

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
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*Barbara
file WIPP*

DOENEWS:

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DOE DONATES WIPP MINING EQUIPMENT TO ROLLA

CARLSBAD, N.M., September 2, 1994 -- The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) is encouraging the development of new mining technology by donating equipment to the University of Missouri-Rolla School of Mines. The equipment was used for mining activities at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP).

"We are happy to do our part in helping college students and universities in their development of energy-related technology," said Thomas Grumbly, assistant secretary for the DOE's Office of Environmental Management. "If this donation contributes to new mining technology, the DOE has accomplished one of its goals."

According to Dr. Hamish Miller, professor at the University of Missouri-Rolla, the Roadheader Continuous Excavation Miner and electric-powered roofbolter will be modified by the school to develop new equipment that uses pressurized water for mining activities.

Miller, who works closely with WIPP mine engineers, said the equipment will be put to good use by students and professors at the Rolla School of Mines.

"Of course, with our limited funding, there is no way we could have afforded a purchase like this," said Miller. "We are very thankful to Mr. Grumbly, the DOE, the Carlsbad Area Office and the WIPP for considering us as the new home for the miner and roofbolter."

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WIPP Donates Mining
Equipment to University

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Used during underground excavation activities at the WIPP in the mid-1980s, the mining equipment was removed from service because it was not cost effective to maintain, said Jack Gilbert, DOE's manager of mine operations at the research and development facility. "We are pleased that the Rolla School of Mines is able to use them in developing mining technology."

The continuous miner, with a cone-shaped cutting head that measures 3.5 feet in diameter at the base, is powered by electricity and used by WIPP miners to excavate rock salt 2,150 feet below the earth's surface. Roofbolters are used to drill holes in the ceiling and walls of the WIPP's underground tunnels and rooms. After holes are drilled, bolts of varying lengths are installed to provide stability and ensure worker safety.

The WIPP, located in southeastern New Mexico, is operated by the DOE's Carlsbad Area Office. It is designed to demonstrate the safe, permanent disposal of 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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