cess toward a major goal.” The shipment, which came from EM’s program at the Savannah River Site in South Carolina, follows changes to WIPP’s waste acceptance criteria and the retraining of workers in the wake of the February 2014 accidents at the deep geologic repository in New Mexico.

According to EM, the Transuranic Package Transporter Model 3 (TRUPACT-III) cask allows a DOE site to package and ship in a single box large-sized defense TRU waste that would otherwise have to be broken down into smaller waste boxes. Large TRU waste includes contaminated glove boxes, used motors, and large-scale analytical equipment. The TRUPACT-III cask, which is just over 8 feet in height and width and 14 ft. in length, weighs about 50,000 pounds loaded and is transported on a custom-designed trailer. By comparison, the TRUPACT-II, which handles most TRU waste shipments, weighs up to 19,250 lb. loaded.

According to EM, the TRUPACT-III accelerates the pace of cleanup at EM sites across the DOE complex and reduces risk to worker safety. To get the casks back to work, teams at both the Savannah River Site and the WIPP receiving facility were retrained and recertified for the effort. Workers ensured that equipment that was last used six years ago was in working condition, EM said.

The Environmental Protection Agency began in 2019 the recertification process for the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant. Every five years, the Department of Energy is required to apply to the EPA for the recertification of WIPP, documenting that it is in compliance with the agency’s environmental protection standards for the disposal of radioactive waste.

This is the fourth recertification review that WIPP has undergone since the deep geologic repository began accepting defense-related transuranic waste in 1999. (Turn to “WIPP @ 20,”

A worker removes the 6,000-pound cover of a TRUPACT-III large-box cask during a practice session at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant in New Mexico. (Photo: DOE)