



WASTE ISOLATION PILOT PLANT (WIPP)

“Tremendous accomplishments were achieved in 2024 by an engaged workforce dedicated to safety—reaching 17 million miles of safely transported transuranic waste and completing construction of the new underground ventilation system that will increase air flow and enhance worker safety and comfort. And, for the first time in over a decade, WIPP began mining a new waste disposal panel—2024 was truly a banner year for the site.”

– Mark Bollinger, Manager, Carlsbad Field Office

HIGHLIGHTS

- Commemorated WIPP’s 25th Anniversary, marking 25 years of safe and successful operation.
- Started mining Panel 11.
- Received 490 transuranic waste shipments, exceeding calendar year goal—an EM 2024 priority.
- Completed construction and began commissioning of the Safety Significant Confinement Ventilation System, which is expected to be operational in 2026.
- Began salt pocket refurbishment and hoisting upgrades.
- Started mining access drifts from utility shafts.
- DOE selected NextEra Energy to enter into negotiations for a carbon-pollution-free electricity generation project at WIPP as part of the Department’s Clean-up to Clean Energy initiative.

CAPITAL PROJECTS ADVANCE

Crews completed construction of the Safety Significant Confinement Ventilation System (SSCVS) marking a milestone in enhancing safety by increasing underground airflow up to 540,000 cubic feet per minute. This included new buildings supporting the HEPA filtration system and salt reduction activities. Commissioning of the SSCVS began and is close to completion.

In addition to the new SSCVS, WIPP continued construction of a new utility shaft to provide higher capacity air intake for the underground in conjunction with the SSCVS.

SUMMING UP SHIPMENTS

WIPP surpassed 14,000 transuranic waste shipments received since the first day of operations in 1999. Shipments received in fiscal year 2024 totaled 490.

MINING IN THE UNDERGROUND

Mining operations in the West Mains continue—cutting passageways, or “drifts,” to connect the existing mine to the Utility Shaft and future panels 11 and 12.

UPGRADING INFRASTRUCTURE

Decades-old infrastructure continue to receive upgrades to ensure the WIPP facility can continue to safely operate for years to come.



Workers install reinforcement bolts into the "back" or ceiling of the mined ancient salt bed in the WIPP underground. The salt formation creeps slowly, so the bolts hold the back of the mined rooms where TRU waste will be emplaced.