



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF **ENERGY**

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For Immediate Release

WIPP Receives First Shipment From Oak Ridge National Laboratory

CARLSBAD, N.M., September 25, 2008 – Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL) in Tennessee has become the latest site to ship defense-related transuranic waste directly to the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP). A truck with three loaded TRUPACT-II shipping containers departed ORNL yesterday and arrived at WIPP this morning – the 6,894th safe shipment to WIPP since the project opened in 1999.

“Safe, responsible cleanup is the bottom line,” said DOE Carlsbad Field Office Manager Dr. Dave Moody. “While we make steady progress every day at WIPP, it is milestones like this that highlight the overall success of the DOE clean-up effort. I applaud the employees at Oak Ridge and WIPP, who have worked very hard to make this possible.”

For months, ORNL has worked to package and certify the waste to be sent to WIPP. A final requirement was approval by the Environmental Protection Agency and the New Mexico Environment Department of an audit report validating the site's ability to perform the work by established procedures.

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Training and public outreach also played a major role in advance of the milestone shipment. WIPP emergency preparedness experts traveled to communities along the route from Tennessee through the southern states, training first response organizations to respond effectively in the event of a transportation accident involving a WIPP shipment.

The DOE-sponsored training also prepares first responders for transportation accidents involving hazardous materials, a more common scenario on the nation's highways.

In July, two WIPP trucks were the centerpiece of a transportation road show that stretched from Oak Ridge, Tenn. to Birmingham, Ala. The outreach effort gave residents, first responders and members of the media an opportunity to ask questions and to learn about the DOE clean-up mission and WIPP transportation system.

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