

WIPP Quick Facts (As of 2-27-12)

10,308

Shipments received since opening
(9,772 CH and 536 RH)

80,199

Cubic meters of waste disposed
(79,919 CH and 280 RH)

157,123

Containers disposed in the
underground
(156,587 CH and 536 RH)



CBFO Manager Joe Franco hits the ground running

If you want to catch up with Carlsbad Field Office (CBFO) Manager Joe Franco, you may have to run. In fact, the first couple of weeks in his new job have looked like a sprint.

Franco's last six years were at the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Richland Operations Office (RL) as the RL Assistant Manager. That coupled with a previous 17 years of experience at WIPP, and he was able to hit the ground running upon arrival at CBFO.

Three days after his official February 13 start date, he held a series of all hands meetings at WIPP's in-town facility and at the WIPP site. Inviting all CBFO federal and DOE laboratory and contractor employees to attend was a first and it was well received.

At the all hands sessions, Franco talked about growing up in Carlsbad and graduating from Carlsbad High School. He served in the U.S. Navy six years before he began work with the South Texas Nuclear Generating Station, also known as the South Texas Project (STP), a nuclear power station southwest of Bay City, TX, as they became operational in 1988. In 1989, he returned to Carlsbad and worked for the management and operating contractor in numerous positions, which provided experience in the various functions and management processes that keep WIPP running safely, compliantly and effectively.

Having that experience was a real plus for many in the audience. Franco demonstrated that his WIPP knowledge goes much deeper than most. One employee said Franco's history with WIPP makes a difference because it provides him with an understanding of the work done at the site and of the employees.

Franco's messages weren't just about what he'd experienced in the past. He also described how he plans to champion the WIPP Team into the future. Being here in 1999 when WIPP opened, he said that he recalled the pride everyone had in the activities. He emphasized that feeling regarding WIPP's reputation is equally important today. "WIPP is a world-class facility," he said.



During Week One, CBFO Manager Joe Franco held WIPP All Hands Meetings.



Franco shaking hands with Mark Long, Jr. following an all hands meeting with employees.

The following week, Franco met with community leaders and had an interview with a reporter from the Carlsbad Current-Argus, the local newspaper. Asked about the challenges he faces, Franco articulated three issues that he considers important.

First, he talked about the fact that WIPP is no longer a new facility. The infrastructure has aged and a higher than expected throughput in the years since opening has resulted in wear-and-tear on the facility. He said, "The plant must be maintained so we can continue to fulfill our cleanup mission to the nation."

Second, Franco talked about how we measure success. In some cases, he said, the number of WIPP shipments received isn't a good performance measure. Instead, Franco said, we need to look at risk reduction. "The reason is that even small numbers of shipments to WIPP can, in some cases, dramatically reduce the risk to people and the environment," he said.

And finally, he talked about alignment with the DOE sites that are sending waste to WIPP. He said he will bring together all the customers that need WIPP services – such as field managers from the other sites - so both WIPP and the sites have a common vision of what's needed for cleanup.

"I'm glad to be back and hoping to make a difference," he said. Regarding deep geologic repositories for nuclear waste, "WIPP is America's only and the world's best."



Among the event's early risers were URS Washington TRU Solutions President and General Manager Farok Sharif with Senator Carroll Leavell, Senator Gay Kernan, Representative Shirley Tyler and Carlsbad Mayor Dale Janway.



DOE provides annual update to New Mexico Legislature

State legislators gathered in Santa Fe, New Mexico for this year's 30-day legislative session had an opportunity to hear a briefing about WIPP. On January 31, southeast New Mexico legislators hosted the annual WIPP Legislative Breakfast, which featured a briefing by Deputy CBFO Manager Ed Ziemianski (above).



Representative Bill Gray visits with Sharif and event newcomer, Representative Ricky Riddle.

The 6:30 a.m. breakfast meeting is a tradition that attracts legislators from across the state. This year, several legislators attended for the first time, including Representative Jimmie Hall of Albuquerque, Representative Alonzo Baldonado of



Representative Cathrynn Brown, Representative Alonzo Baldonado and Representative Candy Spence Ezzell were among those at the WIPP update.

Los Lunas, Representative Ricky Riddle of Chaparral and Senator Bill Burt of Alamogordo. In addition, two cabinet secretaries were in attendance: Secretary F. David Martin from the Environment Department and Secretary John Bemis from the Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department.

Following brief introductions, Ziemianski requested a moment of silence in honor of the late Representative Jeannette Wallace. Representative Wallace of Los Alamos served the residents of District 43 from 1991 until her death in 2011. She had been a regular participant in the annual WIPP update for many years.

This year's presentation provided a status of WIPP since the last legislative session and highlighted some key milestones. Among the topics discussed were the first use of the TRUPACT-III, URS Washington TRU Solutions' Mine Operator of the Year Award and receipt of the 10,000th shipment.

Southeast New Mexico sponsors of the event were Senator Carroll Leavell, Senator Vernon Asbill, Senator Gay Kernan, Representative Donald Bratton, Representative Bill Gray, Representative Shirley Tyler and Representative Cathrynn Brown.

WIPP employee joins environmental justice advisory committee

Organizers say no similar opportunity or conference exists in America. In April, representatives from federal and state agencies, local governments, tribes, communities, business, academia and other groups will gather in Washington, D.C. for the 2012 National Environmental Justice Conference and Training Program.

The Department of Energy is a founding partner and sponsor of the event which was first held in 2007.

Melinda Downing, DOE Environmental Justice Program Manager, said the conference provides federal agencies an opportunity to present collaborative environmental justice efforts at the national level.

"During the conference, communities will have direct access to federal officials and members of Congress," said Downing. "It's the largest and most diverse environmental justice conference in the nation."

A newcomer to the conference advisory board, Rose Scott (shown at right), a governmental affairs specialist with URS Washington TRU Solutions, the management and operating contractor for DOE at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant, says she, too, looks forward to participating in the conference.



"The interests and well being of stakeholders is important to us at WIPP. We do our best to inform them about opportunities to participate in proposed DOE initiatives and the public process," she said.

Scott is a former magistrate judge, former president of the New Mexico Democratic Women and current president of the Hobbs Hispano Chamber Foundation. Her Spanish-speaking skills have made her a key liaison at community meetings and



Planned maintenance work completed at WIPP

A planned maintenance period between January 20 and February 13, gave workers at WIPP a chance to complete projects that can't be done while the site is receiving shipments and disposing waste.

Some of the projects included replacing/installing underground bulkheads, relocating an electrical distribution panel, multiple roof and wall bolting projects, realignment of steel in the Salt Shaft, removal of excess equipment from the underground and upgrading overhead cranes in the Contact-Handled Waste Bay.

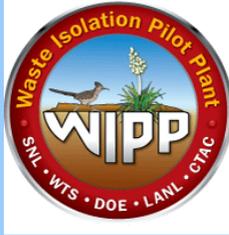
Safety continued to be the focus as the projects progressed. Shipments to the plant have since resumed and waste is once again being disposed.

Above, WIPP employees working on an exhaust ventline.

asset to the WIPP Joint Information Center, should the need arise for emergency public information.

Environmental justice experts will guide conference participants through a variety of topics such as strategies related to land use, mitigation of environmental hazards and socioeconomics. The conference training program offers professional-level educational credits to federal employees and stakeholders.

The 2012 National Environmental Justice Conference and Training Program conference will be held April 11-13, 2012 in Washington, D.C. For more information, contact Melinda Downing, U.S. Department of Energy's Environmental Justice Program Manager at melinda.downing@hq.doe.gov or the conference coordinator, Lloyd Moore, at email@thenejc.org or by telephone at 202-827-2224.



**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.

