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DOENews

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For Immediate Release **WIPP Receives 200th Shipment**

CARLSBAD, N.M., April 18, 2001 – The U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) today received its 200th shipment of defense-generated transuranic radioactive waste. The shipment came from DOE's Rocky Flats Environmental Technology Site (RFETS) in Colorado.

“The arrival of the 200th shipment of waste to WIPP exhibits the safety of our transportation system. This marks another major milestone for WIPP as we work toward cleanup of transuranic waste at DOE sites across the country,” said Dr. Inés Triay, Manager of DOE's Carlsbad Field Office.

Since beginning disposal operations on March 26, 1999, WIPP has received 59 shipments from the Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory, 118 shipments from RFETS, 17 from Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico, and 6 from the Hanford Site in Washington State. During the expected 35-year operating life of WIPP, DOE will transport some 19,300 loads of transuranic waste from 23 locations nationwide.

The 200th shipment of transuranic waste to WIPP left RFETS at 9:20 a.m. (MDT) April 17 and arrived safely at WIPP at 4:55 a.m. (MDT) today. Coincidentally, the 100th shipment of waste to WIPP that arrived on October 18, 2000, also came from RFETS.

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WIPP, a cornerstone of the DOE's cleanup effort, is the nation's first repository for the permanent disposal of defense-generated transuranic radioactive 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 (almost one-half mile) 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>.