



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF **ENERGY**

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For Immediate Release

WIPP Security Force Recognized for Outstanding Safety

CARLSBAD, N.M., May 10, 2013 – The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) has awarded Security Walls, LLC, the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant’s (WIPP) Security Protective Force, with a Star of Excellence Award in the Voluntary Protection Program (VPP) for the fifth consecutive year.

“I’m very pleased to present this recognition to the WIPP Protective Force, which is the only security force within the DOE complex to receive ‘Legacy Star’ status,” said DOE Carlsbad Field Office (CBFO) Manager Joe Franco, who presented the award to Security Walls, LLC Manager Richard De Los Santos this week. CBFO has responsibility for WIPP and the National Transuranic (TRU) Program.

“They can be very proud of this accomplishment and the close attention to detail it takes to achieve it,” Franco said. “It shows a strong commitment to safety and security at WIPP.”

To receive a Star of Excellence Award, an organization must achieve an injury rate 75 percent below the industry average. Last year, after achieving that for four consecutive years, Security Walls, LLC was awarded the Legacy of Stars Award. This

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year's Star of Excellence Award builds on that record of safety. In addition, the WIPP Security Protective Force has marked more than five years without a recordable injury.

De Los Santos accepted the award on behalf of Security Walls, LLC, which is part of Nuclear Waste Partnership, LLC's, the WIPP management and operating contractor, team for the WIPP facility. "The men and women in uniform are the ones who made this happen," De Los Santos said. "They are the ones with their feet on the ground, who do the work, face risks and deliver."

The VPP program promotes safety and health excellence through cooperative efforts among labor, management and government at DOE contractor sites. Star status is the highest level that can be achieved and is reserved for companies that demonstrate outstanding protection of employee safety and health.

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.

Photo Caption: U.S. Department of Energy Carlsbad Field Office Manager Joe Franco (right) presents the Star of Excellence Award to Security Walls, LLC Manager Richard De Los Santos.