



# U.S. DEPARTMENT OF **ENERGY**

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**For immediate release**

## **New WIPP Transportation Exhibit Opens at the National Museum of Nuclear Science & History**

**ALBUQUERQUE, N.M.**, November 2, 2011 – The National Museum of Nuclear Science & History will debut an exhibit on November 5, 2011, that features the transportation system used by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) to ship transuranic (TRU) waste from generator sites nationwide to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) near Carlsbad, N.M. The exhibit includes a cut-away of the Transuranic Package Transporter, Model 2, or TRUPACT-II, which is the workhorse-shipping package used in WIPP's transportation fleet.

A ribbon cutting and reception for museum members and other guests is scheduled for 5 p.m. at the museum, 601 Eubank SE in Albuquerque.

DOE recognized a major milestone at WIPP in September when the facility received its 10,000<sup>th</sup> shipment of defense-related TRU waste. More than 24,000 TRUPACT-IIs have been received and processed during WIPP's 12 years of safe operations.

Each stainless steel TRUPACT-II is certified by the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission. The shipping package measures approximately eight feet in diameter and 10 feet high, and is constructed with leak tight inner and outer containment vessels. The TRUPACT-II can hold up to fourteen 55-gallon waste drums, two standard waste boxes with 63 cubic feet capacity each, or one 10-drum over pack (a container designed to provide additional protection for older waste drums).

WIPP drivers have accrued more than 12 million safe loaded miles, which is equivalent to 25 round trips to the moon. The National Academy of Sciences described the WIPP Transportation System

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as “safer than that employed for any other hazardous material in the United States today.” The TRUPACT-II prototype underwent extensive testing at Sandia National Laboratories in Albuquerque for certification by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Drivers must pass stringent safety and emergency response examinations and maintain good driving records. They work in pairs to assure that the truck and payload are attended at all times and drivers receive adequate rest. All transuranic waste shipments are tracked by satellite from the time they leave the generator site until arriving at WIPP.

WIPP is a DOE 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. The facility began waste disposal operations in 1999 and is located 26 miles outside of Carlsbad, N.M.

The National Museum of Nuclear Science & History is the nation’s only congressionally chartered museum in its field and is a Smithsonian affiliate. Originally known as the National Atomic Museum, it was established in 1969 as a place to learn about the Atomic Age, from early research of nuclear development through today’s peaceful uses of nuclear technology. For more information about the WIPP Transportation exhibit, please call the museum at 505-245-2137.