



underground repository continues to display its ability to safely contain TRU waste for the duration of WIPP's 10,000-year regulatory period.

Expanding on WIPP's commitment to transparency, the permit provides for an enhanced community relations plan, consolidation of permit-related public documents on the WIPP Web page, an expanded e-mail notification capability, and opportunities for public involvement in a variety of other ways. WIPP is also now authorized to dispose of TRU waste in Panel 8 of the underground repository.

The permit renewal process included seeking public input at meetings that were held throughout the state. Consultations involving the public, stakeholders, the NMED and WIPP have been ongoing. The NMED issued a draft permit in June, and public hearings were held on the draft throughout August. In October, the Honorable Judge Joseph A. Alarid recommended the draft permit be approved with no changes. NMED Secretary Ron Curry issued a decision on the permit on Nov. 30, and the permit's effective date is Dec. 30.

"The Carlsbad Field Office is pleased to acknowledge the efforts of the many people and groups who are responsible for the success of the permit process," said Ziemianski. "We appreciate the contributions of everyone associated with the action, including NMED, communities across the state, CBFO and DOE Headquarters employees, and contractors—especially those of our co-permittee Washington TRU Solutions, the WIPP management and operating contractor—in preparing the permit application. The success of the initiative is a collective tribute to all those involved."

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.