November 1998

November 2 -- Citizens Tour Day at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant, Carlsbad, New Mexico

November 13 -- *Public Tour Day at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant, Carlsbad, New Mexico

November 14 -- WIPPTREX, Tremonton, Utah. For more information, contact Bill Craig at (801) 536-4271.

November 25 -- Citizens Tour Day at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant, Carlsbad, New Mexico

December 28 -- Citizens Tour Day at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant, Carlsbad, New Mexico

December 1998

December 7 -- Citizens Tour Day at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant, Carlsbad, New Mexico

* This tour is currently full. In the event that cancellations occur, interested persons should call the WIPP Information Center.

January 1999

January 8 -- Citizens Tour Day at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant, Carlsbad, New Mexico

January (Tentative) -- 65th WIPP Quarterly Review, Santa Fe, New Mexico
For more information:

WIPP Information Center
1-800-336-WIPP
(1-800-336-9477)
infocntr@wipp.carlsbad.nm.us

National Transuranic Waste
Program Home Page
http://www.wipp.carlsbad.nm.us

★★★ For Your Information ★★★
November 1998

Transuranic waste sites affected by delay in opening the WIPP

The delay in opening the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) is impacting cleanup efforts at other DOE sites. For example, the Rocky Flats Environmental Technology Site has been forced to begin planning for additional, on-site storage space for transuranic waste.

In a September letter to community members, DOE Rocky Flats said it has begun planning for interim waste storage needs so that it can continue to reduce risks while maintaining its cleanup schedule. "While we ... believe that disposal at WIPP is the safest, most effective, and most economical means to deal with transuranic waste, delays now obligate us to activate contingency plans," the letter said.

Assuming the delay in opening the WIPP is short-term, Rocky Flats would need to expand its transuranic waste storage space within existing facilities by mid-1999. However, if the delay continues, a long-term strategy is needed. Two options exist:

- Stop some cleanup activities that generate transuranic waste; or
- Build a new storage facility or retrofit an existing one.

The second option would have less impact on other Rocky Flats projects. However, it could cost several million dollars to construct a facility and several million dollars more to operate it. This funding probably would come from allocations slated for shipment of transuranic waste for off-site disposal. The Department of Energy is working to get the WIPP open as soon as possible.