



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF **ENERGY**

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For Immediate Release

WIPP Receives Green Zia Award for Environmental Excellence

CARLSBAD, N.M., August 16, 2012– The Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP), the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) facility known as the nation's only deep geologic repository for the permanent disposal of radioactive waste, was recently honored for its pollution prevention efforts for the second year in a row.

The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) recognized the DOE Carlsbad Field Office (CBFO), which provides oversight for WIPP and the National Transuranic (TRU) Program, as a Silver Level Leader in its Green Zia Environmental Leadership Program. CBFO was selected for the Bronze Level award in 2011.

In place since 1996, the Green Zia program is a part of the NMED Pollution Prevention Program. In 2012, WIPP was one of the few other-than-commercial business organizations to be singled out and one of only seven total award recipients in New Mexico to be honored by NMED.

Recognition was for continual improvements to environmental stewardship and sustainability in the areas of energy use, hazardous waste reduction, recycling, and water use reduction. Some of the facility's specific achievements that were cited included a 13 percent reduction in energy use over eight years, a 19 percent reduction in petroleum use over six years, and a 15 percent reduction in site water use in 2011.

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As a Silver Level Leader recipient, WIPP commits to partnering with NMED for a three-year period, during which annual progress reports to NMED will demonstrate continued improvement.

“CBFO is honored by NMED’s recognition,” said CBFO Manager Joe Franco. “The award demonstrates the Department of Energy’s and WIPP’s commitment to environmental stewardship in our surrounding communities, the State of New Mexico and the nation.”

CBFO Environmental Protection Specialist Susan McCauslin is program lead for the team of employees of Washington TRU Solutions (WTS) LLC, the WIPP management and operating contractor, and URS Regulatory Environmental Services (RES), subcontractor to WTS, recognized for the initiatives resulting in the award. “Specifically, we look for opportunities to conserve energy, recycle and minimize waste products in our project planning activities,” she said. “Sustainability practices are tied to daily operations at WIPP.”

In addition to McCauslin, those honored included: Lynn Johnson, Joe Vasquez, Colleen Navarrette, Bruce Jeffress, Shari Cullum, Marty Gonzales, Judy McLemore, Stewart Jones, Robbin Spoon, Ritchie Jimenez, Gene Valette, Roy Byrd, Ellen Harkness, James Hedin, Jennifer Hendrickson, Bob Kirby, Rick Salness and John Vandekraats.

The Green Zia Environmental Leadership Program is modeled after the Malcolm Baldrige Performance Excellence Program with emphasis on integrating environmental improvements into core business practices. According to NMED, more than 130 organizations and businesses have participated with over \$45 million in cost savings reported since the program’s inception.

WIPP is a DOE 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: Department of Energy Carlsbad Field Office Deputy Manager Ed Ziemianski presents a WIPP team with the Green Zia Program Silver Level Award from the New Mexico Environment Department on Aug. 15, 2012 in recognition of environmental initiatives. Shown right of Ziemianski is Farok Sharif, president and general manager of URS Washington TRU Solutions LLC, the WIPP management and operating contractor.