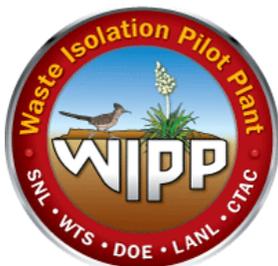


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July 14, 2005



## Scientists keyed in on WIPP

Distinguished panel visits site ...



## Shipment Numbers

Shipments  
scheduled to arrive  
07/17/05 - 07/23/05

23

Hanford - 2  
INL - 18  
LANL - 1  
SRS - 2

(subject to change)

3,743  
total shipments  
received as of  
07/13/05



## HalfPACT hero

HalfPACT helps with Brookhaven shipment ...



## Can you hear me now?

New phone system in the works for WIPP ...



## Handle with care

Good chemistry for WIPP ...



## Disposal Numbers

Waste disposed as of  
07/13/05 :

312  
100-gallon drums

4,471  
standard waste boxes

1,837  
ten-drum overpacks



## Fun in the sun

Solar Challenge racers stop at SWB ...

62,425  
waste drums  
  
29,900 cubic meters



## Team news

Team happenings found here ...

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

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## The Big Story

### WIPP Silver shines in Colorado competition



**Silver Mine Rescue Team members navigate the field exercise during the Colorado competition.**

WIPP's Silver Mine Rescue Team took second place honors in field competition and second in the "best overall" category at the Western Regional Mine Rescue Competition held June 29-30 in Golden, CO.

Team member Curtis Sanders also took home third place honors in the benchman's contest.

The event was sponsored by the Western Regional Mine Rescue Association and administered by the Mine Safety and Health

Administration to test the teams' skills in field competition, self-contained breathing apparatus competition, gas detection instrument contests and first aid.

Ten outstanding mine rescue teams, including the top four national field teams, competed for honors in last month's competition.

### Distinguished science panel visits WIPP

**The keys to WIPP's operational success were recently discussed with a top-level team of scientists. Members of the Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board (NWTRB), an elite group appointed by the President, visited WIPP on July 12.**

Created by Congress in 1987, the NWTRB provides an independent review of technical and scientific activities proposed at the Yucca Mountain Project. The board then reports its conclusions to Congress and the Secretary of Energy twice a year.

Dr. B. John Garrick, NWTRB board chairman, explains the purpose of the group's visit to WIPP: "WIPP and Yucca Mountain are similar facilities in terms of construction and operations. We are visiting to view the physical systems used at WIPP in the storage of radioactive waste."

Garrick notes that board members were excited about the opportunity to visit WIPP.

"The board is intensely involved in technical analysis and review, he says. "It is refreshing to get a physical feel for a facility to add to our theoretical knowledge of the plant."

It was the NWTRB's first visit to WIPP, though the group often visits nuclear facilities in the U.S., as well as other countries. While on tour the group viewed surface waste handling facilities before heading to the WIPP underground. Board members also listened to presentations on the WIPP performance assessment, transportation and systems prioritization methodology.

The WIPP visit was followed by meetings with local leaders, allowing board members to learn more about the Carlsbad community's role in WIPP's success.

According to the organization's Web site, the NWTRB is made up of 11 part-time members who are eminent in the fields of science or engineering. The members are selected solely on the basis of distinguished service, and recommended for appointment by the National Academies of Science.



**Dr. Inés Triay was on hand to welcome Dr. John Garrick and the entire NWTRB to Carlsbad.**

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## Operations

### WTS donates to local college



Dick Raaz, WTS president and general manager, presents Dr. Gary Dill, president of College of the Southwest, a check on behalf of DOE and WTS for \$120,000 in support of the college's efforts to provide quality education in the areas of math, science and environmental management.

### HalfPACT stands tall in Brookhaven shipment

**Nine weeks ago, officials at Brookhaven National Laboratory determined that a small amount of waste that was generated by solidification experiments on incinerator ash from the Rocky Flats Environmental Technology Site was transuranic. Today that waste is en route to the Idaho National Laboratory and will eventually head to WIPP. But this shipment is unique not because of what was in the waste, but because of what the waste was in. The waste was removed from Brookhaven in a HalfPACT.**

The HalfPACT, a shorter version of WIPP's TRUPACT-II shipping container, was used for the first time last month to ship compacted TRU wastes from Idaho National Laboratory (see June 30, 2005 issue of *TRU TeamWorks*). The HalfPACT was designed to optimize the shipment of heavier waste, some of which includes 55-gallon drums of 1,000 pounds or more. The shorter, lighter design allows shipments with less dunnage (empty drums) and therefore more waste to be transported, while staying within Department of Transportation weight restrictions. Inter-site shipments of TRU waste are not uncommon. The first one in a WIPP shipping container was from Teledyne-Brown in 1997. That, too, was a one-drum shipment to Rocky Flats in a TRUPACT-II.

Oddly, the waste at Brookhaven was nowhere near heavy enough to require the use of a HalfPACT. In fact, the entire shipment was comprised of one 55-gallon drum containing eight gallon-size paint cans and six dunnage drums. The waste itself only weighs 83 pounds.

Despite the lightweight-nature of the shipment, the HalfPACT proved to be just the right shipping container for the job. Using the HalfPACT instead of the TRUPACT-II meant that fewer dunnage drums were needed (six, rather than thirteen) and the overall shipment weighed less, which improved fuel efficiency. But perhaps the best reason for using the HalfPACT was that it was not a TRUPACT-II.

"Using the HalfPACT kept one additional unit of the TRUPACT-II fleet in service," says Ralph Smith, CBFO's manager of Institutional Programs. "That means we were able to ship up to fourteen drums with it from another site, rather than just one from Brookhaven. Demand for our TRUPACT-IIs from the sites is high, so this was a smart use of resources."

The shipment is expected to arrive at INL on Friday, July 15th.

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## Progress

### New phone system features

- 4-digit dialing among the WIPP site, the Skeen-Whitlock Building and the North Canal facility
- Caller ID
- 6-party conference call capability
- Capable of setting up conference calls with restricted security code access
- Digital trunk lines, rather than analog trunk lines
- Majority of users will be able to keep their current phones
- Phone numbers will not change
- Training available for those requiring a new digital phone (secretarial phones)

### NCI team replacing phone systems

**Some days the phone just won't stop ringing. We may not always like the distraction, but for a team of NCI employees, dial tones and ringing phones in the next few months will sound like music to their ears.**

Replacing WIPP's aging telephone and voice-mail system is just one of five major projects NCI has planned for completion by the end of September. The project will replace three different systems that are about 16 years old, well past their technological prime.

"The current system has exceeded its life expectancy," says Steve Sauer, NCI's project coordinator. "It's becoming difficult to find people who have the technical knowledge of the systems to repair them and perhaps even more difficult to find replacement parts."

To fix the problem, a team led by Sauer wrote up the scope of work, evaluated proposals and awarded a contract for installation of the new system. NCI awarded the contract to Valor Telecom, which will be able to provide technical and user training on the system at its Carlsbad facility prior to the switch over, tentatively set for August 26.

"Our goal is to make the installation as seamless as possible, with minimum down time for users," adds Sauer. The switch will happen over a three-day weekend, starting on an "A" Friday when most employees are off for the day. Those working on the "B" schedule are encouraged to bring cell phones that day, but there will be some critical users that will experience no more than a few minutes of downtime. Specifically, key DOE personnel, the Central Monitoring Room, security, health services and key WTS offices will be given top priority.

Team member John Lucero is optimistic about the new system. "We're going to be able to provide more reliable service, both in terms of the phone system and the voice-mail system," says Lucero. "This is especially important for the WIPP site, where cellular service isn't always available."

Steve Bartlett is the technical lead on the project and he reports good progress. "I'm getting excited about it," says Bartlett. "It started out slow, but it's picking up steam. Everything seems to be on track." Bartlett is being trained on the system and will be responsible for its maintenance after installation.

The only users that may need more specific training are those with the old multi-line digital terminals (Dterms), which will be replaced. Most employees will be able to use the phones they already have and still gain the benefits of the new system.



**This old phone switch system will soon be replaced.**

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## Safety



### Calling all WIPP Picnic planners

The WIPP family picnic is scheduled for Saturday, September 17, at the Riverwalk Recreation Center. Help is needed to ensure that the picnic is a success. If you would like to volunteer, please get your manager's approval and contact Elisa Hernandez.

## Chemistry at WIPP - the good, the bad and the ugly

*Guest writer: Curtis Potter, MSDS Coordinator, Industrial Safety & Hygiene*

### The good

Without question, chemistry has improved all of our lives. It would be hard to imagine life without the benefits of modern chemical-based products, such as adhesives, paints, lubricants, sealers, epoxies, absorbents, cleaners, solvents, refrigerants and insecticides.

### The bad

Unfortunately, most of these products are classified as hazardous materials by the OSHA Hazard Communication standard. That means they pose either a physical hazard (flammable, reactive, explosive, etc.) or a health hazard (irritating to eyes, harmful if swallowed or inhaled, etc.) while in use or storage. In some cases, hazardous materials that are spilled, leaked or otherwise released from their containers, could cause harm to human health or the environment.

### The ugly

Every one of these hazardous materials products presents some form of risk for us, whether it is a health, physical, environmental, or legal liability risk.

At WIPP, there are 881 material safety data sheets (MSDSs) listed as active in the WTS Industrial Safety & Hygiene's MSDS database. That's already 881 products that have wide-ranging potential implications, including: employee or environmental exposure; OSHA, EPA or RCRA compliance issues; and storage and disposal issues.



### The bottom line

The next time you're tempted to acquire a sample of a new product for site use, ask yourself, "Is this a product we actually need?" Perform a mental benefit/risk assessment. Do the benefits of the product exceed the risks? That free sample is far from free.

Consider alternatives to consolidate, substitute and reduce hazardous chemical use. For instance, would a mechanical rat trap serve the same purpose as rat poison? Are less hazardous, non-hazardous or non-toxic substitutes available? Would an existing store stock material currently in use at WIPP meet your needs?

Look on the WIPP MSDS database on the WIPP Intranet to see if the material you need is already on site. Items listed with "MC" in the location column are store stock items available from the site warehouse. Otherwise, call Curtis Potter at Ext. 8312 for assistance identifying owners of other materials listed. Using hazardous materials already on site goes a long way toward reducing additional liabilities.

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## Working Smart



This team took time to get some sun before the clouds rolled in.



All systems are go for this young driver.



The team from Choctaw, MS, gathers round their vehicle just before the race start.



Waiting for the race to start.

## WIPP hosts "solarific" car race

"Had Roswell-bound aliens missed a turnoff?" Employees arriving for work Monday morning wondered as they caught sight of the strange vehicles parked at the Skeen-Whitlock Building. More than 180 high school students were busily rolling the vehicles out of trailers and preparing for the day's events: the fourth leg of the 10th annual Dell-Winston School Solar Car Challenge. The group had stopped overnight in Carlsbad, guests of CBFO and WTS.

This year's 1,600-mile Dell-Winston School Solar Challenge began July 8, at Dell headquarters in Round Rock, Texas. For eight days, the students, loaded in passenger vans and escort vehicles, will follow their hand-built, solar-powered cars and team drivers to NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, Calif. – the final destination.



Unlike conventional car races, the winner of the solar car challenge will be the car with the most road miles. Each of the nine teams will rely on the skill of its members for energy conservation, weather forecasting, route logistics and vehicle maintenance to succeed. Vehicles may be towed for a number of reasons.

Racers use Dell notebooks and wireless technology to monitor solar battery use and check weather patterns. Competitors are tracked by global positioning systems.

Clearly proud of the students' efforts, event founder and program director, Dr. Lehman Marks says "All the students are winners." He says it takes 12 to 15 months for a team to design and build a solar-powered car. "They learn a sense of responsibility and develop confidence. They learn that you can only be a success if you don't give up – life's lesson planning."

The Winston School of Dallas developed the solar car program in 1993 to offer students a way to apply classroom learning to real-world projects. As an added program benefit, educational stops are organized along the race route. CBFO was one such stop. WTS



Race participants lined up inside the SWB lobby for a much-needed meal.



Team St. Thomas hits the road.

Communication staff gave students a "virtual tour" of WIPP and explained the science and technology behind the first-of-its-kind project.

When it was time to leave, Karen Farrell, daughter of CBFO's Richard Farrell, waved the starting flag. One by one the eight sun-powered cars rolled out of the parking lot toward El Paso, Texas, to begin the fourth leg of the trek.

The program has taught more than 8,500 students in 22 countries about the wonders of science, technology and teamwork. Dell is the program's national sponsor.



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## Our Team



### Birthdays

**Todd Sellmer** (WTS) July 6  
**Tom Goff** (WTS) July 10  
**Sandra Tanner** (CTAC) July 14  
**Vernon Daub** (CBFO) July 15  
**Joe Lopez** (NCI) July 15  
**Cathy Lees** (WTS) July 19  
**Bill Thompson** (CTAC) July 21  
**Wille Most** (WRES) July 23  
**Cecil Thomas** (NCI) July 23  
**Deanna Ybarra** (WTS) July 25  
**Koreen Guillermo** (WRES) July 28  
**Esther Najjar** (WTS) July 28



### Appointments

**John Angelis** has been named WTS Chief Information Officer. John is a graduate of the School of Computer Technology in Pittsburgh, PA and also earned a bachelor's degree in business management from the College of the Southwest in Hobbs, New Mexico.

John has over 22 years of information technology experience. Since joining WIPP in 1984, he has held positions of increasing responsibility and most recently served as the program manager for NCI Information Systems, Inc. John will manage the NCI contract, as well as the L&M records contract.



### WTS July service awards

[5 Years](#)
[15 Years](#)
[20 years](#)

Patrick Foreman	Deena Cantrell	Bill Allen
Burton Hubbard	Linda Jo Dalton	David Black
Pat Jasso	Debbie Freeze	Jerry Graham
	Linda Santo	Jeff Knox
	Dan Standiford	Melody Smith

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## About the Dell-Winston Solar Challenge

