



## **Media Contacts**

Dennis Hurtt  
U.S. DOE Carlsbad Area Office  
(505) 234-7327

Donavan Mager  
Westinghouse  
Waste Isolation Division  
(505) 234-7518

1-800-493-9768

<http://www.wipp.carlsbad.nm.us>

### **For Immediate Release**

## **Emergency Response Training Draws Professionals From Seven States**

**CARLSBAD, N.M., August 18, 2000** – Emergency response professionals from Arizona, California, Louisiana, Mississippi, Nevada, New Mexico, and Texas will be in Carlsbad Aug. 23-25 to learn how to handle potential accidents involving radioactive and hazardous materials.

The course, titled "Train-The-Trainer: First Responder Radiological Transportation Emergency Course," is taught by members of the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant's (WIPP) Emergency Responder Training Team. The team, comprised of employees of the Westinghouse Waste Isolation Division, provides emergency response professionals with the tools to teach colleagues First Responder and First Responder Refresher courses. The two-day course includes classroom activities at the Pecos River Village Conference Center, plus a tour of the WIPP site. Westinghouse is the management and operating contractor for the U.S. Department of Energy at WIPP.

First responders are individuals who arrive at scenes of automobile accidents first. They include law enforcement personnel, emergency medical technicians, firefighters, tow truck operators, and state and U.S. Department of Transportation representatives.

WIPP first responder courses give students information about how to protect themselves, the public and the environment in the unlikely event of a transportation accident involving a transuranic waste shipment headed for WIPP.

The course, offered through DOE's Carlsbad Area Office, is part of the States and Tribal Education Program (STEP).

Since 1998, STEP trainers have taught 178 emergency responders through the Train-the-Trainer Program to teach WIPP First Responder and First Responder Refresher courses. Students learn about material identification, regulations, response procedures, and personal protection.

Since the inception of STEP in 1988, the DOE has trained more than 16,000 emergency response professionals in 17 states. WIPP shipments will ultimately cross 30 states and 11 tribal lands.

STEP courses include Train-The-Trainer, First Responder, First Responder Refresher, Command and Control, Incident Command System, Mitigation, and Medical Management. In 1993 and again in 1997, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration reviewed and concurred with the Train-The-Trainer, First Responder and First Responder Refresher courses.

WIPP, a cornerstone of the DOE's cleanup effort, is designed to permanently dispose of defense-generated transuranic radioactive waste left from the research and production of nuclear weapons.

Located in southeastern New Mexico, 26 miles southeast of Carlsbad, project facilities include disposal rooms excavated in an ancient, stable salt formation 2,150 feet (almost one-half mile) underground. Waste disposal operations began at WIPP on March 26, 1999.

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 Home Page at <http://www.wipp.carlsbad.nm.us>.