



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF **ENERGY**

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

Media Contact

Deb Gill
U.S. DOE Carlsbad Field Office
(575) 234-7270

www.wipp.energy.gov

For Immediate Release

WIPP Trucks Surpass 10 Million Loaded Miles

CARLSBAD, N.M., April 19, 2010 – The U.S. Department of Energy’s (DOE) Carlsbad Field Office said drivers, who haul defense-related transuranic (TRU) waste to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant, surpassed 10 million safe, loaded miles. The first of more than 8,400 shipments to WIPP arrived 11 years ago from Los Alamos National Laboratory in northern New Mexico.

“There’s no doubt, some of the best drivers in the transportation industry work for WIPP,” said Dr. Dave Moody, Carlsbad Field Office manager. Loaded miles, he explained, are the number of miles traveled hauling a waste payload.

The milestone shipment contained contact-handled TRU waste that originated from the Hanford Site in Washington State.

“If you consider round-trips, our trucks have traveled 20 million miles on the nation’s highways without a serious injury or release of radioactive material. I am extremely proud of the WIPP transportation system and all of those dedicated to ensuring the safety of our shipments,” added Moody.

Two transportation carriers, CAST Specialty Transportation of Henderson, Colo. and Visionary Solutions LLC out of Oak Ridge, Tenn. contract to DOE to haul waste for WIPP. WIPP

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packaging engineers, schedulers, emergency management personnel, mobile loading teams, and a nationwide network of first responders make up the WIPP transportation system.

The DOE ships TRU wastes, left from nuclear weapons research and production, in specialized containers certified by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. Driver teams and loaded shipments are monitored, via satellite, at all times. WIPP transportation safety protocols were developed through cooperative efforts with states, tribal governments and the DOE.

The WIPP transportation system has played a key role in completing cleanup efforts at 15 waste generator sites around the country.

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 1999, is located 26 miles outside of Carlsbad, N.M.

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