

## WIPP Quick Facts

(As of 9-21-05)

**3,937**

Shipments received since opening

**31,497**

Cubic meters of waste disposed

**71,085**

Containers disposed in the underground

## New phone system and voice mail system to be operational on Monday

When you arrive at work on Monday morning, the new phone and voice mail systems will be operational. A flyer detailing the use of the new systems is being distributed. It includes step-by-step instructions for setting up your voice mailbox, in case you did not set up your voice mailbox in advance.

A special "Phone Help Desk" will be available for a limited time. If you have any difficulties, please call the following numbers based on your location:

WIPP Site - 8611

In-town offices - 7611

## Triumph poised to work on \$30 million contract

What's in a name? A lot, if you go by the letter subcontract that WTS issued earlier this week. On September 20, WTS issued a letter subcontract to Triumph Technologies, Inc. to provide information-related services. A letter subcontract is a temporary measure, pending approval of the actual subcontract by DOE Headquarters.



**"We are excited and honored to work on the WIPP contract .... "**

**Gloria Redman**  
President and CEO  
Triumph Technologies, Inc.

Triumph is a minority, women-owned, disabled veteran, small business that has provided program management, information technology and security operations services to government and private industry since 1988. Triumph may be a new name to the WIPP project, but its teaming partners, L&M Technologies and NCI Information Systems, are well known at WIPP, since both companies currently perform a portion of the new subcontract's scope of work.

"We are excited and honored to work on the WIPP contract with our wonderful prime, Washington TRU Solutions, in support of the Department of Energy" says Gloria Redman, president and CEO of Triumph Technologies, Inc. "Triumph looks forward to our rewarding and beneficial relationship and partnership."

The pending subcontract is for a year with four one-year options. If Triumph maintains the fixed-priced contract for the duration, it could be worth about \$30 million. The subcontract is divided into seven tasks: project records services, mail services, document services, engineering file room services, technical library services, CCP project records services and document control and information resources management.

In the subcontract, information-related services currently performed by L&M and NCI are to be combined into a single contract. Another feature of the subcontract is the inclusion of technical library services, which is currently performed by WTS employees. Warehouse services, which was previously part of the L&M scope of work, will not be part of the new subcontract, but will be awarded under a separate contract later.

Brian Marshall, the current NCI program manager and a 19-year veteran of the WIPP project, will become Triumph's program manager. "I am very excited about the team of people we have in place here," says Marshall. "Members of our corporate management will be onsite the week of September 26 th to meet with their respective areas and to answer questions about the teaming arrangement."

Many practical day-to-day issues will also be addressed in the next week. "Personnel that will be working for Triumph will also meet to finalize necessary paperwork," adds Marshall. "We look forward to our continued support at WIPP and anticipate a very successful teaming arrangement with the three partners."

A transition period has already begun and Triumph will officially begin work on the project on October 3. Triumph will employ about 24 employees, while approximately 33 others will work for either L&M or NCI.

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## Ybarra and Martinez take top honors in security training

Earlier this month, five WIPP officers with Santa Fe Protective Services (SFPS) graduated from basic security police officer training at the National Training Center in Albuquerque, NM.

Robert Ybarra received the "honor man" award for the best overall trainee and Bobby Martinez received "top shooter" honors for his expert marksmanship. Other WIPP officers that successfully completed the training were Daniel Dominguez, Ray Lopez and Sammy Mendez.



Sammy Mendez provides cover for fellow WIPP security force members during a training exercise in Albuquerque.



Ray Lopez (standing) covers the suspect as Robert Ybarra prepares to handcuff him.

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Bobby Martinez (Santa Fe Protective Services) takes aim with his M249 light machine gun. He recently received "top shooter" honors for his expert marksmanship at the National Training Center in Albuquerque, NM.

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## CCP gears up

With Rocky Flats cleanup in the tail lights, WIPP has redirected resources to assist waste cleanup at other sites. According to Dave Haar, CCP manager, CCP personnel are firmly established at three major TRU waste sites. "We're right where we want to be," says Haar, referring to CCP progress at Idaho National Laboratory, Los Alamos National Laboratory and the Savannah River Site.

### Idaho National Laboratory

CCP has been processing approximately 100 drums of legacy waste per week at INL for the past three months. "Until now, CCP operations at INL have been limited by five-day-a-week real-time radiography operations. Last week, seven-day operations were initiated, and this week a second RTR unit will come online; we expect production to double to 200 drums," Haar says.

CCP is developing a backlog of certifiable drums for shipment to WIPP to help INL reach its target goal of 6,000 cubic meters by December 2005 – a stipulation of the 1995 Batt Agreement between DOE and Idaho for scheduled removal of the state's nuclear waste. Approximately 40 CCP personnel are working to support those cleanup goals.

In May, the EPA audited CCP characterization processes at INL that include development of acceptable knowledge, real-time radiography, visual examination, non-destructive assay (NDA) and quality assurance. Its report is now in the 45-day public comment period. Haar says certification is likely this fall.

Meanwhile, INL's Advanced Mixed Waste Treatment Project has averaged 12 shipments a week to WIPP over the last month. CCP plans to contribute up to 600 cubic meters (3,000 TRU waste drums) this calendar year to the INL disposal effort. The site has shipped approximately 2,400 cubic meters of waste to WIPP this year.

### Los Alamos National Laboratory

CCP will be adding a second shift of NDA operators at LANL in the coming weeks, according to Haar. The added shift will nearly double NDA production, which has been a primary obstacle to increased shipping.

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## Wade obtains NRRPT certification

Congratulations to Bob Wade (WTS) for successfully completing the requirements for certification in the National Registry of Radiation Protection Technologists (NRRPT).

This prestigious professional certification acknowledges experienced professionals who have demonstrated an excellent knowledge of radiation protection. In addition to extensive preparation, Wade passed a rigorous written test and will maintain certification by participating in accredited professional development activities as part of the NRRPT Registration Maintenance Program.

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## Ouch! Fuel costs affect WIPP, too.



High fuel costs have impacted people across the nation. Did you know that some of the trucks that transport waste to WIPP have two 150-gallon-capacity tanks? Filling up with diesel fuel at the national average price of \$2.79 would cost a whopping \$837.

Another challenge, Haar says, is that many of LANL's 55-gallon debris waste drums contain large sealed containers. The drums will have to be remediated in gloveboxes – the large sealed containers opened or removed – and the drums repackaged to meet WIPP acceptance criteria. CCP operations at LANL have shifted to address the solid waste streams, while LANL works to address the debris stream repackaging effort.

Despite these issues, LANL/CCP has managed to make up to three shipments per week this summer. CCP personnel are working to maintain the shipping rate, with plans for a steady increase in characterization and shipping in the coming months.

### Savannah River Site

Since 2001, CCP operations at SRS have shipped more than 17,000 waste drums to WIPP. Like LANL, SRS has a large number of drums that require remediation. SRS has a new facility that is expected to come online within the month, which will significantly increase remediation capability. Once that facility completes its start-up activities and begins producing feedstock for characterization, full CCP operations will resume at SRS.

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## Safety in a can

“All underground personnel don your self rescuer and report to the nearest staging area.” Not an announcement underground personnel want to hear. Fire is one of the most dangerous situations that can be encountered in a mine. To protect miners and other underground workers, federal law requires all U.S. underground mining facilities to provide employees with self-rescuers. The type of device used depends on the type of mine and the hazards that might be encountered.

At WIPP, the canteen-like MSAW-65 self-rescuer is used. The MSAW-65 unit is designed to convert carbon monoxide – that results from burning – to carbon dioxide, a natural byproduct of the body's metabolism. The units are inspected on a quarterly basis to ensure they are not damaged in a way that would prevent proper use.

“In accordance with the Code of Federal Regulations, we inspect each of the approximately 200 self-rescuers on a quarterly basis,” says Ed Hernandez, WTS underground controller. Hernandez and Butch Daszczyzak inspect the canisters for integrity, specifically looking for dents, dings or excessive wear. Particularly important, according to Hernandez, is to make sure that the rubber seal between the lid and container body is solid and has not been breached.

After a visual check, each unit will be weighed. “We can tell by the weight of the unit if it's still operational,” adds Hernandez. “If the rubber seal is breached, the self-rescuer collects moisture and will weigh more.” The actual weight at the time of manufacture is printed on each individual unit. If a unit weighs more than 10 grams over factory weight, it is removed from service.



A colored strip is applied around the center of each unit that passes inspection. The

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## Annual WTS Carnival

The Annual WTS Carnival for WTS, WRES, L&M and NCI employees will be on Saturday, September 24 at the Riverwalk Recreation Center.

The children's carnival will begin at 4:00 p.m., dinner will be at 5:00 p.m. and a 60's and 70's dance contest will be at 6:00 p.m.



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color of the strip tells miners that the unit is up to date. The current color is red. After September 30th, the color will change to orange. A Mine Safety and Health Administration chart specifies the color that will be used each quarter for odd and even years.

Units are removed from service 15 years from the date of manufacture (printed on each container), or 10 years after the date they are placed in service. Approximately 20 units a year are removed from service, most having reached useful life expectancy. But even retired units serve a safety purpose. They are used as demos by the training department to show new miners how the self-rescuer works.



"It was a great class," says Candace Nance, WTS General Employee Training coordinator. Ten new hires will fill a variety of WIPP jobs from project management to radiological control. Left to right: Candace Nance, Preston Peterson, Kelton Beaisd, Rebecca Kuenzler, James Balderama, Shannon Bermea, Richard Perez, Stephanie Eager, James Gomez, Maxim Marquez and Shauna Hardwick.

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## WIPP re-certified as VPP Star Site

WIPP recertified as a Voluntary Protection Program (VPP) Star site, following last week's onsite evaluation of WIPP safety programs by a team of DOE VPP reviewers. WIPP was the first site to achieve DOE program STAR status in 1994. The site recertified in August 1998 and again in 2002.

During its week-long visit, the team reviewed safety documents and interviewed approximately 210 employees, both bargaining and non-bargaining units, as well as management. The team found that STAR-quality performance remains strong at WIPP.

Following are the team's observations:

### Strengths

- ⌘ The team noted a very strong and comprehensive safety culture.
- ⌘ Nearly everyone that was interviewed agreed that WIPP is a safe place to work.

**Keep your safety program vibrant.**

**Don't allow production to drive safety.**

*DOE VPP team closing remarks*

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## A Very Happy Birthday!



**Kirk Kirkes** (CTAC)  
September 24

**Bennie Armijo** (WTS)  
September 24

**Kathy Kessler** (WTS)  
September 24

**Lila King** (Stoller)  
September 26

**Randy West** (WTS)  
September 28

**Loretta Greene** (LANL)  
September 30

**Doug Tawater** (WTS)  
September 30

**Bobbye Johnson** (WTS)  
October 2

**Paul Gilbert** (NCI)  
October 3

**Don George** (Stoller)  
October 4

**Phil Porter** (WTS)  
October 5

- ⌘ All respondents agreed that they could stop work without fear of reprisal.
- ⌘ Employees are aware of the hazards of their job(s) and how the hazards can be mitigated.
- ⌘ The team found that WIPP workers are cooperative and ready to follow safety and health procedures and processes.
- ⌘ The site continues to satisfy the VPP requirements for employee involvement.

### Best practices

- ⌘ The WTS Lessons Learned program was found to be an outstanding program that uses a committee-approach to review and appropriate transfer of lessons learned.
- ⌘ The WTS Towing and Dragging Committee developed a new set of procedures for towing and dragging that met DOE requirements and would integrate with existing requirements. The team suggested that the involvement of workers on this committee serve as a model for improving safety and health program efforts.
- ⌘ The WTS Issues Management Program encourages employees and expects them to identify and report conditions that compromise or are not in compliance with safety and health programs. The program provides an important feedback element. Management is responsive to safety concerns.

### Areas for improvement

- ⌘ Improved communications between management, supervisors and employees. Opportunities exist to seek and incorporate employees input into overall safety and health programs.
- ⌘ Adequacy of automatic external defibrillators. WTS-WIPP team should formally evaluate numbers, locations, training and re-training of staff in use of equipment.
- ⌘ WTS-WIPP should ensure that workers deployed to other sites, such as those working in the CCP program, are provided with a VPP-level of quality for all safety and health issues. WTS should adopt a deliberate process for developing new and enhancing existing protocols, procedures and guidelines for this unique effort.
- ⌘ In anticipation of increased productivity, the strengthening of employee involvement is encouraged

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

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

