

WIPP Quick Facts

(as of September 7, 2005)

3,896

Shipments received since opening

31,181

Cubic meters of waste disposed

70,546

Containers disposed in the underground

On behalf of WIPP employees, TRU TeamWorks offers its condolences to the victims of Hurricane Katrina.

FEMA provides contact information to donate cash or to volunteer to help the victims of Hurricane Katrina

Click [here](#) to read a FEMA news release about helping in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.

Washington Group International matches employee donations for Hurricane Katrina relief

In addition to donating \$500,000 to the American Red Cross, Washington Group International is offering to match donations by employees dollar for dollar.

WTS employees may participate by making checks payable to the Washington Group Foundation and submit it to Kathy Kessler in Human Resources before September 30.

For more information, contact Kessler at Ext. 8578.



A National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration satellite image of Hurricane Katrina taken on August 28 while it was a Category Five hurricane.

Hurricane Katrina impacts WIPP shipments

Hurricane Katrina devastated the lives of more than a million people and impacted the entire nation – including far-away WIPP. WIPP had been averaging 23 waste shipments per week, with four of those originating from South Carolina's Savannah River Site (SRS), located just north of the Georgia border. SRS shipments follow Interstate 20 from South Carolina through Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana and Texas where they connect with U.S. 285 at Pecos, Texas, and continue into New Mexico.

WIPP safety protocols restrict shipping during adverse weather conditions. Shipments may be delayed at the shipping site or in a designated safe parking area until it is safe for them to resume. "Our number one priority is not just the safety of the shipment, but the safety of the public and environment as well," said Angela Johnson, manager of the WTS transportation group. With forecasters predicting Katrina's landfall on August 29, SRS shipments were suspended on the 28th, and remain suspended at this time.

CBFO officials have been working with officials in other states in an effort to establish a temporary alternate route from SRS to WIPP. "While our shipments are completely safe, it is our intention to eliminate any additional burden on the states," said Ralph Smith, CBFO Institutional Programs manager. "Plus, there has been a severe fuel shortage and rationing in that part of the country. The available fuel is needed for other uses."

According to Smith, CBFO will continue to monitor the situation on a daily basis and use the alternate route until they feel conditions are right to return to the normal routing.

WIPP transportation personnel are also watching the fuel situation near other shipping sites. "If we find that fuel shortages become a problem for other regions, we will take a close look at suspending shipments in those areas," adds Johnson.

Environment Department issues NOD

In late April, DOE-CBFO and WTS submitted a revised permit modification request to the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) consolidating a number of pending requests to modify the WIPP Hazardous Waste Facility Permit.

Last week, NMED responded with a completeness letter and notice of deficiency (NOD). In issuing the completeness letter, NMED acknowledged that it had received all the required elements of the revised permit modification request, the required

WIPP View



Waste handling techs emplacing waste in Room 6, Panel 3, last week.



Gary Ashford and Randy Wilson put in a hard day's work in Panel 4.

Set up your new voice mailbox early

When WIPP switches to the new telephone system on the weekend of September 23, a new voice mail system, called Call Pilot, will also be installed.

One major difference will be the number used to access voice mail. To ease the transition to the new system, you may set up your new voice mailbox (starting on Wednesday, September 14 until noon on Wednesday, September 21) in advance by following the instructions posted on the WIPP Intranet.

The new voice mail system will be active beginning on Monday, September 26.

public notices and meetings had taken place.

Along with the completeness letter, NMED issued an NOD indicating further clarification and/or additional information is needed before the agency can consider changes to the WIPP Hazardous Waste Facility Permit.

Wille Most, WRES principal scientist, says permitting personnel are working to provide the information requested in the 26-page NOD received September 2. "We've begun developing our response to the NOD in order to provide a submittal in a timely fashion," Most adds.

Key permit changes sought by CBFO and WTS include:

- ⌘ Changes to the WIPP waste analysis plan that incorporate the requirements of Section 311, Public Law 108-137. Section 311 was passed by Congress to economize national TRU mixed waste cleanup operations. Proposed changes, such as a request to monitor VOCs exclusively in underground disposal rooms, rather than drawing air samples from thousands of TRU mixed waste containers, are designed to minimize risks to workers and eliminate redundant processes.
- ⌘ A request to initiate storage and disposal of remote-handled TRU mixed waste at WIPP.
- ⌘ Facility changes, such as increased waste storage capacity in the Parking Area Unit and Waste Handling Building, to support remote-handled TRU mixed waste operations and add staging areas for waste containers awaiting examination.

According to the NOD, CBFO and WTS have 60 days to respond. Most says project participants are working diligently to provide NMED with the additional information needed to respond to the NOD.

WIPP shines at National Conference of State Legislatures



Communicators Dennis Hurr (CBFO) and Rose Scott (WTS) recently staffed a WIPP exhibit at the 2005 National Conference of State Legislatures in Seattle, Wash. Exhibits like this one are a useful venue to share information and answer questions about the WIPP project and its transportation program. Conference participants came from all over the country, including New Mexico.

New Mexico's legislative leaders, Speaker of the House Ben Lujan and Senate President Pro-Tempore Ben Altamirano both visited the WIPP exhibit. Lujan praised the work WIPP is doing in cleaning up the

nation's legacy waste and keeping stakeholders informed on the importance of WIPP's mission.

Lujan seemed glad to see the exhibit from his home state. "It's great to have WIPP here supporting us," he said.

New Mexico was well represented at the conference. Representative John Heaton, who represents a district that includes the Carlsbad area, attended. Other

D-Term phone training reminder

If you have a D-Term telephone, remember that it will be replaced by a new phone when the telephone system is upgraded later this month. If you have not yet signed up for the hour-long new phone training (September 19-21), please contact Joe Lopez at Ext. 7676.

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 & 70's dance contest will be at 6:00 p.m.



participants from the Land of Enchantment included state senators Michael Sanchez and John Arthur Smith, state representatives Henry "Kiki" Saavedra, Edward Sandoval, Dan Silva, Mimi Stewart, Janice E. Arnold Jones and Jeannette Wallace, and the chief clerk of the Senate, Steve Arias.

VPP STAR recertification auditors visit WIPP September 12 through 15

What is the VPP?

The Voluntary Protection Program was established by DOE to recognize superior safety and health performance by contractor management and employees. To participate, a contractor presents its safety program and incident rates, then completes an application and submits it to DOE. DOE then determines if the elements of the contractor's program exceed basic compliance.

What is the STAR program?

This program is for companies who demonstrate outstanding protection of employee safety and health—the highest level that can be achieved in the VPP. Because STAR designation requires a program of continuous improvement, participants cannot allow efforts to stagnate. Approvals are subject to triennial re-evaluation by DOE to ensure that STAR status is still warranted.

Purpose of the audit

Re-evaluation of participants in the STAR Program is intended to:

- ⌘ Determine continued qualification for the STAR Program
- ⌘ Re-evaluate and document results of program participation versus program criteria
- ⌘ Identify problems that could adversely affect continued STAR Program qualification and determine whether those problems require additional evaluations

What will VPP auditors consider?

- ⌘ Continued compliance with program requirements
- ⌘ Satisfaction of the participants
- ⌘ The nature and validity of any complaints received by DOE
- ⌘ The nature and resolution of problems that may have come to DOE attention since initial approval, or the last recertification as a STAR site
- ⌘ The effectiveness of employee participation programs

WIPP was the first STAR site in the DOE VPP program. WIPP employees have maintained STAR designation for the past 10 years. Once again, we'll have an opportunity to demonstrate improved safety excellence and recertify at the STAR level!

Happy Birthday!

Tom Fabian (WTS)
September 9

Priscilla Ridenour (WTS)
September 9

Ava Holland (CBFO)
September 10

Gloria Sena (CBFO)
September 10

Cindi Becker (L&M)
September 11

Jim Wilburn (CTAC)
September 11

Mike Knowles (WTS)
September 12

Bo Bowen (WTS)
September 12

Randy Steger (CTAC)
September 12

Helen Pettus (WTS)
September 16



This bobcat finds a comfy rest area at the WIPP site. Employees say she was spotted in Area 474 without the required hard hat and safety glasses.

Photo courtesy of Roger Simmons, WTS

Time is brain: How to tell if someone is having a stroke

Strokes can be a silent killer. The American Stroke Association (ASA) estimates that someone in America has a stroke every 45 seconds and someone dies of a stroke every three minutes. WIPP employees and their families are not immune from this threat, in fact, in the last few years a couple of our co-workers have experienced strokes.

“Fortunately,” says WIPP nurse Anita Self, “it is possible to survive a stroke.” Like so many other medical conditions, survival often depends on early detection. “Time is brain,” adds Self. “The earlier someone can be treated for stroke, the higher chance we have of retaining critical brain functions.”

The ASA Web site identifies the following stroke warning signs and urges people to call 911 if you or someone near you experiences these symptoms:

- ⌘ Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body
- ⌘ Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding
- ⌘ Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes
- ⌘ Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination
- ⌘ Sudden, severe headache with no known cause

If you have difficulty identifying these symptoms, but suspect that a stroke has occurred, a less known method has also been proposed for non-medically-trained people. A promising study by researchers at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill School of Medicine suggests that untrained adults may be able to identify symptoms of a stroke with three simple questions.

- 1) Ask the individual to smile
- 2) Ask him or her to raise both arms
- 3) Ask the person to speak a simple sentence

If the individual has problems with any of these questions, which help identify facial weakness, arm weakness and speech problems, it may be a sign of a stroke. "Those in the medical field that I have talked to agree that it is a useful tool for non-medically-trained people," says Self. The ASA home page says that this study is promising, but has not taken a position on it, nor endorsed its use.

For more information about strokes, visit the American Stroke Association home page at www.strokeassociation.org.

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

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

