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DOENews

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For Immediate Release
**HalfPACT Transportation Container Wins
Prestigious Hammer Award**

CARLSBAD, N.M., December 21, 2000 -- The National Partnership for Reinventing Government has awarded the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Carlsbad Field Office and the Westinghouse Waste Isolation Division (WID) the prestigious Hammer Award for the design of the HalfPACT transportation container.

The HalfPACT design program was honored for its projected \$49 million savings to taxpayers by eliminating about 2,000 projected shipments to DOE's Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) over its 35-year operating life. The HalfPACT will supplement the Transuranic Package Transporter Model 2 (TRUPACT-II), which is currently used for transportation of transuranic waste to WIPP.

The TRUPACT-II is designed to carry waste in fourteen 55-gallon drums or two standard waste boxes. However, some waste drums, called "heavy drums," weigh up to 1,000 pounds. When the load includes "heavy drums," TRUPACT-II containers cannot be filled to capacity and still stay under the Department of Transportation's weight limit.

DOE and WID engineers developed the HalfPACT to carry up to seven "heavy drums." Each WIPP transport truck can haul up to three fully loaded HalfPACTs. Because the HalfPACT allows a greater volume of heavy waste to be transported in each shipment, the number of shipments is reduced and, therefore, the cost and the potential for accidents are also reduced.

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“We are particularly proud of this award because it recognizes our continued commitment to providing the safest and most cost-efficient solution to disposing transuranic waste,” said Dr. Inés Triay, Manager of the Carlsbad Field Office. “The engineers who developed the HalfPACT exemplify the ingenuity of Westinghouse employees.”

The Hammer Award was created by Vice President Al Gore to recognize the innovative and important work done by American government workers and those with whom they partner.

“The Hammer Award is an excellent tool for tearing down an outmoded structure – and is also very useful in building something new and better in its place,” said Morley Winograd, Senior Policy Advisor to Vice President Gore and Director of the National Partnership for Reinventing Government. “For that reason, the Vice President has chosen it as his way of recognizing the efforts of those federal employee teams who have successfully reinvented a process or program in order to make it work better and costs less.”

The team members who contributed to the creation of the HalfPACT are:

Dr. Inés Triay, Manager, DOE Carlsbad Field Office

Joe Epstein, General Manager, WID

Mike Brown, Manager, Waste Characterization, DOE Carlsbad Field Office

Farok Sharif, Manager, National TRU Programs, WID

Mike Caviness, Manager, Packaging, WID

Phil Gregory, Manager, Packaging and Certification, WID

Peter DeBeer, Senior Procurement Specialist, WID

Mark Davis, Senior Quality Assurance Analyst, WID

Lane Galle, Quality Assurance Inspector, WID

George Williams, Quality Assurance Specialist, WID

Westinghouse is the management and operating contractor for DOE at WIPP.

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A cornerstone of DOE's clean-up effort, WIPP is designed to permanently dispose of transuranic waste left from the research and production of nuclear weapons.

Located in southeastern New Mexico, 26 miles east of Carlsbad, project facilities include disposal rooms excavated in an ancient, stable salt formation, 2,150 feet underground.

Transuranic waste consists of clothing, tools, rags, debris, residues and other disposable items contaminated with radioactive elements, mostly plutonium.

For more information about WIPP, call 1-800-336-9477, or visit the WIPP web site at <http://www.wipp.carlsbad.nm.us>.

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