



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF **ENERGY**

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For Immediate Release

Carlsbad Field Office Recognized by New Mexico and DOE for Environmental Excellence at WIPP

CARLSBAD, N.M., December 13, 2011 – The Department of Energy (DOE) Carlsbad Field Office (CBFO) was selected for top recognition for environmental stewardship and for reducing energy, water and paper usage at the DOE's Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP).

The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) recently selected CBFO for a Bronze Award under their Green Zia Environmental Leadership Program, which recognized New Mexico businesses or organizations for their commitment towards environmental stewardship by implementing pollution prevention practices and for excellence and long-term environmental and economic sustainability.

In place since 1996, the Green Zia Environmental Leadership Program is a part of the NMED Pollution Prevention Program. WIPP was the only organization to be singled out, along with four businesses, in New Mexico for the honor. The program, which is based on the Malcolm Baldrige Business Performance Excellence Criteria and the Quality New Mexico program, is the only initiative of its kind nationally and helps participants incorporate environmental decision making into core business practices.

"As a result of these worthwhile efforts, these businesses (or organizations) are both saving money and reducing impacts on the environment," NMED Secretary David Martin said. "The New Mexico Environment Department is pleased to recognize these environmental leaders and we encourage all New Mexico businesses (or organizations) to take steps to promote conservation."

In addition to the state award, CBFO also received recognition as a winner of the 2011 DOE Sustainability Award. The awards are presented to individuals, teams, and organizations for improving energy, water and fleet efficiency while reducing pollution and waste across the DOE complex.

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“Today’s Sustainability Award winners are leading by example, showing what’s possible when employees bring creativity, innovation and dedication to their efforts to make the Department of Energy more sustainable,” said Deputy Secretary of Energy and Senior Sustainability Officer Daniel Poneman.

Both awards recognize the WIPP team most significantly for the environmental achievement of the WIPP South Access Road project. In addition to CBFO, the WIPP team included members of Washington TRU Solutions (WTS), LLC, the WIPP management and operating contractor, WTS Sub-contractors Constructors Inc. and Pettigrew & Associates, and the U.S. Department of Interior Bureau of Land Management.

The WIPP South Access Road is used daily by employees commuting to and from the WIPP site. The project team identified sustainable options early in the planning of the 4.5-mile road’s reconstruction, including reducing fresh water and reusing existing materials for construction. Rather than use the city’s water sources, the team reused clean storm water held in the evaporation ponds at the site.

For road base materials, the team used caliche, a hardened deposit of calcium carbonate, from a salt storage evaporation pond on site. For paving, 7,800 tons of recycled asphalt product was used. Together, these actions resulted in saving \$150,000 in construction costs, 9.7 billion British Thermal Units of energy, 340,000 gallons of fresh water, and the equivalent of 640 million tons carbon dioxide.

“The project enhanced the safety of the road and allows for a shorter delivery route, saving fuel and preventing additional associated greenhouse gas emissions,” said CBFO Interim Manager Ed Ziemianski. “These awards reflect favorably on the entire WIPP Team of the Department of Energy and the DOE’s contractors and laboratories.

In addition to the WIPP road project, environmental performance recognition included the following:

DOE started a recycling program for slip sheets, a plastic/polymer material that is used between waste containers. DOE contacted the slip sheet manufacturer and quickly determined that it was possible to return the used slip sheets for recycling, which eliminated the need for disposing of the material.

Personnel also implemented mitigation actions, including increased monitoring, use of barriers, and filtration systems, to manage carbon tetrachloride levels in the WIPP underground. These mitigation actions resulted in the stabilization of carbon tetrachloride levels below those permitted by the WIPP Hazardous Waste Facility permit.

DOE created the Carlsbad Area Office in late 1993 to lead the nation’s transuranic waste disposal efforts. In September 2000 the office was elevated in status to become the Carlsbad Field Office, taking on significant new responsibilities. The CBFO coordinates the transuranic (TRU) program at waste-generating sites, national laboratories, and other participants involved in characterizing and disposing of TRU waste at the WIPP site located 26 miles southeast of Carlsbad, N.M.

Photo caption: CBFO Interim Manager Ed Ziemianski (far right) presented the New Mexico Environment Department's Bronze Award under their Green Zia Environmental Leadership Program and the 2011 DOE Sustainability Award to several recipients. Shown from left to right are Debra Hicks and Randy Pettigrew of Pettigrew & Associates; Owen Lofton of the Bureau of Land Management; Hank Carey and Ronnie Crockett of URS Washington TRU Solutions; Dan Ferguson of CBFO and Judy McLemore and Bob Kehrman of Regulatory and Environmental Services.

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