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Representatives from Waste Control Specialists, Texas lawmakers and U.S. representatives of Congress cut the ground-breaking ribbon for the Texas Compact Disposal Facility Thursday five miles east of Eunice.

Nuclear waste site dedicated



Baltzer

LANCE CRENSHAW
NEWS-SUN

Waste Control Specialists president Rod Baltzer lined up Thursday with more than 20 other community leaders, clients, elected officials and WCS employees, all with giant scissors in hand, for the cutting of the ribbon at the grand opening of the Texas Compact Disposal Facility five miles east of Eunice.

The Texas Compact Disposal Facility is owned by the state of Texas, operated by WCS, and hosted and supported by Andrews County.

"For the first time in decades, generators have the opportunity to send waste to a site specifically designed to permanently sequester waste in a facility that will protect human health and environment," said WCS chief executive officer William Lundquist. "As operator of the facility, we are ready to begin accepting waste on behalf of the Compact and the state of Texas, and we look forward to the very near future when that first shipment

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rolls through our gates."

The opening of the facility will allow WCS to dispose of Class A, B and C low-level radioactive waste at the site.

"We've been working at this for over 16 years now, and we are happy it has come to this today," Baltzer said. "There has never been a facility quite like this, and we are pleased to be able to work with Andrews County, the residents of Lea County and the state of Texas. There was a need for this, and now we have a solution."

Brenda Brooks, community relations developer for URENCO USA, which is located right next to the Texas Compact Disposal Facility, was in attendance and stressed the importance of the opening of the facility.

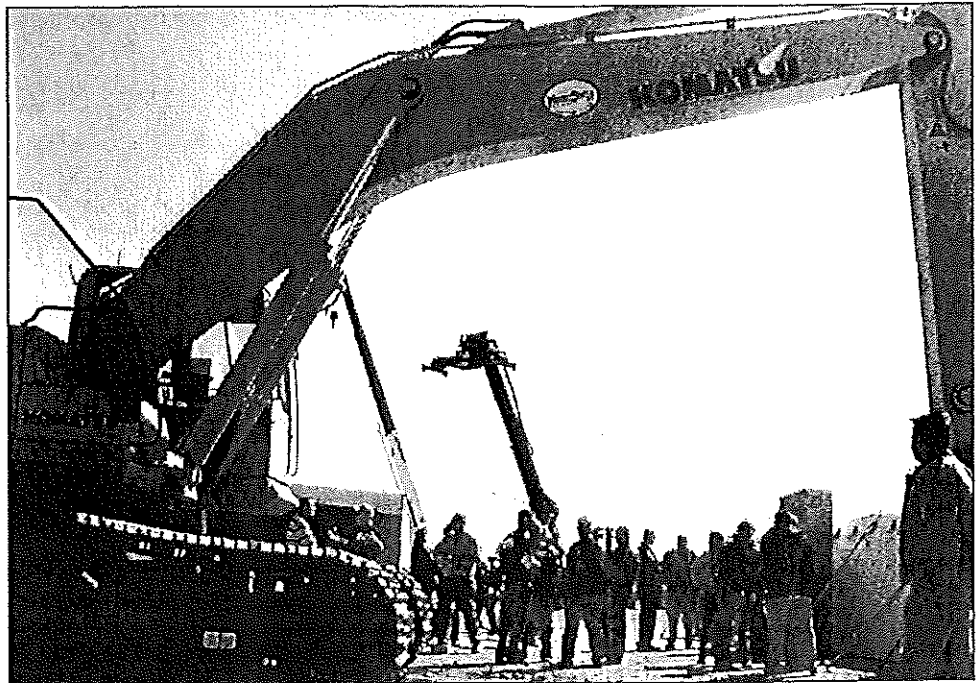
"It's an exciting day for everyone; it's another piece in the whole nuclear industry," Brooks said. "What this facility will bring to the area is more jobs, economical diversification, and it helps position Lea and Andrews counties as the EnergyPlex for the United States."

The WCS facility is the only commercial facility in the United States licensed to dispose of Class A, B and C low-level radioactive waste. It is also licensed for the treatment and storage of low-level radioactive waste and has safely and successfully served as a temporary storage facility for past U.S. Department of Energy projects.

WCS has been processing and storing low-level radioactive waste at its facility since 1998, and, most recently, was the site of the successful storage and disposal of byproduct material from the DOE Fernald, Ohio, cleanup site.

"It took years of scrutiny by state regulators, public hearings, public comments, and the application to be licensed was extensively studied before it was granted by the state of Texas," said Rickey Dailey, spokesperson for WCS. "For years the oilfield has been the main economy in the Permian Basin. Now we have something that will provide good paying jobs independent of the oil and gas industry."

The waste will be stored in 10-foot-high, concrete drums,



TOP: Hundreds were in attendance Thursday for the grand opening of the Texas Compact Disposal Facility.



LEFT: Gary Sanford, chief of staff for Urenco, shakes hands with WCS president Rod Baltzer during the grand opening ceremony for the Texas Compact Disposal Facility.



LEFT BELOW: WCS president Rod Baltzer presents Andrews mayor Robert Zap with a plaque in recognition of Andrews' support for Waste Control Specialists. To Zap's right are Andrews councilmen Ron McCormack and Charles Vought.

KIMBERLY RYAN
NEWS-SUN PHOTOS

then set in a site that is 100 feet deep, 1,300 feet wide and 1,000 feet long.

"The bottom of the site consists of impermeable red-bed clay, almost like concrete, then

a layer of reinforced concrete, a state-of-the-art liner system, and then covered in grout," Dailey said. "It is fully safe for the environment, people and the area surrounding it."