
WIPP Quick Facts

(As of 11-9-05)

4,058

Shipments received since opening

32,786

Cubic meters of waste disposed

72,285

Containers disposed in the underground

A salute to Veterans

Veterans Day is on Friday, November 11. There are a lot of veterans working at WIPP and living in our community, so take a moment to say thanks to our veterans for the sacrifices they have made on behalf of our nation.



TRANSCOM2000 on track for Carlsbad

It's no secret that WIPP shipments are tracked 24-hours-a-day while en route to the WIPP facility. The Transportation Tracking and Communication 2000 system (TRANSCOM) and its operators are currently headquartered in Albuquerque, N.M., but will relocate to the Skeen Whitlock building on December 1. In addition to WIPP TRU waste shipments, the TRANSCOM system is used to track high-visibility and spent nuclear fuel shipments for DOE. Since its inception in 1992, TRANSCOM has successfully tracked over 10,000 shipments.



Eddy Methola is one of Security Consultants Group's seven-member team that will operate and maintain TRANSCOM at Carlsbad 's Transportation Communication Center.

Security Consultants Group (SCG), the TRANSCOM operations contractor, will relocate its seven-member team to operate and maintain TRANSCOM in Carlsbad . TRANSCOM system operators receive extensive training and must complete 80 hours of intensive training before working a shift alone. The TRANSCOM Communication Center (TCC) is a twenty-four seven operation.

TRANSCOM employs state-of-the-art mapping and satellite tracking software. It's customized with multiple levels of access and security features so that states and tribes along the WIPP route will see shipments on a need-to-know basis.

The TRANSCOM system features a two-way communication system between operator and driver, an embedded e-mail system to document communications and a database that contains information specific to each shipment. If needed, information regarding the type of shipment and its cargo could be retrieved to assist emergency responders in the event of a transportation incident. The system also can be used to notify emergency responders or other authorities to situations that involve shipments.

Have a safe and happy Thanksgiving holiday!



TRU TeamWorks wishes its readers a safe and happy Thanksgiving. Remember to buckle up when traveling and be on the alert for others around you that may be acting or driving in an unsafe manner.

TRU TeamWorks will publish again on December 1.

WTS Service Awards

5 years

Mike Antiporda
Frank Beekman
Andy Cooper
Randy Elmore
George Kemp
Eddie Roybal

10 years

Norman Whitlock

15 years

Ruben Guerra
Michael Thompson
Gerald Woolsey

WIPP Central Monitoring Room personnel use TRANSCOM to monitor and manage all TRU waste shipments. Corridor states and tribal governments also use TRANSCOM to track shipments that travel through their jurisdictions. The TCC provides help desk support to all TRANSCOM customers twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

Casey Gadbury, CBFO TRU waste logistics coordinator, says SCG and CBFO are committed to providing a continued high level of service to all TRANSCOM customers. Only the physical location of TRANSCOM equipment and personnel will change, he adds. Otherwise, it's business as usual.

It's a triple!



CBFO contractor Tri-State Motor Transit scored a triple shipment on November 7. The convoy is part of a shipping campaign to move the remaining TRU waste from Battelle Columbus in Ohio to the Savannah River Site in South Carolina. The packages shown on the back of these trucks are NRC-approved 10-160Bs. RH-72Bs are also expected to be used to ship waste for the first time during this campaign.

WIPP readies for RH ORR

Bill Stockho, a nuclear engineer and former Safe Sites of Colorado manager, recently joined WTS as the WIPP Facility Readiness Manager. Stockho will help prepare WIPP for the remote-handled (RH) waste Operational Readiness Review (ORR). The basic purpose of the ORR, says Stockho, is to demonstrate WIPP readiness to manage and dispose of RH-TRU and RH-TRU mixed wastes.

Birthday Celebrations!

Steve Porter (WTS)
November 10

Beverly Schrock (WTS)
November 12

Donna Carter (L&M)
November 12

Prissy Martinez (CTAC)
November 13

Russ Riddle (NCI)
November 16

Leslie Rostro (WTS)
November 18

Dora Lopez (L&M)
November 18

Bobby St. John (WTS)
November 18

Kathy Gibson (WTS)
November 22

John Giblin (WTS)
November 23

Norm Frank (CTAC)
November 26

Joe Vasquez (L&M)
November 28

Greg Van Soest (LANL)
November 28

Dan Taggart (LANL)
November 30



Though RH-TRU will comprise approximately four percent of the total waste volume destined for WIPP, its disposal is critical to DOE cleanup efforts.

In April 2005, CBFO submitted a permit modification request to the New Mexico Environment Department that included a request to initiate RH-TRU waste handling and disposal operations at WIPP. At present, WIPP only accepts contact-handled TRU wastes for disposal.



Waste handling technicians remove the impact limiter from an RH 72-B shipping cask during a 2002 performance dry run.

Preparations for ORR will kick off with a line management assessment (LMA), led by a nine-member plant management team. The team, led by WTS Operations Manager Scott Anderson, will identify and define supporting activities or criteria that must be accomplished to meet requirements for RH operations. Members will track activity schedules and oversee operational reviews, drills, walk-downs, training qualifications and equipment modifications. Cognizant personnel will be assigned to complete affidavits verifying compliance with established readiness criteria, and track corrective actions for non-compliances.

According to Stockho, the LMA must be completed by Spring 2006 to meet a targeted September 2006 start-up date for RH operations at WIPP. Once the LMA is successfully completed, the "contractor" ORR begins. A team from Washington Group International will conduct a thorough examination that includes observation of receipt, waste handling and disposal operations for both the CNS 10-160B and RH 72B shipping casks.

If the demonstration goes smoothly, it will be followed by a similar examination conducted by the DOE. Corrective actions will be developed for deficiencies found during the readiness reviews.

"Sometime during the ORR sequence, we hope to have a final permit from NMED, so that we can implement any changes and be ready to start receiving RH waste by September," says Stockho. Meanwhile, he says, personnel assigned to RH operations will be busy training, updating procedures and completing equipment modifications for successful start-up in 2006.

AREA WEST takes first close-up look at WIPP

AREA WEST will be keeping a watchful eye on WIPP, but last week all eyes were on AREA WEST. A group headed by AREA WEST director, Dr. Joseph Peterson, took its initial trip to WIPP to see the surface and underground facilities that will be the focus of its work.

"I was pleased to begin the process of learning about the extensive history of WIPP and seeing, first hand, the impressive salt mine operations," says Peterson. "Over time, AREA WEST will be reviewing and evaluating the operating procedures with respect to characterization, transportation and disposal of TRU wastes to be sure that they are in accord with best available science and provide safety for both the environment and the public at large. I look forward to continuing good relations with WIPP and all its stakeholders."

DOE's Environmental Management Consolidated Business Center (EMCBC) in Cincinnati, Ohio, awarded the independent oversight contract to AREA WEST on October 7. AREA WEST is an acronym for the Alliance for Research, Evaluation, and Advancement of WIPP Environmental Science and Technology. The alliance was formed by Pecos Management Services, Inc. of Albuquerque, N.M. who teamed up with the Institute for Regulatory Science of Columbia, Md. AREA WEST has opened an office in Carlsbad, and hopes to fully staff it before the year is out.

AREA WEST will provide independent reviews and evaluations of the design, construction and operations of WIPP, as they relate to protection of the public health, safety and the environment. Their small core staff will identify particular issues and assemble teams of experts that will investigate each topic and routinely issue reports that summarize the expert opinions that come out of each team's investigations and analyses.

AREA WEST will be overseen by a planning committee, chaired by Mr. Christopher Timm, Pecos Management Services' vice president and senior project manager. The committee will ensure the appropriate project management of the contract and the independence of all expert participants.

The \$4.5 million contract contains a one-year base with four one-year renewal options. The contract was issued by the EMCBC, so all decisions related to the contract are independent of the DOE's Carlsbad Field Office, which is responsible for WIPP.



Wasps and bees -- It's that time again

Wasps and bees, which are common in this area and around the WIPP site, have already started to appear. Here are a few suggestions to help protect you and your family from stings, and advice on what to do if you are stung.

The nature of the beast

Bees are common insects and we find them almost anywhere, especially on flowers. Most species build their nests in the soil and some use other natural holes such as rodent nests or tree hollows. Bees are normally more mild-mannered than wasps and are less likely to sting. Maybe that's because they know they can only sting once, leaving the barbed stinger in your skin and dying after they fly away.



Be aware that more bees are becoming Africanized and, therefore, may be more aggressive and territorial. Most people can outrun a bee attack.

Wasps are social insects, usually more aggressive in the fall when their food supply is gone. The most common wasp in the WIPP vicinity is the Southwestern Texas Paper Wasp. Wasps sting multiple times since their stinger has no barb. Wasps sting when they feel threatened. By remaining calm and not annoying wasps by swatting, you lessen your chance of being stung.

Yellow jackets live in ground burrows while paper wasps live above the ground in a paper-like nest that is usually attached to the underside of structures such as buildings, trees, shrubs, etc. There are usually two swarming episodes during a normal calendar year. The first is in the spring when the fertile females or "queens" emerge from winter dormancy and begin looking for areas to establish nests, and during late fall when new queens swarm structures in which to spend the winter.

Contact prevention

At home, remove attractive nesting sites to keep wasps and bees from making a nest. In the early spring, seal any cracks or holes on the outside of your buildings. Look at the soil around your foundation and bushes. Fill areas with soil that have a hole. Aerosol sprays containing propoxur, pyrethrin or rotenone are effective in controlling wasps or bees. Always be cautious when spraying bee or wasp nests because they will try to defend their nests. The best time to control bees or wasps is at night when they are all in their nests. Use a flashlight, but don't carry it. Place it where it will shine on the nest. If the bees and wasps escape, they will fly toward the light instead of you.

At WIPP, call the Central Monitoring Room at Ext. 8457 if you discover a nest or suspect a swarm.

Snake sighting

The nights in the Carlsbad area are getting cooler, so snakes may be coming out during daylight hours to sun on roads, sidewalks and rocks. In fact, a WIPP employee recently spotted a rattlesnake near a trailer at the WIPP site.

Keep the doors of connexes and other normally unoccupied buildings closed. Open doors, especially leading into dark places, are an invitation to snakes. When entering such a building, look and listen carefully for signs or sounds of a rattlesnake. It pays to consider other critters, too, such as brown recluse and black widow spiders, scorpions and wasps.

If you encounter any of these at WIPP, contact the Central Monitoring Room at Ext. 8457.

Reaction to close encounters

Many people are stung each year. First, scrape, rather than pull, a bee's stinger from the skin to avoid injecting more venom. Most people stung will have a "local" reaction with redness, pain, swelling and some itching only at the sting site. If the reaction progresses quickly to sites other than the sting site or is followed by difficult breathing or choking at the throat, the person is experiencing a "systemic" allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) requiring emergency first aid or medical treatment. A normal reaction lasts a few hours but will quickly dissipate. At home, for stings that cause itching, irritation and swelling, the following remedies may help. Put a cold pack on the site and use a paste of baking soda or meat tenderizer for people not allergic to bee stings. Use any brand of meat tenderizer with Papain in it. A solution of 1 to 2.5 percent solution of ammonia applied three to four times daily helps. Oral antihistamines and topical creams also help. If you have a significant reaction at home, call your doctor immediately or go to the emergency room.

If you are bitten or stung at work, go to Health Services for first aid or treatment; allergies can develop at any time. If you have a known allergy to insect stings, you are encouraged to bring your sting kit with you to work and notify the nurses, in advance, if possible.

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

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

