



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF **ENERGY**

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For Immediate Release

WIPP Receives Top Mine Safety Award

CARLSBAD, N.M., September 18, 2013 – The U.S. Department of Energy’s (DOE) Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) received top safety honors from the New Mexico Bureau of Mine Safety (BMS) and the New Mexico Mining Association (NMMA) during the association’s 2013 conference held in Albuquerque, N.M. on Sept. 4-6.

Nuclear Waste Partnership LLC (NWP), the WIPP management and operating contractor, was named Safe Operator of the Year based on its safety performance. NWP and its heritage companies have received the prestigious award 25 of the past 27 years.

“We’re very pleased that WIPP employees were honored with this award,” said DOE Carlsbad Field Office (CBFO) Manager Joe Franco. “Safety is the top priority at WIPP, and we work very hard to continually improve processes in the workplace. It’s gratifying that NWP and all WIPP employees have been recognized for their efforts.” CBFO has responsibility for WIPP and the National Transuranic (TRU) Program.

In addition to the Safe Operator of the Year Award, the following eight NWP work groups were recognized for having a zero frequency rate (no reportable injuries) for the year: Mine Maintenance; Instrumentation and Control Maintenance; Facility Restoration; Facility Operations; Waste Handling Operations; Radiological Control; Mining and Ground Control Operations; and Surface Maintenance.

“I congratulate our employees on a job well done,” said Farok Sharif, NWP President and Project Manager. “Safety awards must be earned. It requires vigilance and a questioning mind and attitude. Our employees consistently perform safely on every job, every day. I am extremely proud to be part of a team that, for years, has illustrated their commitment to a safe work environment.”

Minimum criteria for the Safe Operator of the Year Award include an injury rate below the national average and no fatalities from July 1, 2012 to June 30, 2013. During that time period, NWP employees worked 1.37 million hours without recording a single injury that required a day away from work.

According to the latest available U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average national mining injury rate was 2.2 in 2011 compared to 0.00 for NWP. From July 2012 to June 2013, NWP’s injury rate was 0.15, which is lower than most libraries.

“WIPP’s mining operation is, without a doubt, one of the safest in nation,” said Terence Foreback, New Mexico Mine Inspector, who presented the award to NWP. “It is my honor to present this award for the 25th time in 27 years, which is a good indication of how WIPP employees keep safety at the forefront of everything they do.”

NWP is a URS-led company that includes partner B&W Technical Services Group and major subcontractor AREVA Federal Services.

WIPP is a DOE-owned 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.