

U.S. Department of Energy  
Carlsbad Field Office  
Waste Isolation Pilot Plant  
P.O. Box 3090  
Carlsbad, New Mexico 88221

**Media Contacts:**

Susan Scott  
Washington TRU Solutions  
(575) 234-7204  
[www.wipp.energy.gov](http://www.wipp.energy.gov)

# DOENews

**For Immediate Release**

## ***WIPP Mine Rescue Teams Excel at Regional Competition***

**CARLSBAD, N.M., April 8, 2008** – Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) mine rescue teams last week excelled at the 2008 Southwestern Regional Mine Rescue Competition in Carlsbad, N.M. The success of the teams is evidence of the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) long-standing commitment to mine safety at WIPP.

“I'm proud of our teams' success and I applaud the members of all of the teams who volunteer to render aid,” said Dr. Dave Moody, DOE Carlsbad Field Office manager. “These competitions are not about winning or losing, they're about raising the bar in mine safety.”

The four-part competition, which takes place over two days and is sponsored by the Southwestern Regional Mine Rescue Association and administered by the U.S. Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA), consists of a field contest, multi-gas instrument contest, benchman's contest and first aid contest. The field contest simulates conditions that could be encountered in an underground mine emergency, including gases, fires or mine instability. The teams are evaluated as they move through the obstacle course to locate, treat and move staged victims to the surface. MSHA officials judge each team's response skills.

WIPP's Blue Team captured an overall first place and WIPP's Silver Team took second place in a field that included local teams representing Mosaic Potash

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and Intrepid Mining, and two teams from Chevron MolyCorp of Questa, N.M. WIPP Blue and WIPP Silver teams achieved first and second place, respectively, in the field contest with Mosaic Potash taking third. In the multi-gas instrument contest, Mosaic's James Pierce and Joe Parker took first and second, while WIPP Silver's Matt Ridgeway placed third.

"These individuals are volunteers who have indicated their willingness to help their fellow miner when called upon," says Buddy Webb, WIPP team emergency response coordinator. "We are fortunate to have such a fine group of individuals in the area."

In the benchman's contest, Joe Baca of the WIPP Blue Team took first, with Kevin Cummins of Mosaic taking second and Rudy Dominquez of Intrepid Mining placing third. WIPP Blue Team members Nadine Kuhn, James Pearce and Ty Zimmerly were awarded first place in the first aid contest. Intrepid Mining placed second and Mosaic Potash placed third.

The Waste Isolation Pilot Plant is a U.S. Department of Energy facility designed to safely isolate defense-related transuranic waste from people and the environment. Waste temporarily stored at sites around the country is shipped to WIPP and permanently disposed in rooms mined out of an ancient salt formation 2,150 feet below the surface. WIPP, which began waste disposal operations in March 1999, is located 26 miles outside of Carlsbad, N.M.