



WIPP Quick Facts (As of 5-7-12)

10,483

Shipments received since opening
(9,938 CH and 545 RH)

81,340

Cubic meters of waste disposed
(81,067 CH and 273 RH)

159,068

Containers disposed in the
underground
(158,526 CH and 542 RH)

Sandia National Laboratories' final shipments to WIPP depart with the Sandia Mountains in the background.

DOE Reaches Recovery Act Goal With Cleanup of All Legacy Transuranic Waste at Sandia National Laboratories

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) completed cleanup of the Cold War legacy transuranic (TRU) waste at Sandia National Laboratories (Sandia) in Albuquerque, New Mexico when four shipments of remote-handled (RH) TRU waste from Sandia arrived at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) near Carlsbad, N.M. for permanent disposal on May 2, 2012.

The DOE Carlsbad Field Office (CBFO) reached one of its final milestones under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) with the legacy TRU cleanup at Sandia.

Under ARRA, legacy TRU waste shipments were expedited in support of DOE's goal to dispose of 90 percent of legacy TRU waste by 2015. The Sandia waste shipment campaign, which began in 2011, was supported by \$1.6 million in ARRA funding. "An important component of the Department's ARRA investment was to focus on waste removal from small quantity sites at locations around the country where a comparatively small amount of legacy TRU waste was present," said Senior Advisor for EM David Huizenga. "With this last shipment of RH TRU waste from Sandia, we've now achieved goals to remove legacy TRU waste from eight small quantity sites with ARRA funds."

Sandia was also the 22nd site in the nation to be completely cleaned of legacy TRU waste. "The removal of legacy TRU waste from sites greatly reduces our Cold-War footprint and fewer people now live in the proximity of TRU waste as the result of ARRA funding," said Huizenga.

New Mexico Governor Susana Martinez, who was on hand to see the shipments leave Sandia, said the milestone is extremely important to New Mexico and its residents.



Sandia National Laboratories Cleanup a Big Deal for New Mexico

New Mexico reached an important cleanup milestone with the final shipments of legacy TRU waste from Sandia National Laboratories (SNL) in

Albuquerque to WIPP (see related article at right). Among the officials attending was New Mexico Governor Susana Martinez.

"This is a significant milestone in our efforts to protect New Mexico's environment and keep our state beautiful," said Governor Martinez. "Today's final shipment of TRU waste demonstrates an important partnership with Sandia National Laboratories as we work to preserve our state for future generations."

Following a press conference, four trucks carrying remote-handled legacy TRU waste departed SNL from the Eubank Gate. All four shipments arrived at WIPP later that day, with the last one arriving shortly after 9 p.m.

One additional TRU waste site remains in New Mexico, the Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL). In her remarks, Governor Martinez reported that after the first quarter of this calendar year, LANL is on schedule in its effort to remove above-ground TRU waste by June 2014.

This latest effort on the part of LANL is a direct result of the New Mexico Environment Department and LANL entering into a Framework Agreement last fall that calls for all 3,706 cubic meters of above-ground TRU waste to be completely removed from the facility by June 2014.

Above, Governor Martinez (right) along with Carlsbad Field Office Manager Joe Franco and his wife Roxie.

"Cleaning up the legacy TRU waste at Sandia helps further reduce the nuclear waste footprint in the State of New Mexico," said Governor Martinez.

ARRA funds allowed highly trained teams to safely prepare and load waste shipments ahead of schedule and resulted in the clean up of defense-related TRU from the following:

- General Electric Vallecitos Nuclear Center – California
- Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory – Site 300 – California
- Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory – California
- Nevada National Security Site (Nevada Test Site) – Nevada
- Nuclear Radiation Development, LLC – New York
- Argonne National Laboratory – Illinois
- Bettis Atomic Power Laboratory – Pennsylvania
- Sandia National Laboratories – New Mexico

WIPP became operational in 1999, and 14 sites were cleaned of legacy TRU waste during its first 10 years. Through the \$172 million ARRA investment, eight additional sites were cleaned of legacy TRU waste during the three-year period that followed.



URS Washington TRU Solutions employee Bob Nieman receives one of the four final shipments from Sandia National Laboratory upon its arrival at WIPP.

DOE Awards Management and Operating Contract for DOE's Waste Isolation Pilot Plant

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) announced that Nuclear Waste Partnership LLC (members comprised of URS Energy & Construction, Inc., of Boise, Idaho, and Babcock & Wilcox Technical Services Group, Inc., of Lynchburg, Virginia, and Major Subcontractor, AREVA Federal Services LLC, of Bethesda, Maryland) has been awarded a \$1.3 billion contract for management and operating (M&O) at DOE's Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) in Carlsbad, New Mexico.

The five-year contract contains an option to extend for an additional five years. The M&O contractor manages the WIPP site and the Department's National Transuranic (TRU) Waste program. After a transition period, the contractor will assume responsibility for M&O of the WIPP facility on October 1, 2012.

The mission of WIPP and the National TRU program is to protect human health and the environment by safe management, retrieval, characterization, transportation and disposal of approved wastes. TRU waste consists of materials contaminated with radioactive elements that have atomic numbers greater than uranium, including tools, rags, protective clothing, sludge and soil.

WIPP team members hike to the highest point in Texas

Several members of the WIPP team recently completed a hike to the top of Guadalupe Peak, the highest point in Texas. Shown at right are Irene Quintana (URS Washington TRU Solutions), Sheila Pearcy (Stoller), Brianna Pinzel and her dad, Marcus Pinzel (CBFO).

The 4.2-mile hike ascends about 3,000 feet above the surrounding desert floor to an elevation of 8,749 feet. The round trip hike takes between six and eight hours. The peak is part of the Guadalupe Mountains National Park.



WIPP's Finest in Action at the Southwest Regional Mine Rescue Contest



WIPP Mine Rescue Team Wins Regional Contest

Mine safety was the focus as 10 teams competed for top honors at the Southwestern Regional Mine Rescue Contest in Carlsbad, New Mexico last week. After three days of competition, the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) Blue Mine Rescue Team claimed the coveted first place trophy for the field contest.



The field contest involves a simulated mine rescue scenario that challenges team members to put their training to full use. Officials from the U.S. Mine Safety and Health Administration judged the timed exercise and awarded scores based on completion of key objectives, including successfully rescuing a victim.

"Our mine rescue teams are tops," said U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Carlsbad Field Office Manager Joe Franco. "Their drive for continual improvement not only makes WIPP safer, it also raises the bar for mine safety throughout the nation. I'm very appreciative of the sacrifices these dedicated volunteers make to ensure we have mine rescue capabilities in the event an emergency arises."



The WIPP teams also had success in other categories in the contest. The Blue Team placed second in both the team technician and first aid contests. The Red Team placed third in the team technician contest.

The WIPP Blue Team included: Gary Kessler, team captain; Heath Fowler; Ty Zimmerly; Manny Marquez; Jim Pearce; Joe Baca; and Chauncey Ortega. The WIPP Red Team included: Matt Ridgway, team captain; Curtis Sanders; Kirk Nance; Mark Long; Fabian Carrasco; Doug Pitzer; and Nico Dominguez. Both teams were trained by Richard West.



At right, two contestants from the University of Idaho think it through at the 2012 WERC IEDC.



International contest seeks environmental design solutions

California Polytechnic State University students test output from cyclone treatment at the 2012 WERC IEDC.

If you're looking for environmental solutions, you may want to start your search at the annual International Environmental Design Contest in Las Cruces, New Mexico. The Waste-Management Education and Research Consortium, or WERC, sponsors the contest that first began in 1991. This year's event, which took place in April, drew hundreds of college students from throughout the United States and around the world.



University of New Mexico bench design for saltwater treatment was one of projects in the 2012 WERC IEDC.

Contest Results

Open task winners:

1st: University of California-Riverside for development of a storm drain oil filter

2nd: Louisiana State University for applied solutions to food production (hydroponic approach)

Combined task winners

1st: University of Arkansas for a comprehensive approach to micro-hydro power

2nd: University of Idaho for water softening technology

Green technology pre-filtration winners:

1st: University of New Mexico, swept all scoring categories with ultra-filtration approach

2nd: Roger Williams University for multi-media filtration

Students develop environmental projects that are evaluated by volunteer judges representing areas of private industry, government and academia. Two of this year's judges were from the U.S. Department of Energy's Carlsbad Field Office (CBFO).

Steve Casey, of CBFO's National TRU Program, has a lot of experience with the design contest. Not only has he served as a judge six times, but he also participated in the contest when he was a college student.

"This annual event brings together industry, government and academia in search of environmental solutions," said Casey.

Joining Casey was Dr. Josef Sobieraj, of CBFO's Environmental Safety and Health Department. This was his first experience at the contest and he liked what he saw.

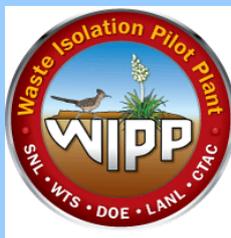
"I was impressed by the ingenuity of system designs and the detailed level of analysis. In many cases, these highly motivated students worked independently with minimal oversight and direction from their advisors," said Sobieraj. "Their talent and performance was recognized not only by judges, but also prospective employers."

Competition criteria require a balance of ingenuity, pragmatism, and leading edge technology for solving some of the most daunting problems facing our nation. Student teams address design engineering basis, equipment and process selection, system testing and results, legal and health implications, economic analysis, quality assurance and public involvement.

Industry and government provided the 2012 design tasks that included the following: open design, allowing universities to demonstrate ongoing research; solar power array; treatment technology for water softening technology; product stewardship in the copper value chain; green reverse osmosis pretreatment; and micro-hydro power generation. Student teams considered a range of potential solutions, isolated and tested viable options, and designed a solution for the problem.

Many universities use the contest as part of their capstone design courses. Students benefit by receiving the constructive comments and feedback submitted by contest judges.

The WERC IEDC program focuses on environmental education and technology development. It is a cooperative effort between the University of New Mexico, New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology, New Mexico State University, Sandia National Laboratories, Los Alamos National Laboratory, and the U.S. Department of Energy.



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

To be added to the TRU TeamWorks update notification list or to submit comments or suggestions, please contact us at TRUTeamWorks@wipp.ws.