



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF **ENERGY**

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WIPP, Carlsbad Host Department of State Conference

CARLSBAD, N.M., August 30, 2011 – The United States Departments of State (DOS) and Energy (DOE) recently met with a delegation from the Argentina government for the 8th meeting of the U.S./Argentina Joint Standing Committee on Nuclear Energy Cooperation (JSCNEC).

Argentina has a small but rapidly developing nuclear industry. Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship Gustavo Ainchil led the country's delegation to Carlsbad.

The July 25-28 conference was hosted by the DOE's Carlsbad Field Office (CBFO) and included representatives from the National Nuclear Security Administration and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

"The idea behind JSCNEC is that all nuclear states should be interested in what all other nuclear states are doing," said Roger Nelson, CBFO Chief Scientist. "It's in the best interest for the safety and security of everyone."

JSCNEC bilateral meetings help to coordinate policies, establish technical cooperation activities and discuss policy issues of importance to both countries. The JSCNEC Carlsbad conference included meetings on nuclear energy policy, international security and nonproliferation, technological cooperation, and nuclear safeguards. This year's conference also took advantage of being near the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) and introduced a waste disposal component to the discussion for the first time.

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Located 26 miles outside of Carlsbad, WIPP is America's only deep geologic repository for the permanent disposal of defense-generated transuranic radioactive waste generated from the research and production of nuclear weapons.

U.S. delegates from CBFO, URS Washington TRU Solutions, Los Alamos National Laboratory and Sandia National Laboratory explained WIPP's role and outlined the training and support provided to other countries' radioactive waste management and related programs.

"CBFO sets a great example in waste management by the way it runs WIPP," Abe Van Luik, CBFO's senior international programs manager, said. "Seeing WIPP in operation was a powerful reminder to visitors that they need to start thinking about waste disposal for their growing nuclear program."

CBFO is continuing to develop its international program by providing the DOS with information to invite other nations to send operations workers and engineers to Carlsbad for training. Training focuses on various aspects of running a waste management facility, including safety, quality assurance and safeguards.

"These are the beginnings of larger opportunities for the CBFO, its technical and operational participants, local universities, and the local communities," Van Luik said. "These types of international cooperation activities aid the U.S. agenda of promoting the safe and responsible use of nuclear energy both around the world and in the U.S., plus they promote the growth of local capabilities in providing technical training to international participants."

Photo caption: Members of a delegation from the Argentina government, along with representatives from the United States Department of State and the United States Department of Energy, gather at the DOE's Waste Isolation Pilot Plant. The visit to WIPP was a part of the 8th meeting of the U.S./Argentina Joint Standing Committee on Nuclear Energy Cooperation (JSCNEC).