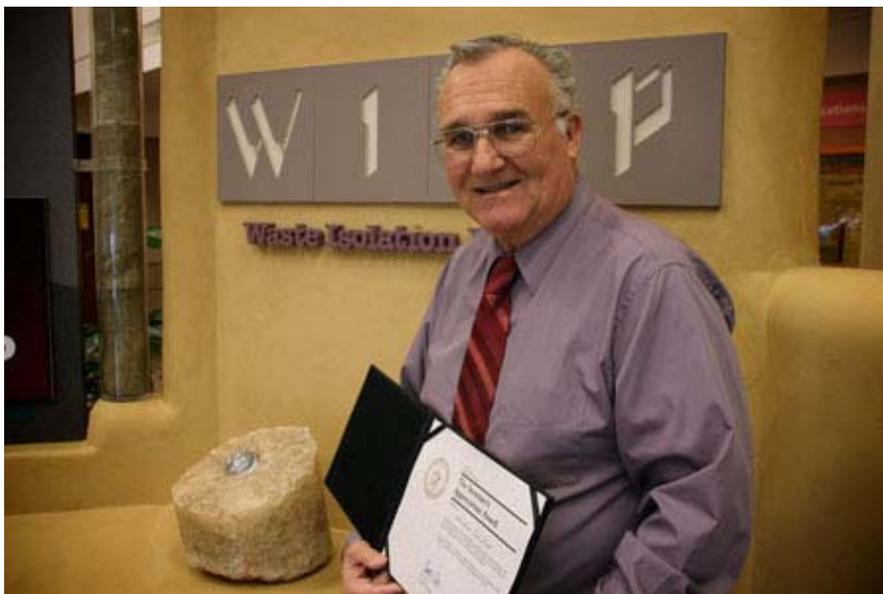
DOE created the Carlsbad Area Office in late 1993 to lead the nation's transuranic waste disposal efforts. In September 2000 the office was elevated in status to become the Carlsbad Field Office, taking on significant new responsibilities. The CBFO coordinates the transuranic (TRU) program at waste-generating sites, national laboratories, and other participants involved in characterizing and disposing of TRU waste at the WIPP site located 26 miles southeast of Carlsbad, N.M.



Van Luik honored by Secretary Chu

The newly mined area will eventually be used for the Salt Disposal Investigations (SDI). The purpose of the SDI project is to investigate the use of salt formations for the disposal of thermally elevated waste types.

Phase 1 of the mining project began on December 1 and is expected to take about a year. The entire job, which is being worked in among other mining requirements, will be completed in mid 2014.



Dr. Abe Van Luik, Carlsbad Field Office Senior International Programs Manager & Policy Advisor, was recently recognized by Department of Energy Secretary Steven Chu for his extraordinary efforts to further DOE international relations with nuclear partners in Argentina.

Interested in WIPP?

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"I really appreciate the management of the Carlsbad Field Office, the Office of Environmental Management and the Secretary of Energy for this award. I also would like to recognize the staff of Washington TRU Solutions, who made the logistic challenges of hosting this conference look easy," said Van Luik.

Van Luik worked with officials from the Department of State Office of Nuclear Energy, Safety and Security, the National Nuclear Security Administration, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and a high-level delegation of nuclear officials from Argentina to co-host the 8th meeting of the U.S.-Argentine Joint Standing Committee on Nuclear Energy Cooperation (JSNEC) in Carlsbad, N.M.

Christine Martin, State Department Foreign Affairs Officer and joint host, summarized the four-day conference as "one of the best managed enterprises in which I've been privileged to be involved."

As part of the four-day conference, JSNEC members held bilateral talks on international security, nonproliferation policies, technical collaboration, nuclear power and waste management.

"Uncontrolled radioactive materials do not recognize national borders," said Van Luik. "Whenever we can demonstrate to other nations how to do something safely--in this instance the permanent disposal of radioactive waste--we help to make the world a safer place."

The visitors toured the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant's (WIPP) surface and underground facilities to see firsthand the U.S. solution to safe isolation of nuclear defense wastes. They observed waste handling operations on the surface, then the group descended 2,150 feet underground to see how waste is permanently placed in the repository.

Representatives from the Carlsbad Field Office, Los Alamos National Laboratory-Carlsbad Operations; Sandia National Laboratories-Carlsbad Programs; and URS Washington TRU Solutions, the management and operating contractor, presented WIPP scientific and engineering data to JSNEC members during a half-day session and fielded questions related to deep geologic disposal.

Local community leaders also joined the JSNEC group at a DOE-hosted meeting to discuss the community's historic involvement in the WIPP project and public acceptance issues.

Van Luik believes international collaboration on nuclear safety has an enormous payoff. "When one country properly manages its radioactive waste materials, it

protects its neighbors and the world."

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

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