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WTS to Reduce Workforce at WIPP

CARLSBAD, N.M., September 21, 2011 – Washington TRU Solutions (WTS) announced the second phase of a workforce restructuring plan today at the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP).

Earlier this year, 51 WTS employees volunteered to separate from the company with benefits under the first phase of the workforce restructuring plan that was approved by DOE in April. It is anticipated that approximately 65 WTS and contingent staffing employees will be involuntarily separated from the company as part of phase two of the plan. Subcontract personnel are also expected to be impacted.

Additional workforce restructuring is necessary because American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding ends September 30, and the projected fiscal year 2012 budget for WIPP is expected to be the lowest in eight years.

"This is an extremely difficult time," said Farok Sharif, Washington TRU Solutions President and General Manager. "We have implemented numerous cost-saving measures in FY11 and more are to come in FY12, but it isn't enough. With the end of the Recovery Act scope and funding and the outlook of the FY12 budget, we are faced with reducing our workforce further. Our employees' performance over the past 12 years of WIPP operations has been world class. WIPP is a national success because of our employees. That is why it is so difficult to take this action."

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Employees were notified of the involuntary separation program during meetings September 20-21 at DOE's in-town office on National Parks Highway and at WIPP, which is located 26 miles southeast of Carlsbad.

Sharif emphasized that WTS's commitment to safety excellence is paramount.

"I can assure you that our full attention will be on continuing to operate the facility in a safe and compliant manner that is protective of our employees, the public and the environment," said Sharif.

The workforce restructuring plan considers core positions and a workforce skill mix to ensure continued safe operations. WTS employees identified under the plan will be notified around mid-October. Impacted contingent and subcontractor personnel will be notified in early October.

All WTS personnel who are separated from the company because of this action will receive outplacement services including severance pay, career counseling, unemployment, and educational assistance.

WTS manages and operates WIPP, the nation's only deep-geologic repository for safe, permanent disposal of transuranic wastes, resulting from the research and production of defense nuclear weapons.