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For Immediate Release

WIPP Mine Rescue Team Wins, Retires Trophy

CARLSBAD, N.M., April 9, 2001 – For the third consecutive year, a Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) mine rescue team won the Southwestern Regional Mine Rescue Competition. The competition was April 5-6 at the Pecos River Village in Carlsbad.

The WIPP Blue Mine Rescue team has been designated the best in New Mexico by winning the New Mexico State Mine Inspector's Traveling Trophy three years in a row to retire the trophy. Second place was awarded to FMC Corporation from Green River, Wyoming, while the WIPP Silver team placed third.

Kevin Cummins of IMC-Kalium won first place in the benchman's competition. Joe Baca of the WIPP Blue Team won second place.

Mine Rescue teams have been participating in this competition since 1981. Each team consists of five working members and three support personnel. Seven teams took part in this year's event including FMC Corporation of Green River, Wyoming; MolyCorp of Questa, New Mexico; and five local teams including both WIPP teams, IMC-Kalium, Mississippi Potash East and Mississippi Potash West.

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 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.

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- 2 -

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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