

TRU Solutions News

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For Immediate Release

Westinghouse TRU Solutions LLC Earns Corporate Award for Mining Operations

CARLSBAD, N.M., May 3, 2001 – Washington Group International has selected Westinghouse TRU Solutions LLC (WTS) for a 2000 Eagle Award. WTS is the management and operating contractor for the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP).

Washington Group International's annual Eagle Awards Program acknowledges and honors extraordinary projects, teams and individual performers. Washington Group International is the parent company of WTS.

WTS was selected as a Division Project of the Year for safely mining Panel 2 in the WIPP underground six weeks ahead of schedule and under budget. In August 1999, DOE challenged WTS to mine Panel 2 in one year.

Panel 2 is the second disposal panel excavated 2,150 feet below the desert floor for permanent disposal of defense-generated transuranic radioactive waste. It was the first full-scale mining project at WIPP since the completion of Panel 1 in 1988. Mining of Panel 1 was a three-year project. To meet waste disposal schedules, a second shift of workers was added and commercial mining techniques were employed to complete Panel 2 in just less than 11 months.

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In accordance with WIPP's design, Panel 2 is identical in layout to Panel 1. Underground waste disposal panels are arranged in parallel sets of seven rooms each. Each set of seven rooms is called a panel. Each disposal room is 300 feet long, 33 feet wide and 13 feet high. A disposal room will hold the equivalent of 12,000 standard 55-gallon drums of waste.

WIPP, a cornerstone of 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 Southeast 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. Waste disposal operations began at WIPP 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 Web site at <http://www.wipp.carlsbad.nm.us>.