

# DOENews

## **For Immediate Release**

### **DOE Awards WIPP Independent Oversight Contract**

**Cincinnati, Ohio, October 7, 2005** – Today the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) announced the award of the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) Independent Oversight contract to Pecos Management Services, Incorporated (Pecos) of Albuquerque, N.M. The contract is effective October 7, 2005, and contains a one year base with four one-year options. It is valued at approximately \$4.5 million over the five-year period.

Pecos has teamed with the Institute for Regulatory Science of Columbia, Md., to form the “Alliance for Research, Evaluation, and Advancement of WIPP Environmental Science and Technology” (AREA WEST) for this contract. AREA WEST will provide independent reviews and evaluations of the design, construction and operations of the WIPP, as they relate to protection of the public health, safety and the environment. The reviews and evaluations by AREA WEST are in addition to the authority of the state and federal regulatory agencies.

WIPP is the world’s first underground repository certified to dispose of transuranic radioactive waste left from the research and production of nuclear weapons and is a cornerstone of the Department of Energy’s Environmental Management cleanup program. It is located in a salt formation 2,150 feet below ground and is 26 miles southeast of Carlsbad, N.M.