TRU TeamWorks

September 21, 2006

WIPP Quick Facts
(As of 09-20-06)

5,043
Shipments received since opening

41,877
Cubic meters of waste disposed

82,575
Containers disposed in the underground

Storment achieves two computer security certifications

Brandon Storment (NCI), WIPP's computer security advisor, has recently received two computer security certifications.

On August 1, Storment was certified in Information Security Evaluation Methodology. This certification means that based on National Security Administration Standards, he is able to conduct vulnerability and risk assessments on a system level to prevent outside attacks on the WIPP computer system.

On July 31, Storment became a Certified LiveWire Examiner. This enables him to conduct digital forensics on systems that have been attacked to determine how it was done and how to stop it, all without taking the system offline.

Storment has worked at WIPP for nine years.

Hearing Officer recommends permit approval

Based on ten days of public hearing, where 194 stakeholders testified, Hearing Officer Rip Harwood has recommended to New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) Secretary Ron Curry that the WIPP Section 311/RH Hazardous Waste Draft Permit be approved.

Harwood's report was submitted on September 13 and it carries with it considerable weight. The report and his recommendation came from extensive review of notes, transcripts, exhibits, parties' arguments, closing statements and proposed findings of fact and conclusions of law from the hearing. He also weighed and considered stakeholder comments that were both in favor and in opposition to the draft permit.

The above shipments were part of an intrasite shipping campaign from Battelle-Columbus in Ohio to the Savannah River Site in South Carolina last year.

If Secretary Curry approves the draft permit, the result would be:

- The removal of the permit's prohibition of remote-handled (RH) TRU waste disposal at WIPP
- A new waste analysis plan
- Increased container storage areas
- Increased capacity for disposal panels
- Room-based volatile organic compound monitoring
- A new dispute resolution process
- E-mail public notification requirements

The report triggered a 15-day comment period, after which the Secretary can issue a final decision at any time, but has committed to making a final decision no later than November 3. He has the option of adopting the hearing officer's report in its entirety, in part, or he can deny the permit. If approved, the permit would become effective 30 days later.

CBFO, NMED make joint presentation

There's nothing out of the ordinary about CBFO Manager Dave Moody or New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) Hazardous Waste Bureau Chief James Bearzi appearing before the Radioactive and Hazardous Materials Committee of the New Mexico Legislature, but this time was different. This time, permittee and regulator sat side-by-side and gave the presentation together.

WIPP employees honored for community service

Two current and one former WIPP employee were honored as part of Operation Comfort. Lois George (WTS), Steve Sauer (NCI) and Mike Trefren (formerly of WTS) were among those accepting the Carlsbad Foundation's 2006 A.J. Crawford Memorial Award for a community service organization.

Jane Trefren, Mike Trefren, Glenda Sauer, Steve Sauer (NCI) and Lois George (WTS)

Operation Comfort sends packages to service men and women in Afghanistan and Iraq who are from Eddy County. The packages contain snack foods, candy, sample-size toiletries, books and writing material. When available, canned New Mexico chile and hot sauces are also added. Each month, they also receive a 200-minute phone card, courtesy of Carlsbad's chapters of Veterans of Foreign Wars and the Disabled American Veterans.

Operation Comfort was started to support and help the local families of service men and women serving in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as providing items the soldiers needed and couldn't get. It has been in operation for over three and a half years sending over 1,500 packages.

Congratulations to everyone involved in Operation Comfort!

CBFO Manager Dave Moody and NMED Hazardous Waste Bureau Chief James Bearzi at the Radioactive and Hazardous Materials Committee. In the background is State Representative Mary Skeen (District 59).

The joint appearance on September 19 in Carlsbad showcased the high degree of cooperation that has developed among CBFO, Washington TRU Solutions (WTS), NMED and a number of stakeholders. While the presentation provided legislators with an update on WIPP and the status of the proposed disposal of remote-handled (RH) waste, a lot of attention was focused on recent cooperative efforts related to WIPP's Hazardous Waste Facility Permit.

Earlier this year, NMED brought together the permittees (CBFO and WTS) and 14 entities that had requested a public hearing on a draft permit NMED issued in November 2005. The draft permit addressed the disposal of RH waste, a new waste analysis plan, increased container storage areas, increased capacity for disposal panels, room-based volatile organic compound monitoring, a new dispute resolution process and increased public notification requirements. The parties entered into intensive negotiations that resolved nearly all issues prior to the start of the hearing.

"I want to publicly thank NMED for entering into and facilitating a negotiation process with our stakeholders like we have never seen before," Moody said to those present.

Bearzi was also pleased with the collaborative process.

"This process that we went through — it was just amazing," said Bearzi. "Everyone came to the table trusting."

Representative John Heaton, the committee's vice chair, commented that he was initially skeptical when first approached about bringing everyone together for negotiations, but was impressed by what was accomplished. He had high praise for the work that Bearzi and NMED had done.

"I can't compliment him and the department enough for going through this," said Heaton. "It was not an easy chore. It's this kind of action that really changes the face of New Mexico."

Final approval of the draft permit is pending, but moving forward. On September 13, the hearing officer submitted a report to the Secretary of NMED that recommended approval of the draft permit as changed. (See related article in this issue of TRU TeamWorks.)

The committee includes state legislators from around New Mexico.

WIPP employees help Relay for Life succeed

Eddy Country received first place in per capita fund raising for county populations of 50,000- 59,999 in the Great West Division of American Cancer Society 2006 Relay for Life.

Lisa Roback (Triumph) was the 2006 Co-Chair with Veronica Romero of PNM for the Carlsbad Relay for Life. Brenda Bealler (WTS), Dianna Murray (WTS), Leslie Rostro (WTS), and Heather Evans (CTAC) were all WIPP Team Captains.

The award was presented to representatives of Eddy County at the Great West Division Summit in Reno, Nevada on September 8. Lea County received the award for 2004 and 2005, taking second place in 2006.

The Great West Division covers all of Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, Utah, Washington and Wyoming.

Any WIPP employees that are interested in helping with next year's Relay for Life are encouraged to contact Leslie Rostro.

WIPP receives 5,000th shipment

With a cheering crowd awaiting its arrival, WIPP's first shipment arrived in the early hours of March 26, 1999. Now, seven and a half years later, WIPP celebrated another milestone shipment, as the 5,000th shipment arrived on September 10.

"This has been a real team effort," said CBFO Manager Dave Moody. "Everyone involved in the cleanup, transportation and final disposal of this waste is to be congratulated for making safety the priority."

The 5000th waste shipment originated from Idaho National Laboratory and was driven by the team of Glen Little and Tim Worden of Tri-State Motor Transit Company. The truck traveled more than 1,390 miles to reach WIPP, which took about 30 hours. All WIPP shipments are subject to a Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance Level VI inspection prior to departing from a site and at any point along the route. In addition, drivers conduct inspections of their truck en route every three hours or 150 miles.

When shipments to WIPP began in 1999, an average of one or two shipments per week arrived at WIPP. That average has significantly increased through the years, reaching as high as 33 shipments during a single week in February 2006. WIPP drivers have traveled more than 11 million miles to assist the national clean-up effort.

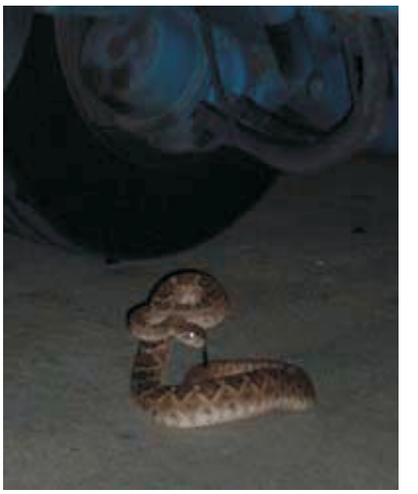
In the past seven years, the WIPP program has removed all legacy TRU waste from 13 sites around the country. So far, Colorado 's Rocky Flats Environmental Technology Site has shipped the most waste – the last of its 2,045 shipments arrived at WIPP in April 2005 as part of a massive cleanup and site closure project. Idaho National Laboratory is next with more than 1,700 shipments to date.

Watch out for WIPP's wildlife neighbors

WIPP may be isolated from people, but when it comes to the desert environment around us, WIPP is in the middle of a busy wildlife neighborhood. Normally this poses no problem, but on occasion our wildlife neighbors come visit so it pays to be alert.

One of the neighborly visits to avoid is with rattlesnakes. Since the nights are starting to get cooler, it isn't uncommon to find snakes that have come out into the sun to warm themselves. WIPP's paved areas provide an attractive area for snakes to do just that. The snake shown at right was found near a trailer a few weeks ago.

The information below is to help protect you from getting bitten by a snake and advice on what to do if you are bitten.



This rattlesnake was found a fewweeks ago in the TRUPACT-II trailer unloading area. The snake was captured and released into the wild.

Rattlesnake 101

There are many different species of rattlesnakes and all are venomous. In addition to rattles, all rattlesnakes share some common physical characteristics including a triangular shaped head, a facial pit, elliptical pupils and foldable fangs.

Avoidance

If you come across a snake do not approach it, try to examine it or photograph it. Move away as quickly as you can. Watch where you step or sit down and stay away from rocks and woodpiles, since snakes like to hang out there. Don't take any blind steps. Use a stick to tap ahead of you before entering an area with an obscured view of your feet. Snakes will attempt to avoid you if given adequate warning.

Do not thrust hands or feet into any areas where you cannot see. Ninety-nine percent of bites are below the knee and the ankle is the primary target. Therefore, you should wear leather boots if venturing through areas where you may encounter a snake, because their fangs cannot penetrate leather.

What to do if bitten

Poisonous snakebites are medical emergencies. If bitten by a snake while at WIPP, call the Central Monitoring Room for immediate medical attention. If outside of work, seek immediate medical attention. If possible, call ahead to the emergency room so antivenom can be ready upon arrival. Wash the bite with soap and water and remove any rings or constricting items. Monitor vital signs. Always keep the bitten area below the heart. Wrap the area with gauze or a T-shirt, but don't create a tourniquet. Also, don't cut into the bite or attempt to suck the venom out of it.

Snakebites can cause severe local tissue damage and often require follow-up care.

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.

Working Smart: Forwarding voice mail messages

You check your messages using the Call Pilot voicemail system and realize the message contains information another employee needs. What do you do?

You can listen to the message, write down the information, call the person who needs the information and, if necessary, leave your own message. Or … You can forward a copy of the message.

When you forward a copy of a message to a mailbox, you can record an introduction to the message. After you record an introduction and enter the mailbox number, your introduction and a copy of the message are automatically sent to the mailbox you selected. Just follow the easy instructions provided in the box below.

Clip 'N Save

How to forward a voice mail message

- Login to check your messages as usual.
- While or after listening to the message that you want to forward, Press 73
- Enter the recipient's extension number followed by a # sign. You can enter multiple extension numbers separating each extension number with a # sign. To finish entering extension numbers enter two # signs following the final extension number (##).

You will be given the opportunity to record and listen to your introduction message:

- Press 5 to record your own message to forward with a copy of the message, then
- Press 2 to listen to your recording before forwarding the message
- Press 79 to send a copy of the message and your recording
- Exit Call Pilot or continue reviewing your messages

Happy Birthday Wishes!

Kathy Kessler (WTS)
September 24

Kirk Kirkes (CTAC)
September 24

Lila King (Stoller)
September 26

Randy West (WTS)
September 28

Doug Tawater (WTS)
September 30

Bobbye Johnson (WTS)
October 2

Paul Gilbert (NCI)
October 3

Is your birthday on our list?
Employee birthdays are submitted once and must be re-approved for publication by you every year. Please submit birth dates to the TRU TeamWorks staff at: TRUTeamWorks@wipp.ws.