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# DOENews

**For Immediate Release**

## **DOE to Host Prominent German Scientists For Technical Conference**

**CARLSBAD, N.M., April 24, 2001** – The U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Carlsbad Field Office will host representatives from Germany's top waste management organizations for a technical conference April 25-27 at the Pecos River Village Conference Center in Carlsbad.

The conference is co-hosted by Westinghouse TRU Solutions LLC, the management and operating contractor for DOE at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP), and Sandia National Laboratories. The gathering provides a forum for sharing information and promoting cooperative research and development activities.

Nineteen engineers and scientists who manage and direct geological waste disposal activities in 13 of Germany's government and commercial operations will attend the three-day conference.

"Germany is the only other nation in the world focusing principally on salt repositories. The Germans have already placed radioactive waste into salt mines. They also operate commercial repositories for hazardous waste, such as incineration residues," said Dr. Inés Triay, Manager of DOE's Carlsbad Field Office. "The Carlsbad Field Office is an internationally recognized leader in transuranic waste repository science and operations. By working together, we help ensure the viability of geologic waste disposal worldwide."

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Several discussion sessions are planned to address a wide range of issues pertinent to WIPP's mission. Topics include hydrology, radionuclide transport, rock mechanics, geochemistry, disposal room processes, sealing systems, and performance assessment. The scientists also will visit the WIPP site.

The group will also meet with Carlsbad Mayor Gary Perkowski and the Mayor's WIPP Task Force to learn about the strong community support for WIPP, a key factor in the project's success.

"By the end of the conference, we hope to have identified areas of common interest for international efforts including collaborative underground science experiments at WIPP," said Dr. Triay

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 research and production of nuclear weapons.

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

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