



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF **ENERGY**

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Reconstruction of WIPP South Access Road Complete

CARLSBAD, N.M., January 11, 2011 – Reconstruction of a road leading to the U.S. Department of Energy’s Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) has been completed. The well-travelled road is used by WIPP employees and oil and gas companies working in the area.

WIPP’s South Access Road, a 3.75 mile stretch that leads from New Mexico Highway 128 to the intersection with WIPP’s North Access Road, will re-open for use on Tuesday. Constructors Inc., a southeastern New Mexico company with headquarters in Carlsbad, was awarded the \$4.4 million fixed-price contract in May 2010 to rebuild the road. URS Washington TRU Solutions (WTS), the WIPP management and operating contractor, awarded the contract.

“This project completion is very important for WIPP employees and the general public who can now use the South Access Road again. The improvements make the road much safer for travelers,” said Acting Carlsbad Field Office (CBFO) Manager Ed Ziemianski.

The reconstruction project was funded through 2009’s American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). Under ARRA, CBFO and WIPP received \$172 million to support cleanup activities across the country and upgrade facilities at WIPP. Last year, ARRA funds allotted to WIPP were used to successfully complete the cleanup of transuranic waste at the Vallecitos Nuclear Center and the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory Site 300, both in California. Using ARRA funds, WIPP has also saved and/or created more than 580 jobs.

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Employees of the WIPP site, located about 26 miles east of Carlsbad, use the South Access Road on a daily basis while coming to and from work. Additionally, the stretch of road is used by oilfield companies operating in the vicinity of WIPP. Prior to the reconstruction, the condition of the road had severely deteriorated.

“I want to thank the Department of Energy – especially Environmental Management Assistant Secretary Dr. Ines Triay and EM Chief Operations Officer Cynthia Anderson – for allotting the funding that allowed us to make this important improvement to our infrastructure,” said Farok Sharif, WTS President and General Manager.

Following the company’s recycling policy, WTS provided Constructors Inc. with resources already available. For the South Access project, 340,000 gallons of water were made available from the WIPP site’s evaporation pond. Also, about 4,800 yards of caliche from a WIPP salt storage evaporation pond were used to build road base. Finally, 7,800 tons of recycled asphalt product were returned to the road. Half of that came from the old South Access Road, while the other half came from other Constructors Inc. jobs. The road was inspected on Monday by a professional engineer to verify its construction and safety.

“Prior to this reconstruction, the road had deteriorated to the point where repairs were being made to potholes on a regular basis. The road has now been fully resurfaced for smooth travel,” said CBFO Site Operations Director Casey Gadbury. “The road also now has been widened to include eight foot shoulders, which includes a rumble strip. These improvements greatly enhance the safety of this road.”

The Waste Isolation Pilot Plant is a U.S. Department of Energy facility designed to safely isolate defense-related TRU 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.