DOE NEWS

NEWS MEDIA CONTACTS:
Tom Welch, 202/586-4316
Greg Sahd (Carlsbad), 505/234-7532

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Department of Energy Competitively Awards Contract for the Management of Waste Isolation Pilot Plant

Secretary of Energy Bill Richardson today announced that the Energy Department will award a $500 million, five-year contract for the management and operation of the department's Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) in Carlsbad, New Mexico, to Westinghouse TRU Solutions LLC. Westinghouse TRU Solutions LLC, based in Carlsbad, is a joint venture between Westinghouse Government Environmental Services Company LLC and Roy F. Weston, Inc.

"By holding an open competition, the department was able to challenge industry to bring their best ideas forward on actions needed to maintain and improve WIPP's safety and operational efficiency," said Secretary Richardson. "We conducted a rigorous solicitation and selection process."

The new contractor will assume responsibility for operations of the facility around December 1. Westinghouse Waste Isolation Division holds the current contract and has been the WIPP's management contractor since 1988.

Last August, when the department solicited competitive bids from interested contractors, two proposals were submitted for consideration and review. Key features of the contract include a five-year base period of performance with an option for an additional five years and a requirement to retain the current workforce at comparable pay and benefits.

Since opening March 26, 1999, WIPP has permanently disposed of defense-generated transuranic radioactive waste left from the research and production of nuclear weapons and helped the department meet its commitment to environmental cleanup. Transuranic waste consists of clothing, tools, rags, debris, residues, and other disposable items contaminated with radioactive elements, mostly plutonium.

Located in southeastern New Mexico, 26 miles east of Carlsbad, WIPP employs approximately 1,000 people. WIPP project facilities include disposal rooms excavated in an ancient, stable salt formation nearly one-half mile underground. For more information about WIPP, call 1-800-336-9477, or visit the WIPP Web site at www.wipp.carlsbad.nm.us.

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