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For immediate release

WIPP Mine Rescue Team First in Missouri

CARLSBAD, N.M., October 14, 2004 – It must have been the right combination. Members from the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant's (WIPP) Silver and Blue mine rescue teams joined forces to take top honors October 8, 2004 in Rolla, Mo. The team placed first out of nine teams competing in the southeast Missouri regional mine rescue competition.

Washington TRU Solutions General Manager Steve Warren, who traveled with the team for the first time, said, "This was an excellent opportunity for different team members to work together against some very good teams. They did an outstanding job representing our company and project." The timed competition gave team members two hours to complete their rescue mission with adverse ventilation conditions as part of the competition scenario.

In addition to the overall win, WIPP's First Aid team put in an excellent performance, winning that event. And first year competitor, Curtis Sanders, wrested first place honors from the reigning Mine Safety and Health Administration national champion in the Drager Model BG4 self-contained breathing apparatus bench competition.

Rounding out the WIPP awards were Edgar Keyser and Greg Sensibaugh who took second and third respectively in the gas detector instrument competition.

Members of the combined team that took first place were Gary Kessler, Greg Sensibaugh, David Ripley, Ben Zimmerly, Andy Cooper and Edgar Keyser.

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Members of the winning First Aid team were Nadine Kuhn, David Sjomeling and Ben Zimmerly.

WTS has managed WIPP for the U.S. Department of Energy for 20 years. WTS opened and has safely operated WIPP, the nation's first permanent geologic repository for defense nuclear waste, since 1999. Washington Group International of Boise, Idaho, is the parent company of WTS.