

WIPP Quick Facts (As of 2-21-11)

9,245

Shipments received since opening
(8,794 CH and 451 RH)

72,663

Cubic meters of waste disposed
(72,433 CH and 230 RH)

140,185

Containers disposed in the underground
(139,737 CH and 448 RH)

Quotes from the BRC public meeting held in Carlsbad:

"I have never encountered a project that is so available. WIPP is a tremendous success story." – **Jerri McTaggart, Carlsbad businesswoman on her visit to WIPP**

"Their lives are better because they learned a new culture of safety." – **John Waters, Carlsbad Department of Development, on the impact to the community from WIPP operations**

"It is rare to see a community so galvanized for a positive thing and this community has done that for many years." – **Allen Sartin, Eddy County manager**

Blue Ribbon Commission visits WIPP, Carlsbad



Members of the Blue Ribbon Commission toured the WIPP site to receive a first-hand look at day-to-day operations and further their understanding of the WIPP mission. From left, Per Peterson, Senator Pete Domenici, General Brent Scowcroft, Vicki Bailey, Congressman Phil Sharp, Mark Ayers and Allison Macfarlane.

The Waste Isolation Pilot Plant's (WIPP) many successes were showcased when the Blue Ribbon Commission (BRC) on America's Nuclear Future toured the WIPP site on Jan. 26.

The Commission's goal is to provide recommendations for developing a safe, long-term solution to managing the nation's used nuclear fuel and nuclear waste. The BRC is tasked with making preliminary recommendations to Secretary of Energy Steven Chu by this summer, with final recommendations to follow in early 2012.

While preparing these recommendations, the BRC will use information gleaned from its visit to WIPP, which disposes of the nation's defense-generated transuranic (TRU) waste in salt beds 2,150 feet beneath the surface.

BRC members who visited the WIPP site included Commission co-chair General Brent Scowcroft, along with Commissioners Per Peterson, Senator Pete Domenici, Vicki Bailey, Congressman Phil Sharp, Mark Ayers, Allison Macfarlane and John Rowe. Their visit to New Mexico also included public meetings and panel discussions in Carlsbad and Albuquerque.

Following a tour of the WIPP site, Domenici praised WIPP's success.

"We have shown how this can be done," he said. "This was an exciting day for nuclear power. These commissioners have really seen something."

Offering the community's insight, Carlsbad Mayor Dale Janway told the BRC the

Department of Energy's openness has been essential to the project's success.

"They have kept their promises. I can honestly say they have kept us informed from the very beginning," he said.

New Mexico Governor Susana Martinez told the BRC the keys to WIPP's success have been the area's geological composition, sound science, transparency and citizen engagement.

"WIPP has been vital to the nation and is responsible for major, significant economic impact to the community," she said. "WIPP's local support has never wavered."

During the BRC's visit to the WIPP site, Farok Sharif, president and general manager of URS Washington TRU Solutions, outlined adaptations his company has made to improve the project's efficiency.

"We had to change the business model on how we received waste," Sharif said. "We were able to standardize the process, which not only increased our shipments but did so safely. It took all of us working together as partners."

Commissioners were very complimentary of their visit to WIPP.

"We had a wonderful day yesterday," Scrowcroft said. "We wanted to learn more about the history and lessons learned of the WIPP experience. The WIPP tour was very informative and we would like to thank all who made it happen."

Sherman receives PE certification



Congratulations to Sherman Butler for completing the requirements to become a Certified Professional Engineer, specializing in fire protection. Following a final eight-hour exam in October, the New Mexico Board of Engineer Licensing notified Butler of his achievement earlier this month.

This certification indicates a high level of proficiency and national recognition in the field of fire protection. Butler was personally congratulated by the DOE EM Headquarters Fire Protection Engineer James Landmesser after achieving the certification.

"Fire protection engineering is an interesting discipline because it is a first response when it comes to fire safety

WIPP completes extended maintenance outage



A miner bolts the rib as part of this year's extended maintenance outage that concluded earlier this month. Shipments and waste disposal have resumed.

The annual extended maintenance outage has officially come to a close and disposal operations have resumed at WIPP. This outage was the longest WIPP has undertaken since extended holiday maintenance outages began three years ago. The extended outage allows for necessary maintenance projects to be completed without disruption of normal waste disposal activities.

One of the more difficult projects involved mining the back (roof) of the East-140 drift (tunnel) from S-400 to S-700. Due to natural salt creep underground mining

protection,” Butler said. “Achieving this certification is gratifying and I want to especially thank WTS engineering management and my wife, Glenace, for their full support.”

Sherman has been the WTS site Fire Protection Engineer since December 2007.

maintenance was needed to ensure adequate clearance for large waste handling equipment, the 41-ton forklift and the RH facility cask. The back was raised as much as eight feet, depending on the area of the drift. A ramp was built with old salt tailings to help reach the necessary height to complete the project. The intersection is now approximately 18 feet high.

Other essential projects completed included:

- A waste hoist tail was replaced. Hoist tails are the end weights on each of the waste hoist cables.
- Ventilation overcast installed in the W-30 intake drift
- Floor mining in the E-300 exhaust drift
- TRUPACT-III facility modifications
- Closed circuit TV for hot cell complex

Consistent with past practice following maintenance outages, WIPP crews resumed waste handling activities using a crawl-walk-run approach to safely ramp-up to routine operations.

“I am proud of the work of everyone involved with this year’s outage,” Outage Project Manager Bonnie Barnes said. “This year’s task was a little bit different than in the past in terms of length of the outage, but everyone did a fantastic job and we are looking forward to getting back into disposal mode.”

Annual legislative breakfast takes place in Santa Fe

During the New Mexico legislative session, the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) annually gets a chance to be front and center forelected officials from around the state. The WIPP legislative breakfast held in Santa Fe on Feb. 8 focused on WIPP accomplishments since last year’s gathering.

Acting CBFO Manager Ed Ziemianski delivered the overview presentation to an attentive audience comprised of state legislators and other state officials, including New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) Deputy Secretary Raj Soloman and Rod Montoya, from the N.M. Lieutenant Governor’s office. He discussed many of WIPP’s 2010 highlights, including safety, mining, characterization, transportation and disposal. He also addressed the successful five-year recertification from the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency and the 10-year renewal of the NMED Hazardous Waste Facility Permit.



Acting CBFO Manager Ed Ziemianski gives New Mexico legislators and special guests a WIPP update as part of this year’s legislative breakfast.

“It’s a privilege to showcase WIPP’s accomplishments with the New Mexico legislature and other state officials,” said Ziemianski. “WIPP is successful because of support from - and ongoing communications with - many stakeholders, including the DOE Office of Environmental Management, the Carlsbad Field Office, the DOE contractors teams, many communities throughout New Mexico and other states, elected officials and WIPP regulators.”

The event is sponsored by southeast New Mexico legislators, including: Senators Carroll Leavell, Vernon Asbill and Gay Kernan and Representatives Donald Bratton, Bill Gray, Shirley Tyler and Cathrynn Brown.

South Access Road construction complete

After a six-month reconstruction project, the South Access Road has re-opened.

The road provides WIPP employees alternate route to the WIPP site and is also used by oil and gas companies to get to their area wells. The reconstruction project was completed with American Reinvestment and Recovery Act funds received as part of the 2009 stimulus plan.

Over the years, the well traveled South Access Road had deteriorated. It was undergoing daily repairs to fill potholes and other surface areas that had been damaged.

The two-lane road was completely resurfaced and widened to include eight-foot shoulders with rumble strips.

“This was a difficult task. It involved a complete reconstruction, in which we ripped up the old road and started from scratch,” said Washington TRU Solutions South Access Road Project Manager Hank Carey. “I want to congratulate everyone involved in this process. The South Access Road is now much safer for everyone who travels on it.”

Following with the WIPP’s recycling policy, WTS provided the contractor, Constructors Inc., with renewable and recycled resources from the WIPP site. For the South Access project, 340,000 gallons of water were made available from the WIPP site’s evaporation pond. Also, about 4,800 yards of caliche from a WIPP salt storage evaporation pond were used to build road base. Finally, 7,800 tons of recycled asphalt product were returned to the road.



South Access Road before construction



South Access Road after construction

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