

WIPP Quick Facts (As of 5-9-07)

5,739

Shipments received since opening

48,035

Cubic meters of waste disposed

89,673

Containers disposed in the underground

Going up! Watch for RH-TRU shipments to increase

Now that the first shipment of RH-TRU waste has arrived at WIPP and subsequent shipments are arriving regularly, what's the next step? [More.](#)

Since January, the total number of RH-TRU shipments has climbed to 17, but by the end of 2007, the shipping rate is scheduled to increase from the current one or two weekly shipments to six.



Six shipments a week of RH-TRU waste are planned by the end of the year.

The Idaho National Laboratory (INL) is currently the only site shipping RH-TRU waste to WIPP. While its shipping rate is anticipated to increase to as many as four per week later this year, three other sites plan to begin shipping RH-TRU waste to WIPP by year's end.

First in line is Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) in New Mexico. With an anticipated first RH shipment in August, the site is undergoing required audits by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED). In preparation, crews are conducting retrieval and loading mockups to verify readiness of their people, procedures and equipment.

The Savannah River Site (SRS) is expected to follow with a first RH-TRU waste shipment scheduled for October. The waste originated at Battelle-Columbus in Ohio, but was shipped to SRS in November 2005. The shipping campaign marked the first-ever use of WIPP's RH-72B shipping cask.

And finally, Argonne National Laboratory (ANL) in Illinois also plans to join the list with its first RH-TRU waste shipment planned for November.

Beyond this year, the list of sites shipping RH-TRU waste to WIPP is sure to grow. Already, Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Tennessee has plans to ship in 2008.



Photo: Art Chavez (WRES)

WIPP's community ties apparent at the Relay for Life

No fewer than nine teams with ties to WIPP took to the track last weekend, walking at the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life fundraiser.

Teams represented multiple organizations at WIPP, including, Los Alamos National Laboratory, Sandia National Laboratories, Stoller, Triumph Technologies, Washington Engineered Products Department (EPD), the WIPP Records Archive and WTS. Combined, these teams had more than 250 walkers.

In addition, Washington EPD, Navarro (CTAC), Triumph Technologies and WTS were among the event's corporate sponsors.

Leslie Rostro (WTS) served as the teams' chairperson.



Symposium promotes science literacy among local students

"Students need to learn science because good citizenship demands at least a basic understanding of how the world works. Today's students are tomorrow's voters. They will be asked to pass judgment on many issues - environmental, biomedical and technological - in which science literacy will help them to reach intelligent, well-reasoned conclusions."



Dr. Jean-Francois Lucchini (LANL-CO) addressing students at the 2007 Nuclear Symposium.

This was one of the major messages Carlsbad High School science students received Wednesday, May 2, at a nuclear symposium organized by Dr. Jean-Francois Lucchini, a chemist with Los Alamos National Laboratory-Carlsbad Office (LANL-CO), with the support of the high school's physics and chemistry teachers and administration.

In the morning, seven lectures about nuclear science and technology were given in the high school theater by local scientists affiliated with the Department of Energy (DOE), LANL-CO, Sandia National Laboratories, and the Carlsbad Environmental Monitoring and Research Center (CEMRC). In the afternoon, the students toured CEMRC.

It was the second year in a row that the scientific event was held.

“Considering the success we got last year from the students, we decided to make this an annual event,” Dr. Lucchini said, adding that area students should have the opportunity to learn about nuclear science. “The Waste Isolation Pilot Plant is so important in the Carlsbad community.”

The goal of the outreach program is to provide students with scientific knowledge so they can form their own opinions and help make decisions in the future.

Dr. Lucchini started the morning lecture session with an overview of radioactivity and nuclear science, as well as a presentation on LANL-CO’s scientific role in the WIPP project. Right after, Dr. Eric Vugrin gave a talk about Sandia’s role at WIPP. Later in the morning, Dr. Lucchini presented information about the many applications of nuclear science and technology, such as food irradiation, power for space shuttles and satellites, radiotherapy, sterilizing, and, of course, electricity generation.

“The Global Nuclear Energy Partnership program may become a reality here in Carlsbad, so this year, we decided to put the emphasis on nuclear power,” Dr. Lucchini said.

Dr. Jim Conca, CEMRC director, introduced the students to the complexity of the geopolitics of energy. He discussed keys to achieving a sustainable energy distribution among fossil fuels, renewables, and nuclear power by 2040.

Roger Nelson, chief scientist with the DOE’s Carlsbad Field Office, gave a talk about Americans’ attitudes toward nuclear power.

A new topic at this year’s event was science education.

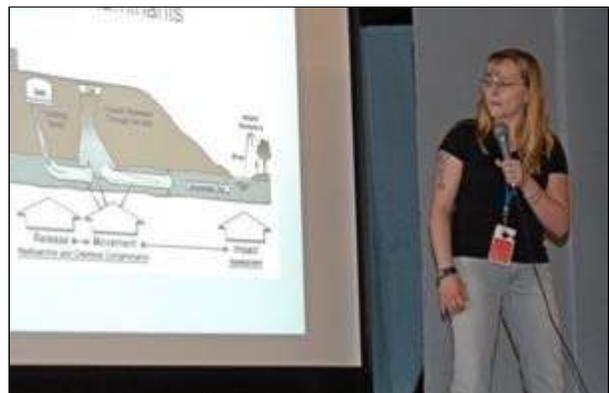
“I attended a very interesting symposium in Santa Fe three weeks ago,” Dr. Lucchini explained. “It was about how the students learn science in school and how scientists can get together with the teachers to improve science education.”

A video was shown about how some students who graduate from prestigious schools like Harvard or MIT don’t know some of the most basic science concepts taught in grade school.

“I wanted to shock them with this video,” Dr. Lucchini said. “I told them that their teachers do their best to teach them the right scientific concepts and knowledge and they need to do their best to memorize this, to make this knowledge their own.”

To demonstrate that science is not a domain exclusively for men, three young women scientists, Kim Ui Cearnaigh and Lisa Hudston, from CEMRC, and Sarah Pepper, a LANL-CO postdoc, shared their experiences with the students.

Sarah Pepper (LANL-CO) shares her experience with students.



During the afternoon tour of CEMRC, the students broke into groups, which allowed them to better interact with scientists from CEMRC and LANL-CO's Actinide Chemistry and Repository Science Program. Activities included videos about CEMRC's internal dosimetry program and a tour of a portion of the labs.

The results of an anonymous survey given to the students at the end of the day were very encouraging, with 92 percent of the students saying they enjoyed the symposium.

"According to them, the symposium was very educating, even though complicated," Dr. Lucchini said. "They said it was very informative and better organized this year."

Submitted by LANL-CO

Lt. Governor keynote speaker at Quality conference



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.

Quality improvement and regional synergy in moving New Mexico and the nation forward were the double-track focus of a conference hosted by WTS and Quality New Mexico in April.

New Mexico Lt. Governor Diane Denish was the conference keynote speaker. Denish and other featured speakers stressed the importance of businesses and communities working together, and businesses and education working together with an eye on workforce development. After the keynote address, the Lt. Governor had the opportunity to visit with conference attendees and area business representatives about regional economic development projects.

May Birthdays!

Steve Kouba (WRES)
May 1

Brenda Buttrey (WTS)
May 2

Debra Medina (CTAC)
May 2

Lois George (WTS)
May 5

Cindy Woodin (WTS)
May 7

Mario Carrasco (WTS)
May 8

Tricia Proctor (WTS)
May 20

Dondee Groves (Triumph)
May 25

Melody Smith (WTS)
May 28



Lt. Governor Diane Denish discusses a local economic development project with Richard Aves and Ronnie Walterscheid of Cetane Energy, as Joe Epstein listens in the back.

Opening remarks and introductions were made throughout the day by Bob Forrest, Carlsbad mayor; Bob Carter, chief of staff (Office of U.S. Congressman, Steve Pearce); Vernon Asbill, New Mexico state senator, District 34; Julia Gabaldón, president/CEO of Quality New Mexico; and Phil Mottel, manager, economic development for WTS.

The conference included a seminar on "Beginning the Performance Excellence Journey," presented by Dr. Jeff Weinrach, Quality New Mexico/New Mexico quality awards administrator. Also featured were invited speakers, Bethe Cunningham, president of the Lea County Economic Development Corporation, Angela Vasquez, president/general manager of Carlsbad Insurance Agency and a panel from New Mexico State University-Carlsbad, including Dr. Martin Parks, Dr. Douglas Dinwiddie, Mr. Mike Cleary, Ms. Claudia Estrada and Dr. John Garmon.

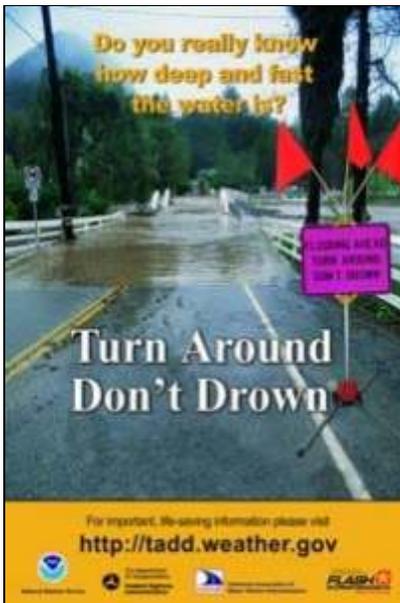
Completing the conference agenda, and tying the keynote address and presentations together were a series of discussions led by Joe Epstein, former general manager, Westinghouse Waste Isolation Division, Dick Raaz, president and general manager of WTS and Vernon Daub, assistant manager for operations for the Department of Energy's Carlsbad Field Office.

Epstein presented historical information on the importance of a quality program in moving WIPP toward beginning operations in 1999. Raaz followed with a presentation focused on recent WIPP successes and the significance of including quality early in a project cycle to ensure business stability followed by growth. Daub presented the final segment in the quality series, highlighting the customer's perspective on the benefits of a quality management system.

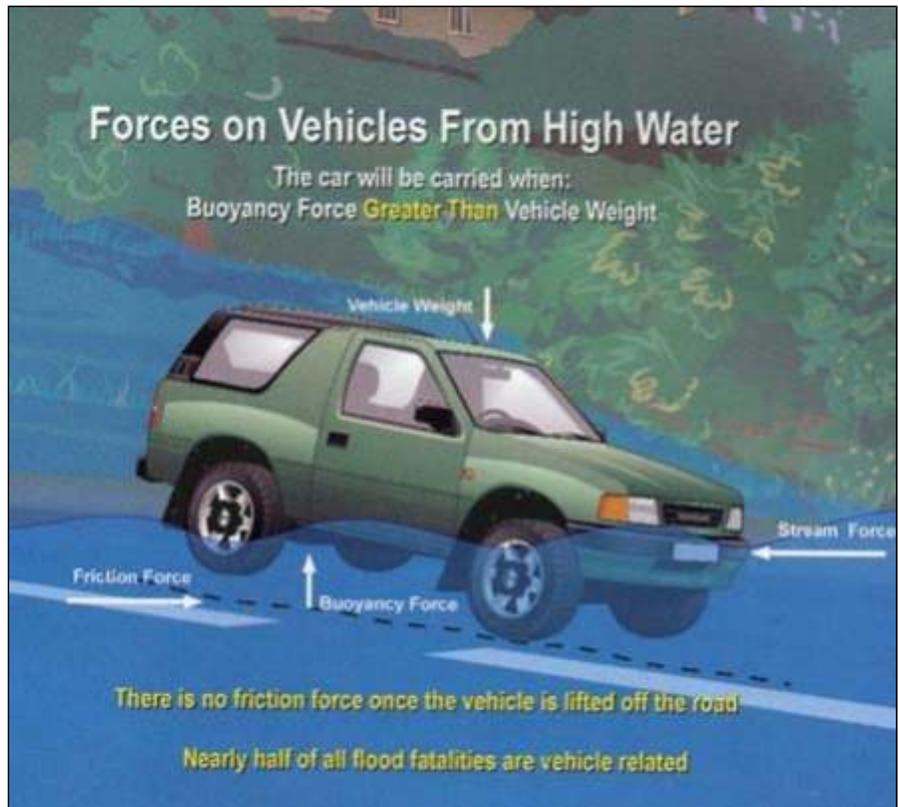
Submitted by Cathy Nesser (WTS)

So you drive an SUV and think you're safe from flooding?

Recent rains have brought some much needed moisture to southeast New Mexico. Unfortunately, when we get the rain, it all seems to come at once. One of the hazards associated with getting a lot of rain in a short period of time is flash flooding. Canyons and roadways that are typically dry can very quickly become racing rivers of runoff water. This is also true of low spots and dips in roads referred to as low water crossings.



Source: National Weather Service web site



Source: National Weather Service web site

But what about our SUV's? Aren't they heavy enough to pass through water on the road? The answer is no. The following information is excerpted from the National Weather Service web site, as part of their "TADD" campaign – Turn Around, Don't Drown.

Why do vehicles float? Buoyancy!

Where does this idea that "my heavy vehicle will keep me safe" come from? It comes from the false trust in the weight of the vehicle you are driving.

Many believe their 3,000 pound or more-vehicle will remain in contact with the road surface, that it is too heavy to float. Think about that for a moment. Aircraft carriers weighing 97,000 tons float.

Vehicles, including ships, float because of buoyancy. In fact, most cars can be swept away in 18-24 inches of moving water. Trucks and SUVs do not fare much better with an additional 6-12 inches of clearance.

So remember to stay safe and not to take chances when water crosses a roadway. Let's live to drive another day.

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

Please send comments and/or
suggestions to: TRU TeamWorks

