

WCS prepares to open site in Andrews County today

BY KATHLEEN THURBER Special to the Odessa American from the Midland

Reporter-Telegram
November 10, 2011

More than 16 years after its initial investment, Waste Control Specialists will celebrate the grand opening today of the Texas Low-Level Radioactive Waste Disposal Compact Facility in Andrews County.

“It’s great,” said William Lindquist, chief executive officer of Waste Control Specialists, a subsidiary of Valhi Inc. “It’s been a long time coming.”

Company leaders and dignitaries, including Congressman Mike Conaway, state Sen. Kel Seliger and Rep. Tryon Lewis, will celebrate the opening of the facility with a 2:30 p.m. ribbon cutting. The public is invited to celebrate the event with a 5 p.m. barbecue at the James Roberts Center, spokesman Chuck McDonald said.

“Both the community and the company have made a commitment that we’ve worked hard to see through,” he said. “We’re going to solve a problem that’s a very real problem.”

McDonald said facilities have evolved into low-level radioactive waste collection sites they were constructed for another purpose in the past.

The Texas Compact Disposal Facility was designed for the specific purpose of disposing of class A, B and C low-level radioactive waste.

Lindquist and McDonald said crews dug 100 feet below the surface, including into about 70 feet of the area’s red bed clay formation, to construct the facility. Concrete and steel was used to reinforce the area below ground, and any waste stored there will be placed inside of another concrete and steel box, McDonald said.

Lindquist added that the liner built in the ground also is 7 feet thick.

“This is a one-of-a kind, highly engineered facility,” McDonald said.

Initially, the facility was set to accept waste from generators in Texas and Vermont because they are part of a Compact Commission. The Andrews County facility now can accept applications for waste disposal from other states, although the Texas Low-Level Radioactive Waste Compact Commission must approve all petitions for disposal.