

Barbara WIPP Team



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WIPP MINE RESCUE TEAM WINS NORTHWESTERN COMPETITION

CARLSBAD, N.M., July 27, 1994 -- Officials from the Mine Health and Safety Administration (MSHA), the federal regulatory agency for the mining industry, awarded the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant's (WIPP) Silver Mine Rescue Team first place in the recent Northwestern Regional Mine Rescue Competition at Wenatchee, Wash.

The victory marked the sixth time since April that a mine rescue team from the WIPP has placed first or second in a national competition.

"Westinghouse and the Department of Energy (DOE) place the highest priority on worker safety," said Carl Cox, general manager of Westinghouse Electric Corporation's Waste Isolation Division. "We have two of the best mine rescue teams in the nation and we're very proud of that fact."

The WIPP Silver Team, competing against mining industry teams from Wyoming, Nevada and Washington, outpointed second place General Chemical from Green River, Wyo., while contest host Asamera Mining of Wenatchee, Wash., was third.

Individually, Fred Miller of the WIPP Silver Team was second in the benchmark contest, while the WIPP's Mike Proctor did equally well by capturing second place in the first aid

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WIPP Mine Rescue Team Wins
Northwestern Regional

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competition. The benchmark competition tests the skills required to maintain and repair breathing equipment used by team members to access areas where air is not breathable.

At the Northwestern competition, mine rescue teams received a contest scenario that included the extent of a mock mine accident, the number of people missing, and known conditions within the mine itself. Team members, who are trained in mine gases, ventilation, first aid, mine recovery and fire fighting, were rated on how well they follow basic MSHA rules and regulations in carrying out a rescue under the assumed conditions. In a real emergency, the lives of co-workers depend on the teams' skills.

Team members voluntarily participate in mine rescue exercise and conduct the majority of their training on their own time. All members of the WIPP Silver and Blue Teams hold full-time jobs with Westinghouse, the DOE's management and operating contractor.

The WIPP is a research and development facility operated by the DOE's Carlsbad Area Office. Located 26 miles southeast of Carlsbad, it is designed to demonstrate the safe disposal of defense-generated transuranic radioactive waste left from the production of nuclear weapons. Project facilities include excavated rooms 2,150 feet below the earth's surface in ancient bedded salt rock.

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