

WIPP Quick Facts

(as of 8-24-05)

3,865

Shipments received since opening

30,909

Cubic meters of waste disposed

70,302

Containers disposed in the underground

Security Training

Members of the WIPP security team in training at the DOE National Training Center in Albuquerque.



Officer Sammy Mendez training with a baton.

Navarro Research and Engineering, Inc. awarded five-year WIPP contract



We have a unique combination of excellent past performance and strong technical experience ...

- Dr. Susana Navarro-Valenti
President, Navarro Research and Engineering, Inc.

On August 11, DOE announced that woman-owned Navarro Research and Engineering, Inc. would provide technical support services to the CBFO. Representatives of the Oak Ridge, Tenn.-based corporation have been in Carlsbad since August 15, making preparations to assume full contract performance on November 14. Navarro's five-year contract has an estimated value of \$29 million.

TRU TeamWorks took the opportunity to interview Dr. Susana Navarro-Valenti, president of Navarro Research and Engineering, Inc.

Q. How did Navarro get its start?

A. Our first DOE contract was to provide nuclear safety services to Y-12 National Security Complex. We also obtained a small contract where I performed technical work in support of a waste processing technology. At that point, I decided that I needed to focus on managing and growing the company and switched my efforts to manage the company full time. We have achieved significant growth in the past few years. We have been listed in the Inc 500 list and the Hispanic 100, three years in a row. We owe this success to our excellent personnel and commitment to customer satisfaction.

Q. What are the company's core competencies?

A. We have two divisions: Environmental and Technical Services. Our environmental division covers environmental remediation, waste management and D&D services. In our technical services division, we provide safety, quality, emergency management, environmental compliance, stockpile stewardship and project management services.

Recently, we have expanded into renewable and non-renewable energy projects. We were recently awarded the Golden Field Office renewable technologies R&D and project management support contract, and the Naval Petroleum Reserve 3 and the Rocky Mountain Oilfield Testing Center field operations, technologies testing and oil production contract.



WIPP security takes aim during firearm training.

Photos courtesy of Wackenhut Services, Inc.
- DOE National Training Center.

Q. What do you believe set your company apart from competitors on this and other contracts?

A. We have a unique combination of excellent past performance and strong technical experience in all the areas that CTAC covers.

Q. What will take place between now and November 14 when Navarro assumes contract responsibilities?

A. We had informational meetings with the incumbents last week. We are very impressed by the caliber of the incumbent personnel we met. They have an excellent combination of strong technical skills, commitment to the job and customer service.

Our goal is to provide the incumbent personnel with the best offer we can to ensure maximum retention of incumbent personnel. We greatly value the incumbent personnel and we will be interviewing them and giving them job offers in the next few weeks. We will then identify any vacancies and bring in new personnel to fill those needs. During this period, if we do have any new personnel coming on board, we will be providing them training and qualification.

Our goal is to provide a seamless and smooth transition to DOE. We understand that this is a very important part of their team and we will work hard to ensure a successful transition. We also would like to thank Portage for their professional interactions and the willingness they have shown to make this transition a success.

Q. What can you tell us about your professional background?

A. I was born and raised in Mexico City. I obtained my B.S. in Engineering Physics at the Universidad Metropolitana in Mexico City. Then, I completed my masters and Ph.D. in Nuclear Engineering at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, NY. From there, I worked for a few years at Oak Ridge National Laboratory before starting the company.

Navarro Research and Engineering, Inc., a Small Business Administration 8(a)-certified business, currently holds 14 technical, environmental and oversight support services contracts at 10 DOE offices nationwide. The largest contract held by Navarro is an environmental contract with the Nevada Test Site.

Readying for RH

One year to go before the first RH waste arrives at WIPP. September 2006 is the target, but preparations are already in high gear.

Activities that are underway include facility/equipment modifications and upgrades, personnel training, qualification card and program development, engineering design, line management assessments and contractor and DOE operational readiness review plans.

Migratory Bird Treaty Act



Did you know that the Migratory Bird Treaty Act provides protection for almost all birds that might be found around WIPP and the Carlsbad area? The only exceptions are house sparrows, European starlings and rock pigeons.

Do not move, take or destroy any nest with eggs. If you discover a nest at WIPP, please contact Joel Siegel at Ext. 8313.



A new communications cable for the WIPP site is being installed where the North Access Road and Highway 62/180 meet. Please obey all warning signs and reduced speed limit signs. Please follow all directions given by flagmen, and watch for heavy equipment and foot traffic in the construction area.

The project should be complete in about three weeks.

Highway 128 (Jal Highway) is another area where road construction is underway. While construction has not yet reached the South Access Road, caution is advised.

New phone system schedule change

The telephone switch installation is being postponed until the weekend of September 23. All training has been rescheduled accordingly. For more information, contact Steve Sauer at Ext. 7242.



[A demonstration of the Horizontal Emplacement and Retrieval Equipment \(HERE\) that will be used for RH waste disposal.](#)

“We have a lot of work to do,” says Randy Britain, manager of waste operations. “But, Operations is planning to meet the September 2006 readiness schedule.”

Completion within the next year is no small feat. Some of the major steps that must be done include the completion of all facility modifications, issuance of procedures, completion of qualifications, successful completion of emergency response procedures and drills and the issuance of the documented safety analysis. The facility modifications include changes to the hot cell, transfer cell and RH bay floor coating, manipulator control upgrades, 140-ton shield door control upgrades, CNS 10-160B prep stand installation, hot cell crane override system modification and WWIS upgrade.

Perhaps the most visible step to be completed is the approval of a permit modification by NMED. WIPP’s current hazardous waste permit only allows for the disposal of CH-TRU and CH-TRU mixed waste. The modification, which was combined with other modification requests for Section 311 and container management, is pending approval. The target for obtaining a draft permit from NMED is November.

EPA approved DOE’s RH TRU Waste Characterization Program Implementation Plan and the RH TRU Waste Characterization Plan for WIPP on March 26, 2004. However, they have a continuing role. EPA must also approve RH waste characterization plans for each of the sites. This is done through certification audits on a site-by-site basis.

A lot can change in a year, but the current projections are for the first RH waste shipment to arrive from either Los Alamos National Laboratory or Idaho National Laboratory. Disposal is planned in Panel 4. Given the work that’s already in progress, it looks like WIPP will be well-prepared.

A language all its own

A number of labels are affixed to the sides of each waste container that arrives at WIPP. To the untrained eye, some might as well be written in hieroglyphics. While not every container displays the same labels, each label provides specific information for waste handlers.



Labels on the outside of arriving TRUPACT-II shipping packages tell waste handlers what kind of waste is contained inside. The labels include the type of package, radioactive hazard, whether there is hazardous waste inside, and the actual weight of the loaded TRUPACT-II (shown left).



Some labels are required on every waste container. Bar code labels identify the container and are used for tracking purposes. The bar code ensures that the waste container is matched to a specific shipment. The container and correlating shipment are verified prior to waste disposal.



Each waste container is also required to display a bright yellow and magenta radioactive materials label. This label tells handlers the radioactive dose rate and contamination levels associated with that specific waste container. Dose rates and contamination must be below predetermined levels listed in the WIPP waste acceptance criteria.



If the waste container holds TRU mixed waste (radioactive and hazardous), a hazardous waste label also must be attached.

WANTED



If you spot any of the computer components below, please contact Property at Ext. 7615.

SO20395, IBM CPU
CO18925, Gateway laptop
S019656, Compaq CPU

NCI Advisory

By September 16, cell phone numbers will be released to telemarketing companies. You will be charged for these calls, which can end up costing you money. To prevent this, call the national "Do Not Call" list at 888.382.1222 from your cell phone, or register online at www.donotcall.gov from your home computer. This will block your number for five years.

Dr. Laura B. Thomas
Director, Information Security
NCI Information Systems, Inc.

Happy Birthday to you!



Laurie Sparks (LANL) August 20

Ron Macaluso (WTS) August 27

Kathy Hernandez (WTS) August 27

Rich Morris (CTAC) August 27

Jessica Mireles (WTS) August 29

Linda Frank-Supka (WTS)
August 31

Art Chavez (WRES) September 1

Chris Gomez (WTS) September 2

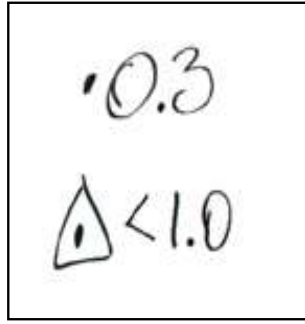
Jim Walker (WTS) September 3

Sue Bradley (WTS) September 5

Dennis Boyea (WTS) September 5

Diana Murray (WTS) September 7

Joe Baca (WTS) September 7



WIPP radiological control technicians mark containers with higher dose rates to show radiation dose rates. Gamma and neutron dose rate measurements are taken at 30 centimeters from the containers to determine area posting requirements. In the photo (at left) the single dot indicates that the gamma dose rate is 0.3 millirem per hour at 30 centimeters. The triangle with the dot inside shows the neutron dose rate is less than 1 millirem per hour at 30 centimeters.

One additional label, present on some waste containers, shows the approximate container weight.

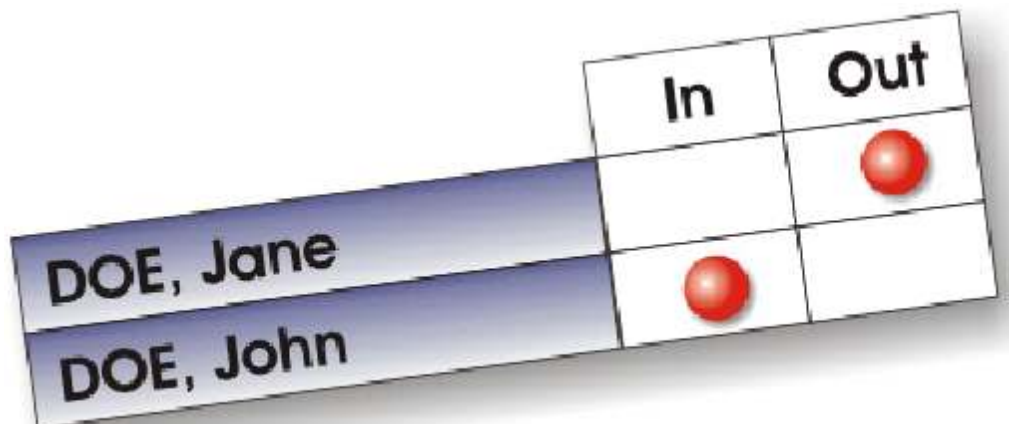
At right, labeled 100-gallon drums are staged for downloading to the underground.



The life-saving power of magnets

Did you know that magnets can save your life? While it's true that magnets have medical applications, like for MRIs (magnetic resonance imaging), what we're talking about is how the simple use of magnets on a sign-out board can mean the difference between being rescued in an emergency or not.

The Carlsbad Field Office has issued a policy to its employees to clarify the use of sign-out boards. "This policy is being implemented to ensure accountability of DOE employees in the event of an emergency or evacuation," says Lloyd Piper, acting CBFO manager.



The policy requires DOE employees to sign in upon entering the work area and to sign out upon leaving it. A work area is typically the building that your primary work is located in. This simple requirement ensures that in an emergency everyone is accounted for and that emergency personnel know if there are people remaining in the building in need of emergency assistance.

If you enter your work area for more than five minutes, the policy requires DOE and contract employees to be signed in. Likewise, if you leave the building for more than five minutes, you need to be signed out. Any other information that is written on the board, and not required for accountability, is optional. However, managers in functional areas may require other notations. Be sure to ask your manager if you are unclear about any additional sign-out board expectations.

When an employee uses the board properly, it will help to focus any life-saving efforts in the event of an emergency. For example, if the building is on fire and filling with smoke, all those who previously signed out will be considered accounted for by the office warden when gathering at a staging area. If a person did not sign-out, but left the building, emergency rescue crews may risk their lives searching for someone who isn't in the building. Conversely, someone who forgot to sign-in could be left inside a burning building simply because the accountability board was not properly used. Remember, it's simple, it takes less than a minute and it could save your life!

Like the use of personal protective equipment, sign-out boards can help protect you from risks, but only if used.

The U.S. Department of Energy
Waste Isolation Pilot Plant

Please send comments and/or
suggestions to: [TRU TeamWorks](#)



