

WIPP Quick Facts (As of 12-19-10)

9,207

Shipments received since opening
(8,761 CH and 446 RH)

72,422

Cubic meters of waste disposed
(72,193 CH and 229 RH)

139,545

Containers disposed in the
underground
(139,099 CH and 446 RH)

Stroble takes over NTP for CBFO



J.R. Stroble has been selected to direct the National TRU Program (NTP) for the Department of Energy Carlsbad Field Office (CBFO). Stroble has been with CBFO since 2007, serving as CBFO's remote-handled waste certification manager.

As NTP director, he will oversee waste characterization, certification and transportation processes at the waste generator sites to ensure that permitted wastes are shipped to and disposed of at the Department of Energy's Waste Isolation Pilot Plant near Carlsbad.

WIPP receives second EPA recertification

The U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) received recertification from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on November 18. This decision means that the EPA, after an extensive review, concluded that the underground repository continues to demonstrate that it will safely contain transuranic (TRU) waste for the duration of WIPP's 10,000-year regulatory period.

EPA recertification verifies the site's continued compliance with federal disposal regulations and is based on various independent technical analyses, public comments and a thorough review of facility information submitted by DOE. On June 29, the EPA declared WIPP's Compliance Recertification Application (CRA) to be complete, which meant the start of the final review process.



Members of WIPP's recertification team display copies of the 1,000-page recertification application that was sent to EPA in June 2010. The EPA recertified WIPP on November 18.

EPA initially certified WIPP in 1998. The recertification process with the EPA takes place every five years, as required by the WIPP Land Withdrawal Act.

"This represents the culmination of several thousands of hours of hard work from the staff of the Carlsbad Field Office, Carlsbad Technical Assistance Contractor, Washington Regulatory and Environmental Services, Washington TRU Solutions, Sandia National Laboratories, Los Alamos National Laboratory and numerous subcontractors," said Steve Kouba, EPA Compliance Programs Manager for Washington Regulatory and Environmental Services. "The fact that EPA issued its approval six weeks ahead of the regulatory-driven deadline reflects the positive relationship that the WIPP project has developed with its regulator."

"We're very pleased the EPA approved the 2009 Compliance Recertification Application almost five months quicker than the first application," added Russ Patterson, Carlsbad Field Office Compliance Certification manager. "It basically shows that through hard work and team dedication we were able to answer all of EPA's questions in a timely manner."

"I am honored to have been chosen for this important position in the DOE Carlsbad Field Office," Stroble said. "We have a great future ahead of us in this office, and I will strive to help lead this office to fulfill its mission and to plan for the future."

Casey Gadbury, who now serves as the Director of the Office of Site Operations, previously held the position.

The 1,000 page CRA includes more than 2,000 references, Kouba said. WIPP provided one paper copy, one DVD and 5 jump drives, along with related references, to the EPA. Additional jump drives were provided to New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson's office and three state reading rooms. WIPP was able to significantly reduce paper copies, compared to the 2004 recertification, by using DVDs and jump drives.

This is the second time WIPP has been recertified since opening in 1999. For WIPP to receive recertification, the EPA verifies that the changes made at the facility during the preceding five-year period will not impact the ability of WIPP to contain TRU waste. The recertification process is not a reconsideration of the decision to open WIPP.

The next application is due March 26, 2014, and the work has already begun.

WTS team receives Safety and Health Innovator Award



URS Washington TRU Solutions, the management and operating contractor at WIPP, was presented the 2010 Safety and Health Innovator of the Year award from the New Mexico Mining Association and New Mexico Bureau of Mine Safety for initiatives related to underground vehicle safety. At right, Chris Hefner, New Mexico associate state mine inspector, presented the award to WTS staff and Carlsbad Field Office representatives on December 9, 2010.

Accepting the award is Bobby Franco, Bob Kirby, Tom Ferguson, Don Galbraith, Farok Sharif and Casey Gadbury.

WIPP RCTs complete intensive training course

Congratulations to the radiological control technicians (RCT) who have recently completed the intensive 9-12 month training program to become qualified. WIPP is required to have trained and qualified technicians that ensure compliance with federal and state regulations.

RCTs are part of Washington TRU Solutions' Safety and Health Department. They are responsible for controlling radiological areas to ensure the protection of workers and the environment.

RCTs successfully completing certification:

Kyle Brown
Danica Watson
Nico Dominguez
Augina (Gina) Anaya
A.J. Mayes
Troy Peterson
Frank Marquez

WIPP receives Hazardous Waste Facility Permit renewal



File Photo

WIPP has also received its Hazardous Waste Facility Permit renewal from the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED).

The Department of Energy's Carlsbad Field Office (CBFO) received notice on Nov. 30 that the state regulatory agency had issued a final decision granting the permit renewal to WIPP for the disposal of TRU mixed waste at the waste repository near Carlsbad, N.M. The permit must be renewed every ten years.

This is the first time that WIPP has renewed its hazardous waste facility permit. On Oct. 27, 1999, the NMED granted the original permit to WIPP. Radioactive material emplaced at WIPP is regulated by the federal government, but hazardous components, which are present in much of the waste disposed at WIPP, are regulated by the state.

"This permit renewal enables us to continue to safely deliver waste from DOE facilities to WIPP's underground repository for permanent disposal, Acting CBFO Manager Ed Ziemiński said.

Combined with the Nov. 18 second recertification by the EPA for a period of five years, the permit issuance, which grants WIPP another ten years of operations, provides the facility with full regulatory authorizations from EPA and NMED.

Expanding on WIPP's commitment to transparency, the permit provides for an enhanced community relations plan, consolidation of permit-related public documents on the WIPP Web page, an expanded e-mail notification capability and opportunities for public involvement in a variety of other ways. WIPP is also now authorized to dispose of TRU waste in Panel 8 of the underground repository.

The permit renewal process included seeking public input at meetings that were held throughout the state. The NMED issued a draft permit in June, and public hearings were held on the draft throughout August. In October, the Honorable Judge Joseph A. Alarid recommended the draft permit be approved with no changes. NMED Secretary Ron Curry issued a decision on the permit on Nov. 30, and the permit's effective date is Dec. 30, 2010.

"The Carlsbad Field Office is pleased to acknowledge the efforts of the many people and groups who are responsible for the success of the permit process," said Ziemiński. The success of the initiative is a collective tribute to all those involved."

WIPP transportation system surpasses 11 million miles

The WIPP transportation system has now logged 11 million safe loaded miles transporting TRU wastes to WIPP from waste generator sites around the country. WIPP shipments travel primarily on interstate highways to southeast New Mexico. Almost half of the WIPP shipments have come from Idaho National Laboratory.

WIPP trucks are held to the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance Level VI standard for radiological shipments. Each truck undergoes the rigorous inspection prior to leaving a generator site. WIPP surpassed the 11 million mile mark late last month.

Carlsbad mayor tours WIPP



Carlsbad Mayor Dale Janway and a group of Carlsbad elected officials toured the WIPP site in November. Above (l to r): City Councilman Dick Doss; Community Liaison Jim Grantner, Executive Assistant to the Mayor's Office, Chyenne Methola; Kevin Wilson; City Administrator Harry Burgess; WTS President and General Manager Farok Sharif and Mayor Janway.

Sandia National Laboratory manager leaves Carlsbad Office



Dave Kessel, senior manager of the Carlsbad Programs Group with Sandia National Laboratories (SNL), has accepted a position with SNL in Albuquerque.

Kessel has spent the past ten years with Sandia at the Carlsbad office. He has accepted the position as the technical deputy of Sandia's Energy Non-Proliferation and High Consequence Security Division. The position, he said, represents a tremendous opportunity for career growth.

Ray Finley will serve as acting manager of the Carlsbad Programs Group after Kessel's departure. Sandia has served the Department of Energy as a scientific advisor on the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant since speculation on the project began decades ago.

WIPP begins third maintenance outage



Mining on the floor of the E-300 drift takes place underground as part of the this year's annual maintenance outage.

WIPP will close out calendar year 2010 with a planned maintenance outage. Shipments to the facility have been suspended to allow underground work to be performed. The outage officially began on December 1 and extends to Jan. 2011 for planned maintenance projects and facility upgrades to ensure the plant's long-term safety and reliability.

Essential projects to be completed during the outage include:

- Mining from S-400 to S-700 – removing approximately 300 feet of roof, including modification of two bulkhead doors to increase clearance for remote-handled waste operations. A steel roof beam and chain-link mesh, referred to as ground control, will be installed to support the roof.
- Waste hoist tail replacements – two waste hoist tails will be replaced due to normal wear and tear over time. Waste hoist tails are the end weights on each of the waste hoist cables.

"It was a difficult decision to leave Carlsbad. My family and I are not eager to leave. We think it's a wonderful place to live and raise a family," Kessel said.

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- Overcast installation at W-30 drift –a ventilation overcast, to direct airflow in the mine, will be installed at the S-2180 intersection of W-30.
- Mining in E-300 – Mining crews will mine out the floor in the E-300 drift to increase ventilation through the area. Plans are to remove as much as 6-foot floor along a 3,000 ft. length.
- Facility modifications to accommodate the TRUPACT-III shipping package- with the recent Nuclear Regulatory Commission certification of the TRUPACT-III shipping package, several facility modifications are planned during the outage to safely handle the package and waste payloads.
- Planned surface maintenance– installation of hardware and software will be completed in the hot cell complex as part of the transfer cell and hot cell upgrade.

Bonnie Barnes, project manager, said the outage allows WIPP to upgrade areas of the facility without having to disrupt day-to-day operations.

"The outage allows us to safely perform maintenance, facility modifications and remediation at the WIPP site," she said. "We can focus on the outage activities without having to worry about interfering with waste handling and disposal operations."

A number of ancillary projects will be completed during the outage as well.

Klein receives ASQ-CSQE certification



Congratulations to Kit Klein for completing the requirements to become a Certified Software Quality Engineer through the American Society for Quality. Klein has reached a significant level of professional recognition, indicating a proficiency in and a comprehension of software quality engineering principles and practices.

The CSQE certification represents a high level of peer recognition. A CSQE is a professional who understands the principles of software quality engineering. Klein passed a four hour, 160-question test to achieve this certification.

ASQ is a global community of people dedicated to quality who share the ideas and tools to make the world work better. ASQ spans individual and organizational members in 150 countries worldwide.

CEMRC has new interim director

Dr. George Mulholland is now serving as the interim director of the Carlsbad Environmental Monitoring and Research Center (CEMRC).

Mulholland replaces Dr. Jim Conca, who served as director of CEMRC for approximately five years before accepting a new position to conduct science outreach for CEMRC and WIPP. In his new position, Conca will be working directly for Dr. Abbas Ghassemi, director of the Institute for Energy and the Environment. He continued to serve as interim director of CEMRC until Mulholland arrived on Sept. 22.



CEMRC Interim Director Dr. George Mulholland

Mulholland retired from New Mexico State University as head of the mechanical engineering department in 1996. Since then he has worked part time for the Institute for Energy and the Environment.

"Dr. Ghassemi and I have been colleagues at NMSU for a long time, so when he asked me if I would fill in (as interim director of CEMRC), I agreed to do so," Mulholland said. "I was very pleased to join the talented staff at CEMRC. This facility has tremendous capabilities."

Toys for Tots



Thanks to all the CBFO personnel who contributed to Toys for Tots, and who brought canned goods for the Carlsbad Community Kitchen.

Above: Toys collected under the CBFO Christmas tree.

Interested in WIPP?

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

Warm wishes from the Blanket Brigade



This year marks the eighth year for the Washington TRU Solutions-sponsored Blanket Brigade. WTS employees hand out blankets to visitors who take the river boat ride down the Pecos River to enjoy the lighted Christmas scenes. Carlsbad's "Christmas on the Pecos" is sponsored by the Carlsbad Chamber of Commerce and residents who live on the river.

Above: Jeff Neatherlin, along with friends and family, hand out blankets to visitors as part of WTS blanket brigade.

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

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



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