

**Southern States Energy Board  
Joint Meeting of the Radioactive Materials  
Transportation Committee  
and the Transuranic Waste Transportation Working  
Group**

Winter Virtual Meeting  
December 2, 2020

**Meeting Summary**

The Southern States Energy Board's (SSEB) Joint Meeting of the Radioactive Materials Transportation Committee and the Transuranic Waste Transportation Working Group was held virtually on December 2, 2020.

Mr. Christopher Wells, Assistant Director of Nuclear Programs for the Southern States Energy Board, called the meeting to order. He welcomed the attendees, provided logistical and administrative announcements and commenced with a brief review of the agenda and speakers. Following the brief remarks, Mr. Wells relinquished the meeting duties to Ms. Denise Brooks (Texas), Chair of the Transuranic Waste Transportation Working Group.

The first speaker of the event Mr. Bobby St. John, Deputy Manager of Communications for Nuclear Waste Partnership (DOE Contractor), provided the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant Update (WIPP). Mr. St. John began by noting how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted their operations and at the time of the meeting approximately 182 WIPP shipment had taken place during the calendar year. Fiscal Year 2021 numbers included 40 shipments which brings the total tally, since the 1999 opening of WIPP, to 12,800 shipment with 15.3 million miles safely traveled. As a result of the hampered transportation schedule, two sites which have not shipped in years were brought back online. The Sandia National Laboratory completed two remote-handled shipments using shielded containers which were transported in HalfPACTs. The Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory was able to complete an 18-shipment campaign during a 10-12-week period which eliminated their current inventory of TRU Waste. In regard to the active facilities Savannah River Site has resumed operations and has completed 10 shipments, one of which was conducted in a TRUPACT-III. He indicated the predominant shipping sites during this time frame would remain the Idaho National Laboratory and Los Alamos National Laboratory; although the impending winter weather could create delays.

The most significant capital projects at the WIPP site continue to be the installation of an improved ventilation system and a utility shaft. Both projects have been slightly postponed as DOE is soliciting a new contractor for completion

of the ventilation system and is working with the State of New Mexico to stay in compliance with regulations for work in conjunction with the shaft. He noted how COVID-19 numbers, particularly in southeastern New Mexico have been high and it has impacted the work at the WIPP site as shifts of personnel have been reduced to address newly implemented safety protocols. Additionally, he spoke about several general projects involving upgrading equipment and operations. In conclusion, he noted WIPP has been compliant with New Mexico and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention in instituting a mask policy at the WIPP site.

The second speaker of the meeting was Mr. Gaylon Fuller, Senior Training Specialist with Nuclear Waste Partnership. Mr. Fuller began by echoing how COVID-19 has impacted his job as a WIPP Trainer. He mentioned limited in-person WIPP-MERRTT classes were able to take place in Utah and Texas where students were adequately spaced out and wore masks. He indicated due to the increase in coronavirus cases, he doubted any more classes would take place until the new year (2021). He mentioned the Modular Emergency Response Radiological Transportation Training (MERRTT) training curriculum modules had been updated and there is an attempt to develop a modified refresher and compressed virtual classes; although the difficulty involves determining the best methods for teaching the hands-on practical exercises. He also informed the group WIPP still provides hospital training thru coordination with the Transportation Emergency Preparedness Program (TEPP). Ms. Denise Brooks initiated a conversation regarding the idea of training videos for radiological instruments used in the WIPP program. The idea is to have Just-in-Time (JIT) videos available for each instrument used by first responders. A QR code tag attached to the instrument case would allow responders to scan the code with a cell phone and view a JIT before using the instrument. The JIT would give a quick overview of how to use the instrument. Since first responders typically don't use radiological instruments on a daily basis, their technical knowledge and confidence in using the instruments could be bolstered by the JIT.

The third presenter of the gathering was Ms. Sharon Taylor, TRANSCOM Project Manager. Ms. Taylor began by noting the predominant format for delivering TRANSCOM Training has been an online computer-based method with the exception of quarterly classroom training in Carlsbad, New Mexico, once or twice per year in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and annually at the National Transportation Stakeholders Forum. She did qualify classroom training is dedicated for Group Administrators, Shippers and Carriers whereas the computer-based training applies to the majority of the candidates which are General Users and Cyber Security. She talked individually about the Cyber Security Awareness and General Users Training which are required for initial access to TRANSCOM and for annual refresher training. She talked about a survey she conducted to ask if the classroom and online training was sufficient to the needs of the customers and the majority of the responses indicated they were fine. She continued talking about the training including the examination process and access to the information on the TRANSCOM website. She discussed the

importance of the Group Administrator position and the responsibility to deactivate delinquent accounts and make sure all General Users within their organization are meeting current program requirements. TRANSCOM Headquarters also has the ability to create a test shipment to allow users a more interactive experience of using the tools and features of the system. States can submit individuals for designation as a Group Administrator and the person will be subject to a background check. Ms. Taylor indicated a “rules of behavior” update would be added to the software to address a security issue. Additionally, mapping system updates will be forthcoming in the near future. It was suggested a quarterly meeting should be held with the Group Administrators to make sure they fully understand and implement all relevant updates.

The final speaker of the conference was Mr. Carlisle Smith Director of the Level VI Program with the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance (CVSA). He informed everyone CVSA is in the final year of their 5-year cooperative agreement with the Carlsbad Field Office. The 2020 CVSA Inspection Report was issued which covered both WIPP shipments and the Cobalt 60 campaign and provides good comparison and contrast data. He noted many Level VI classes had to be cancelled due to COVID-19 travel restrictions. However, two years ago CVSA began developing a web portal Learning Management System (LMS) for conducting Level VI classes online. The process would entail hosting several students from different states and the CVSA instructors would remotely provide the training. Mr. Smith hoped to have the LMS in place by the end of the year. The class size for this new process would be small to ensure students are still receiving sufficient attention. The LMS will be by invitation only and will include the examination. Industry classes for drivers and mechanics will also be invited to receive training via the LMS. He told the group about numerous upcoming CVSA conferences which would be held by virtual means. A State Train-the-Trainer scheduled for February 2021 has been rescheduled to June 2021 to take place in Columbus, Ohio and may be the first face-to-face meeting since the travel restrictions. The Board of Directors have revised recertification policies to allow extra time (6 months) due to the current emergency declaration. In addition, he said CVSA was contemplating holding an 8-hour refresher course online limited to a small student audience.

The remaining portion of the meeting consisted of a round table discussion to highlight the activities of all states in attendance with particular relevance to ideas concerning conducting training during the pandemic. After all participants had provided an update, Mr. Wells reported on the status of activities at SSEB.

The final order of business at the meeting was the announcement of the location and date of the next meeting of the Radioactive Materials Transportation Committee and the Transuranic Waste Transportation Working Group. Since the group continues to meet in conjunction with the NTSF for their Spring meeting, it was tentatively reported that they would gather again on June 14-17, 2021, during the Annual Meeting in Dallas, Texas.

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