



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

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## ***For Immediate Release*** **WIPP Honored for Sustainability**

**CARLSBAD, N.M.**, September 18, 2013 – The U.S. Department of Energy’s (DOE) Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) was recognized as one of two finalists at the New Mexico Sustainable Business Summit held in Albuquerque in August 2013.

The second annual summit, presented by Albuquerque Business First and the New Mexico Green Chamber of Commerce (NMGCC), is a business expo and awards luncheon to recognize organizations that have “green” practices integral to the way they operate.

WIPP was selected as an honoree in the category of sustainable workplace. “I’m very proud of the WIPP team,” said Carlsbad Field Office (CBFO) Manager Joe Franco. “It’s essential to protect human health and the environment, and we encourage the WIPP Team to look for ways to improve our processes.” CBFO has responsibility for WIPP and the National Transuranic (TRU) Program.

WIPP received the award based on improvements in the Environmental Monitoring and Hydrology Field Laboratory. The laboratory found ways to improve efficiencies and reduce the overall amount of hazardous waste generated in the ground water monitoring program. The improvements resulted in zero hazardous waste being generated in 2012. By eliminating the generation of hazardous waste at the WIPP facility, WIPP was able to avoid hazardous disposal impact to the environment, including the emissions, cost and risks of transporting hazardous waste to approved landfills. As a result of these efficiencies, costs were avoided and available resources were used in the management of the National TRU Program and TRU waste disposal.

Established in 2010, the NMGCC is made up of eight regional chapters at varying stages of development and representing a variety of communities. All chapters operate under the mission of the N.M. Chamber of Commerce. While working towards the similar goals of advocating for renewable energy, strengthening local economies, and incorporating the green business advantage, their focus varies throughout the different regions in keeping with the diversity that exists in N.M. Chapters of the NMGCC are members of the Business Alliance for Local Living Economies.

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. WIPP, which began waste disposal operations in 1999, is located 26 miles outside of Carlsbad, N.M.

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