



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF **ENERGY**

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WIPP Completes California Sites Cleanup

CARLSBAD, N.M., June 14, 2010 - The U.S. Department of Energy's Carlsbad Field Office (CBFO) has successfully completed its campaign to clean up all defense-related transuranic (TRU) waste at California's Vallecitos Nuclear Center (VNC) near Sunol and Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL) Site 300, east of Livermore.

The last shipment of defense related TRU waste from VNC was shipped to Idaho National Laboratory on June 7. Following the certification for disposal, this shipment of contact-handled waste will be sent to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) near Carlsbad, N.M. for permanent disposal. On June 11, a shipment of defense-related TRU waste from LLNL Site 300 was shipped to the LLNL main site in Livermore, resulting in the complete removal of Site 300's TRU waste.

"The successful removal of defense related TRU waste at VNC and LLNL Site 300 is another milestone toward our goal of reducing the nation's nuclear waste footprint," said CBFO Manager Dave Moody. "VNC is the 16th and LLNL Site 300 is the 17th site which have been completely cleaned of legacy TRU waste, and that's great news for millions of Americans."

Waste at VNC and LLNL Site 300 was characterized and certified through American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds. CBFO and WIPP have received \$172 million in ARRA funds to support cleanup activities across the DOE complex. "Using ARRA funds, we have been able to significantly accelerate the

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process of cleaning up small-quantity sites across the country,” Moody said. “I want to congratulate everyone for handling the process at VNC and LLNL Site 300 safely and efficiently.”

Last year, working with GE Hitachi Nuclear Energy, CBFO began the shipping campaign from VNC by removing and disposing of 32 shipments of remote-handled (RH)-TRU waste. VNC is a privately-owned commercial energy research facility located approximately 40 miles east of San Francisco and about seven miles southwest of Livermore, California. The TRU waste was generated at VNC from government-sponsored research.

WIPP’s mission includes the safe disposal of two types of defense-related TRU waste, CH and RH. RH-TRU waste produces a higher dose rate than CH-TRU waste at the surface of the disposal container, but when transported, RH- and CH-TRU waste have the same dose rate limit on the outside of the shipping casks due to lead shielding. TRU waste consists of tools, rags, protective clothing, sludge, soil and other materials contaminated with radioactive elements that have atomic numbers greater than uranium.

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.