

## WIPP Quick Facts (As of 2-17-09)

### 7,135

Shipments received since opening  
(6,934 CH and 201 RH)

### 58,363

Cubic meters of waste disposed  
(58,280 CH and 83 RH)

### 109,433

Containers disposed in the  
underground  
(109,238 CH and 195 RH)

Pictured above right:  
Representative Donald Bratton,  
Representative Bill Gray,  
Representative John Heaton,  
Senator Gay Kernan, Senator  
Vernon Asbill, Representative  
Shirley Tyler, CBFO Manager  
Dave Moody, WTS President and  
General Manager Farok Sharif,  
NMED Secretary Ron Curry and  
Senator Carroll Leavell.

## Annual legislative update held in Santa Fe



The New Mexico legislative session is in full swing and last Thursday many legislators began their day with a 6:30 a.m. briefing on WIPP. Scheduled early, to avoid conflicts with committee meetings, floor votes and other business, the annual WIPP Legislative Update is designed to inform legislators and other state officials about the progress made at WIPP in the last year.

And with the 10-year anniversary of WIPP just over a month away, there was a lot to talk about. CBFO Manager Dave Moody gave the briefing, touching on a variety of topics including highlights in safety, mining, transportation and disposal.

Moody also heralded the success of the two-month-long extended maintenance outage, which was completed with a perfect safety record, and looked forward to upcoming regulatory highlights. In the next few months, DOE anticipates the submittal of the WIPP Hazardous Waste Facility Permit renewal application to the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) and the submittal of a compliance recertification application to the Environmental Protection Agency.

In addition to legislators, also in attendance were Attorney General Gary King, NMED Secretary Ron Curry, NMED Deputy Secretary John Goldstein and Economic Development Secretary Fred Mondragon.

King commented on WIPP's long history and how his father, then-Governor Bruce King, asked him to speak with the late State Senator Louis Whitlock on a waste disposal project near Carlsbad. From the start, he was aware of the focus on safety.

"I knew you could do it safely," said King, "I just didn't imagine how safely you would actually do it."

Curry also addressed the gathering, joking with Moody about a slide title.

"Thanks for calling it Regulatory Highlights," he laughed. "You don't usually hear those words together."

On a more serious note, Curry talked about NMED's role as a regulator. He noted

that there are times that NMED and WIPP disagree, but that WIPP is a regulatory model.

The event was sponsored by southeast New Mexico legislators, all of whom were in attendance. The group includes Senator Carroll Leavell, Senator Gay Kernan, Senator Vernon Asbill, Representative John Heaton, Representative Donald Bratton, Representative Bill Gray and Representative Shirley Tyler.

The New Mexico Legislature meets each year for alternating 30- and 60-day sessions. All of its work must be completed in that time frame. This year's 60-day session ends March 21.

### Employee reflects on inaugural experience

WTS employee Ron Macaluso attended the Presidential inauguration, where he represented the WIPP Radiological Assistance Program Team in securing inaugural activities. So how was it? Cold.

Macaluso said Inauguration Day began at about 2:00 a.m. with temperatures down around 10° F. During the course of the 18-hour day, the high temperature never went above 22° F. He worked with others at a check station just north of Pennsylvania Avenue. So many people wanted to attend the historic event that the station had to close its gates mid-morning after the 35,000-person limit was reached. He wasn't able to see much of the parade as it passed, but he did manage a quick glimpse of the President's limousine as it passed by.

When it was all said and done, Macaluso said being there for such a historic occasion was pretty neat. But would he do it again?

"I would do it again in a heartbeat," said Macaluso with a grin. "That surprises people ... even me!"

## Medical first responder course goes beyond basics

Can employee involvement save lives? If ever there was a life-saving employee suggestion at WIPP, this just might be it.

The idea is this – train employees, especially those in the WIPP underground, as first responders, so in the event of an accident they can render emergency medical assistance until an Emergency Medical Technician arrives.



Students in the MED-301 class practice life-saving skills. Above (l to r), Mike Rogers, Mat Ridgway and Lorenzo Munoz provide aid to a patient, simulated by fellow-student Nico Dominquez.

WTS employee Jarrad Burkham is credited with the idea that has moved from concept to reality in a relatively short period of time. Like many other life-saving innovations, the idea was borne of tragedy. Two recent fatalities at area potash mines were a stark reminder of the potential hazards that exist in industrial and mining environments and how quickly life can change or even end.

Burkham, who is a member of the Operations Safety Team, worked with Bargaining Unit Safety Representative Justin Kirkes and WTS Human Resources to champion the idea. WTS President and General Manager Farok Sharif agreed, which led to Technical Training's development of a course titled MED-301 Medical First Responder.

The course was developed by Cheri Williams, WTS Training, who will also be the instructor. Williams has 38 years of experience in nursing (11 years in the emergency room, 10 as an office nurse, 7 years as a nurse at WIPP and 15 years in the WTS Training Department).

"This class is well beyond the basic first aid and CPR (cardio-pulmonary resuscitation) classes taught now," says Williams. "In fact, this class is just one step below the

requirements for someone to receive certification as an EMT-Basic (Emergency Medical Technician – Basic).”

The curriculum is based on National Safety Council/American Heart Association guidelines that follow the U.S. Department of Transportation First Responder National Standard Curriculum. The 56-hour course will consist of eight, 6-8 hour sessions spread out over a four-week period. To pass the class, students are required to attend all day every day.

In addition to the class work, Williams says there will also be a lot of reading and studying to be done before each session.

In class, the day will be filled with a lot of hands-on practice with medical equipment and supplies. Among the topics to be covered are:

- ⌘ Well-being of the first responder
- ⌘ Legal and ethical issues
- ⌘ Anatomy and physiology
- ⌘ Patient assessment
- ⌘ Medical emergencies
- ⌘ Bleeding and shock
- ⌘ Childbirth
- ⌘ Infants and children
- ⌘ Mass casualty and triage
- ⌘ Trauma
- ⌘ Basic life support CPR for professionals

The first class began on January 19 and ended February 12, but will be offered quarterly. Class size is limited to eight students and is open to underground employees first.

### 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](mailto:TRUTeamWorks@wipp.ws).

## Back in disposal mode!

With the official end of the extended maintenance outage on January 20, WIPP is getting back to what it does best, disposing of transuranic (TRU) waste. During the outage, the WIPP site underwent extensive renovations that will help ensure the facility operates safely and efficiently for many years to come.

Wes Bryan, site operations manager, said the site will phase in to full operations. Each crew is taking a deliberate approach to operating equipment to demonstrate adherence to procedures and that the equipment is safe to operate.

“We are going through a crawl-walk-run process,” Bryan said. “Through continued demonstration of sound CON-OPS, the shipment and processing rates will increase to support the complex, but in a controlled manner to ensure high standards for disciplined operations are not compromised.”

WIPP received limited waste shipments during the outage. Payloads were temporarily stored in designated surface areas, but were not disposed until operations resumed on January 27.

## WIPP transportation system recognized



Former DOE Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management James Rispoli (left) presents an award for transportation safety to CBFO Manager Dave Moody (center) and DOE National TRU Waste Program Manager Casey Gadbury (right).

Employees packed into the Skeen-Whitlock Building auditorium on January 29 to witness WIPP's transportation system being honored by the United States Transport Council with an award for transportation safety. Former DOE Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management James Rispoli came to Carlsbad to present the award to WIPP.

The WIPP transportation system was recognized for the record of safety it has maintained since the first shipment of TRU waste was sent from Los Alamos National Laboratory in 1999. To date, WIPP trucks have logged over 8 million loaded miles and WIPP has received over 7,000 shipments of TRU waste.

During the ceremony, Rispoli took time to thank all parties that were involved in the transportation process over the last 10 years, asking each group to stand to be individually recognized. Among those recognized were the Retrieval, Characterization and Transportation Department, Transportation Operations, External Emergency Management, the Packaging Integration Group, the Central Monitoring Room, the Los Alamos-Carlsbad Mobile Loading team, WIPP Waste Information System Group, TRANSCOM personnel and the WIPP carriers and drivers.

Mayor Bob Forrest and DOE National TRU Waste Program Manager Casey Gadbury also spoke at the ceremony, thanking the community and the employees for their support and hard work for the project.

## Inclement weather? WIPP is prepared

Although Carlsbad has experienced a mild winter, winter's not over yet. To ensure the facility runs safely no matter the conditions, WIPP has procedures in place in the event of inclement weather.

When inclement weather strikes the area, the Facility Shift Manager (FSM) follows guidelines to assess whether or not the conditions warrant a delay of shift start-times or work closure for either the site or Skeen-Whitlock Building (SWB). The weather conditions that could delay a shift are:

- ⌘ A tornado warning from the National Weather Service
- ⌘ Winds in excess of 60 miles per hour at the site
- ⌘ Roads have been closed by local law enforcement due to weather
- ⌘ Snow or ice storms, where there is greater than two inches of accumulated snow and still snowing heavily, heavy glaze of ice on the road or report from local law enforcement agency of extremely ice or snowy road conditions

If a delay in start-time is believed to be necessary due to any of these conditions, the FSM will notify the Crisis Manager (CM) to receive approval for the delay. The CM must obtain concurrence from the DOE before the delay can go into effect. Once DOE agrees that a delay or cancellation is necessary, the FSM will make contact with the local and regional radio and television stations for broadcast. The contacts must be made by 4:30 a.m. for broadcast by 6:00 a.m.

Leroy Bostick, maintenance manager, said the FSM can only follow the established procedures to get word out of any possible delays, but it is up to the WIPP employees to find out if there is a delay at the site or SWB.

"All WIPP employees are responsible for tuning into their local radio or television station," Bostick said. "They can also call 234-7070 or 234-8080, to receive information concerning delays during periods of inclement weather."

Any delays or closures of work will be made known prior to 4:30 a.m. for all site personnel and prior to 6:00 a.m. for all Skeen-Whitlock personnel.

### Report an Occurrence!

Occurrence reporting establishes and maintains a system for reporting operating information related to DOE owned and leased facilities.

Individuals who discover an occurrence at the site are expected to immediately call the Central Monitoring Room Operator (CRMO) at extension 8111 (emergencies) or 8457 (non-emergencies). If there is an occurrence at the Skeen-Whitlock Building, employees are expected to call 9-911 for emergencies and follow up with a call to the CRMO, at extension 8111 or 8457. The employee must notify their managers of the occurrence after reporting to the CMRO.

It is expected that all underground non-emergency occurrences shall be reported in a timely manner to the Underground Services Facility Engineer and to the individual's manager.

## Celebrate National Engineering Week



WTS Engineer Howard Katz talks to students at Sunset Elementary School in Carlsbad, N.M. about their catapult project. WTS engineers spent time at area schools this week working with students in recognition of National Engineers Week.

## Without engineers, you've had a bad day

**Albert H. Miller, P.E., P.L.S.,  
NSPE President, National Society of Professional Engineers**

So it's National Engineers Week. I'll be the first to admit, these special commemorative weeks get listed on some secret calendar nobody except the insiders even know where to find, and then a guy like me pops up and asks you to believe it's important. A tall order!

I sell engineering services, so my first instinct is to make you a client of my firm. But let me turn that on its head. I'll be your genie for a week, and when I wave my hand, everything you use and visit that's been created by an engineer will disappear.

Let's start small. Forget about that light switch by your bed—I just took your electricity. Electrical engineers bring the juice to your house and design the equipment that produces it. Brushing your teeth? Chemical engineers had their hands in the plastic for tough bristles. So you're already foul-mouthed to start off the day. You're thirsty and dirty too, because the engineers don't exist to purify your tap water and fill your bathtub.

You try to catch the news. Don't think you can get away with your battery-powered radio. Electronics engineers put those circuits together. Your milk and cereal also went out the window since mechanical and electronics engineers cooked up refrigerators to keep your milk fresh, and agricultural engineers figured out how to process the grains.

So now you're on your way to work, depressed and dirty, and driving on that nice banked curve on your usual highway, but now it's not banked and you're flying off the edge, and besides that it's full of cracks because civil engineers weren't around to design something safe and lasting. But time out. You'd be on foot (freezing if you're up north) because the genie's taken your car, designed by mechanical and automotive engineers, and when it comes down to it, about every other kind of engineer you might think of.

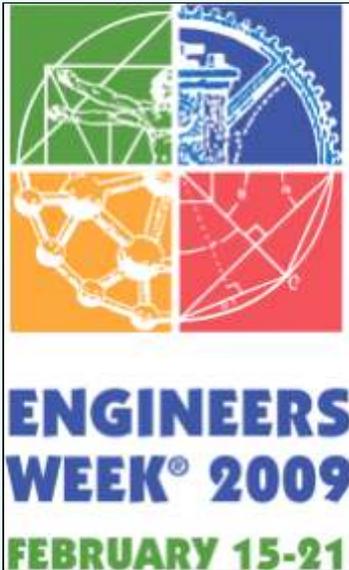
I might mention, you've got no cell phone to call for help, and you probably don't have a winter coat or shoes or even clothes, because engineers have a hand in a lot of those materials and designed the machines and the fasteners to make it all fit.

So now you arrive at that big, handsome, heated office building where you work, still hungry, dog tired, and about as naked as a dog and you've got no computer to even start your job, because the computer and software engineers have been deep-sixed. Of course, I've strung you along again, because you've got no place to even work. No civil, structural or HVAC engineers, so no building.

You're pretty much facing a wasteland! Sure, a few people might like this return to nothing, but if you're like me, you'll probably miss all these comforts and innovations and economic prosperity. I'd say that without engineers, you've had a bad day!

Now I'll return your things. Engineers made them for you. Have a good day.

**Excerpt Courtesy of National Engineers Week Foundation  
Alexandria, VA**



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

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

