

TRU TeamWorks

December 16, 2004

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Feedback

Contact us with [feedback](#) or submit your e-mail address for updates.

By the Numbers

Shipments

Scheduled to arrive
12/19/04 - 12/25/04:

LLNL - 2
RFETS - 6

(subject to change)

3,216 total shipments
received as of 12/15/04

Disposal

Waste disposed as of
12/15/04:

58,384 waste drums
4,047 standard waste
boxes
1,273 ten-drum
overpacks
25,598 cubic meters



*The staff of TRU
TeamWorks
wishes you a
happy holiday
season. TRU
TeamWorks will
publish again
on January 13.*



The Big Story:

A helping hand

WIPP will start the new year with a new, yet familiar acting CBFO manager ...



Operations:

Slip sliding away

Colorado slip sheet technology adapted for use at WIPP ...



Operations:

Class distinctions

Class matters when it comes to HWFP changes ...



Working Smart:

Power shopping

This shopper makes buying a year-round affair ...



Safety & Security:

An appointment for safety

Set your alarm to practice safe behavior ...



Our Team:

The WIPP team in action

Catch the latest employee news ...



TRU TeamWorks is a biweekly e-newsletter for the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant team



Portage makes Inc. 500 fastest growing list for 4th year in a row

Portage Environmental, Inc., has been recognized for the fourth year in a row as one of the top 500 fastest-growing, privately held companies, by Inc. magazine. This year Portage ranked 251.

Portage continues its success in 2004 with the award of a DOE nationwide Indefinite Delivery/Indefinite Quantity contract for accelerated closure of sites across the DOE complex. The company also manages contracts for CBFO, the U.S. Air Force Center for Environmental Excellence, the Environmental Protection Agency, Bureau of Land Management and the DOE National Analytical Management Program.

Triay lends a hand at WIPP

CBFO and WIPP contractor employees are getting a helping hand just in time for the new year. On December 9, DOE Headquarters announced that Dr. Inés Triay, deputy chief operating officer for Environmental Management and former CBFO manager, will once again serve as the project's acting manager, though this time only on a temporary basis until a permanent manager is appointed. The 120-day interim detail becomes effective January 6, 2005. In conjunction with the announcement, Dr. Triay made a surprise appearance at the Skeen-Whitlock Building last week to renew her ties with staff members.

CBFO Deputy Manager Lloyd Piper, who served in dual roles as deputy and acting manager until Triay's appointment, says, "Dr. Triay returns to help out at WIPP during a key phase in the project's operations. I have no doubt that her leadership will benefit the CBFO team as we work to expand our effectiveness in many important areas."

As the acting CBFO manager, Triay will represent DOE in negotiations to exercise an option on the current Washington TRU Solutions LLC contract and is expected to work closely with TRU waste generator sites to ensure consistent shipping rates. Optimizing shipments from other TRU sites is especially important as the Rocky Flats Environmental Technology site completes cleanup and final shipment of TRU wastes early next year.



Dr. Triay returns to WIPP on January 6.

Triay's experience in working with the project's regulators also will be invaluable as DOE seeks WIPP recertification, continued improvement in the regulatory framework and forward movement on other program initiatives.

Triay left WIPP in January 2004 after serving as CBFO manager during the project's transition from a readiness posture to full-fledged operations. During that time, she helped establish the National TRU Program to oversee and standardize best practices for TRU waste characterization, packaging, transportation and disposal. Under her direction, shipments to WIPP increased from an average of two per week to more than 25 per week.

"I am pleased to directly support WIPP at this key juncture," notes Triay. "During my tenure as CBFO manager, I worked to move the WIPP mission forward in every way possible. There are many important initiatives underway at this time, and I'm glad to offer my experience and direct assistance to this vital project once again."

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WIPP borrowed Coors technology

As part of a business trip in the late 1980s, WIPP engineers traveled to Golden, Colorado, to tour the Coors Brewery. If you're wondering what a TRU waste site and Colorado's most famous exporter could have in common . . . the answer is safety. The engineers went to observe a push-pull device used on Coors' forklifts to move, but not puncture, beer kegs.

Unlike the wood pallets with forklift pockets used by most commercial industries, the engineers noted that Coors stacked its products on slip sheets (plastic sheets of varying thickness placed beneath a load). The slip sheets had tabs that could be hooked onto by a pull device so that the slip sheet and its load could be gently pulled onto the forklift.



Operators use a push-pull device to remove a standard waste box from the waste transporter.

And the rest is history. With some modification, Coors' push-pull device is now used at WIPP for moving stacks of TRU waste in the underground. WTS Integrated Waste Operations Project Manager Hardy Bellows says, "This technology was efficiently adapted to meet WIPP's needs and improve safety."

Here's how it's used: Sturdy plastic slip sheets are placed beneath TRU waste containers prior to downloading in the underground.



Operators use the push-pull device to push a standard waste box onto a waste stack in the WIPP underground.

Once underground, the waste is ferried on an underground transporter to the disposal area. There a forklift, equipped with a push-pull device, grasps the slip sheet and pulls the waste load onto the forklift. The forklift moves the waste containers to the disposal waste stack, where the push-pull device releases the slip sheet and slowly pushes the waste off the platform for final emplacement.

"While the slip sheets and push-pull device aid in stacking the waste drums in the underground, they also provide an additional layer of safety," states Randy Britain, WTS Waste Operations manager. "The technology allows us to handle the slip sheet rather than the container itself." Britain continues, "Eliminating the use of forks to move waste drastically reduces the risk of puncturing a drum."



SNL-CPG welcomes new employee



Eric Vugrin recently joined SNL-CPG's Performance Assessment team and has assumed responsibility for several numerical models including the newly developed DRSPALL model which simulates hypothetical drilling intrusions into a pressurized repository.

Eric is a recent graduate of Virginia Tech where he received a Ph.D. in applied mathematics with a specialty in control systems.

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Safety calendar update

The Safety Awareness Committee's 2005 safety calendar will be available in pdf format on the committee's Intranet page, which can be accessed from the Industrial Safety & Hygiene page. The January calendar will be available by the end of December. Other months will be made available soon.

WIPP employees submitted their own snapshots for the calendar. Be sure to check each month to see if your snapshot is included! For more information, contact Melody Smith, Mike Antiporda or Mak Walker.

In a class by itself

As many people were gearing up for the Thanksgiving holiday last month, WRES personnel were working on modifications to the WIPP Hazardous Waste Facility Permit (HWFP). In all, four Class 1 changes were sent to NMED between September 30 and November 24.

The HWFP is not a static document. It constantly evolves to reflect operational changes and demands. Whenever a change is made at WIPP that would affect a permit requirement, a permit modification must be submitted. This process ensures the facility continues to operate in the safest manner possible and in accordance with regulations.



Class 1 permit modifications present minor operational and administrative changes. "In general, we submit only Class 1 modifications that impact current WIPP operations," says David Streng, WRES senior engineer.

The latest Class 1 modifications may seem minor on a grand scale, but each was necessary for a variety of reasons. Below is a summary:

September 30, 2004: This modification allows for the construction of a covered area for transportation containers and other equipment kept in the parking area unit. Shading these items will reduce their surface temperature and facilitate waste handling operations (*see the TRU TeamWorks Disposal section in the October 14, 2004, issue.*)

November 10, 2004: This modification changes the name of the DOE Carlsbad Field Office acting manager from R. Paul Detwiler to Lloyd L. Piper. "This change was important because the CBFO manager must sign documents relating to the permit as the permittee," notes Streng.

November 24, 2004: This modification removes the brand name "Loron" from the push-pull forklift attachment used at WIPP. "If a piece of equipment described in the permit states a particular brand name, then only that brand of equipment is authorized for use by the permit," Streng explains. "In this case, removing the brand name will result in a significant cost savings because procurement personnel will be free to explore other equally safe, but lower-priced options."

November 24, 2004: This modification updates the WIPP Web page address to <http://www.wipp.ws>, replacing references to an older address. "Its purpose," says Streng, "is to direct stakeholders to the new address to review the permit or find WIPP information."

Other changes to the permit requiring Class 1 permit modifications may still exist, but many will be addressed when the permit is submitted to NMED for renewal.

Once a Class 1 is submitted, WIPP may make the operational change immediately. Class 1 changes do not require NMED approval before they are implemented. "However, if NMED determines that the change is not a Class 1, it can be denied and must then be resubmitted as a Class 2 or 3 modification, which requires public input and review," concludes Streng.

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SNL-CPG welcomes new employee



Haoran Deng recently joined SNL-CPG's Repository Performance staff. She will be responsible for ongoing chemistry experiments to validate the efficacy of the MgO engineered barrier. Haoran recently received her M.S. in chemistry from State University of New York at Albany.

Nuclear future

The subject: an underground nuclear park that could provide energy to the nation through a high-capacity SuperGrid. That's the subject of an article authored by Wes Myers (LANL) and Ned Elkins (LANL/CB) in the American Nuclear Society's December issue of Nuclear News.

In the article "Siting nuclear power plants underground: Old idea, new circumstances," Myers and Elkins reintroduce the concept of constructing nuclear power plants in geological formations, citing updated technologies and scientific studies as a basis for reevaluating its potential. December's issue is available at the WIPP Technical Library, Ext. 7618.

Look for an interview with Elkins in the January 13 edition of *TRU TeamWorks*.

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Power shopping

This time of year, malls across America are filled with holiday shoppers. Everyone's looking for the best products at the lowest price while enjoying good service. On a different level, that's the same thing WIPP's shoppers, called buyers, do all year long.

WTS buyer Mark Friend has been on the job for 11 years. Filling the role of a WTS buyer allows him to see the whole picture. He often plays a part in the original design and/or specifications and the supplier selection. Then, Friend also gets to see the completed project.



Every aspect of WIPP benefits from the purchase of quality goods and services.

WIPP spends about \$53 million on purchases annually, keeping buyers busy. The products include office supplies, heavy equipment, construction projects and everything in between. Some of the more interesting procurements Friend has worked on over the years include a custom-designed mine floor planer, a mobile laboratory truck, overhead crane upgrades and bulk magnesium oxide.

To meet all of WIPP's needs, WTS is continually seeking new and reliable suppliers. WIPP's buyers look for businesses that provide better quality, lower prices and professional services. Based on these criteria, southeast New Mexico businesses have performed well. In recent years, buyers have spent about 40 percent of WIPP's procurement dollars in the region.

Buyers have also made special efforts to attract small businesses to its supplier list. In fact, in 2001 and 2002 WTS was recognized by the Small Business Administration for its programs in support of small businesses. In 2003 and 2004 WTS Procurement continues a strong support for small business by spending over 86 percent of WIPP procurement dollars with small businesses.

For more information on becoming a supplier at WIPP, visit the Opportunities section of the WIPP home page at www.wipp.ws/opportunities.htm.

Christmas Giving

For the last four years SNL-CPG has adopted families through Christmas Anonymous. SNL-CPG employees provide non-perishable food items, food for Christmas dinner, clothing and toys for the kids, and something for the guardians. Working together, SNL-CPG employees have helped six families (22 children).



Tim Boswell, WTS Human Resources, displays one of many presents that will bring cheer to needy families this Christmas.

WTS employees participate annually in "A Christmas to Remember." This is an all-volunteer organization located in Carlsbad that has been providing gifts to needy kids for four years. School teachers and social workers have identified families in need. WTS employees individually purchase gifts based upon a needs list. The gifts are then distributed to the family members.

Keep security in mind on the job and at home

As the holiday season begins, there are a lot of things on our minds - shopping, vacation, parties, work, etc. One thing we might overlook is what is happening around us, especially in the checkout line at a store.

Please keep operations security (OPSEC) in mind, not only at work, but in your everyday life.

Remember to watch out for people standing near you in the checkout line at retail stores and restaurants who have a camera cell phone in hand. Camera cell phones can be used to take a picture of your credit card. The photo gives them your name, number and expiration date.

According to a recent report from CBS news, this type of identification theft is one of the fastest growing scams today. Be aware of your surroundings and keep your personal information safe.

- Submitted by Meg Milligan, CBFO

Preventing CTS is part of the job

Carpal Tunnel Syndrome, or CTS, is a serious health issue in many work environments, including ours at WIPP. While CTS can affect a lot of workers, the good news is that CTS is preventable. In fact, a recent decision by WTS management now requires employees to perform CTS prevention exercises as part of their job responsibilities.

If you suspect that you have CTS, notify your manager or one of the nurses. They can help identify additional prevention methods. "Often the issue can be taken care of by exercises or even a different configuration of your work space," says WTS nurse Sue Sleeman. "Like other medical conditions, early detection can help avoid more severe problems down the road."

What is CTS?

CTS is a repetitive motion injury that results in swelling of tendons, which puts pressure on the median nerve. This pressure can cause numbness and/or pain in the arm, wrist and hand, and is often felt in the thumb and the index and middle finger.

How can we prevent CTS?

Below are some suggestions for the workplace that may prevent CTS.

- Keep your wrist straight and relaxed, avoiding awkward bending while performing any repetitive motion
- Take frequent breaks to stretch your fingers and wrist (see sample exercise below)
- Use a wrist pad when working at a computer keyboard

What if you experience CTS symptoms?

If you experience wrist pain and think it may be CTS, stop performing the motion causing the pain. If the pain goes away, you may resume the motion carefully, with special care taken to keep your wrist straight. Gently exercise your fingers and wrists every hour.

For the temporary relief of pain, apply ice or a cold pack to the palm side of the wrist for five to ten minutes, as needed. Over-the-counter anti-inflammatory pain relievers, such as aspirin, ibuprofen or naprosyn can also be used according to their directions. If symptoms persist, contact WIPP Medical Services at Ext. 8997. Symptoms that persist for long periods of time can cause long-term damage.

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Dear TRU TeamWorks,

Please pass along my best wishes for the holiday season to the entire WIPP family. My visit each year to the children's party is a wonder! As always, a team of outstanding elves pull together to assure a special time for our children. The energy and care they put into the preparation for the party rivals the work of my staff - somewhat north of here where its *juuuuust* a bit cooler.

My conversations with the children assured me that they have been "good" to "really good." Some of them, mostly boys, indicated that maybe they were in the "iffy" category. I let them know they got some points for honesty but that the "iffy" stuff needs to improve. Basically, I told all [~400] of the children that being on the good list or bad list is a matter of choice - and that choice is theirs'. And I told them that the "checking it twice" routine is a real deal, so they'd better watch out!

The wish lists were filled with bikes, go-carts, Barbies, X-Boxes, video games, CD players, and Lap-tops. Several children wished for puppies, kittens and horses. Even some of the bigger kids got into the spirit of the day and set an example for some of the shy little ones. I'm still, however, 0 and 2 with the Chatfield twins. Next year, next year!

When a child whispers in your ear, "I love you, Santa," the effect on this old heart is impossible to describe. The experience points out how much each of our children is their own little miracle. Jocy, Tiffany and Karsen were three who clearly pointed this out to me without uttering a word. They simply held me in the palm of their tiny hands.

Mrs. Claus gave me some high compliments on my new outfit this year and I got out of "fashion jail" for the burgundy gloves from last year.

Peace and all the blessings of the holiday season to all.

S. Claus



Birthdays

Mike Strum (WTS) - December 18
Karen Richardson (LANL/CB) - December 19
Lena Dominguez (WTS) - December 20
Dave Moody (LANL/CB) - December 21
Bob Kehrman (WRES) - December 29
John Ingram (WTS) - December 30
Mark Friend (WTS) - January 1
Jo-Ann Garcia (CTAC) - January 5
Celeste Marsh (WRES) - January 8
Ron Reeves (WRES) - January 8
Randy Chatfield (WTS) - January 12
Joel Siegel (WRES) - January 12



Appointments

Effective January 10, 2005, **S. Craig Herndon (WTS)** is appointed the manager of the Safety Department. He will be responsible for managing Industrial Safety and Hygiene, Health Services, Radiological Safety and Emergency Management, Environmental Monitoring Support and the WIPP Laboratories.

Herndon has been employed with Washington Group International since 1993. His most recent assignment was as the Corporate Senior Safety Manager at Washington Group in Cleveland, Ohio. He holds a BA in Political Science from the University of South Carolina and a MS in Safety Environment from West Virginia University. He has in excess of sixteen years of safety experience.

Alvy Williams (WTS) has been appointed Surface Operations Facility Shift Manager. He is responsible for the day to day operations of the WIPP site. Williams has been employed with WTS since 1984 and has held positions of increasing responsibility over 15 years of operations experience.

Ken Hasten (L&M) has accepted the position of site Document Services manager for L&M.



All I want for Christmas is ...

A safe new year.

-- Steve Warren
WTS General Manager



Some Idaho shipments.

-- Kim Jackson
WTS Transportation Manager



Time with my family.

-- Terry Frye
WTS Human Resources Manager



For everyone to have a safe and happy Christmas holiday, and a quarterback for the Dallas Cowboys! And a cornerback ... and a right tackle ... and a defensive end ... and a ...

-- Donnie Rodriguez
WTS Finance and Accounting Manager

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