



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF **ENERGY**

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For immediate release

Magnum Minerals to Buy WIPP Salt

CARLSBAD, N.M., December 21, 2009– The U.S. Department of Energy’s (DOE) Carlsbad Field Office (CBFO) has worked out an agreement to sell 300,000 tons of run-of-mine salt from the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) to Magnum Minerals LLC of Hereford, Texas. As part of the agreement, the Carlsbad Soil and Water Conservation District (CSWCD) will sign and administer the contract with Magnum Minerals, allowing proceeds to remain in southeast New Mexico.

In 2008, DOE management and operating contractor, Washington TRU Solutions, issued a request for interest in the salt tailings, which have accumulated on the surface at the WIPP site since mining began in the 1970s. Magnum Minerals responded with a business plan to remove 10 truckloads of salt a day from the site. The company specializes in providing minerals and feed for the livestock industry. The salt will be converted to a feed supplement.

“The Department of Energy Carlsbad Field Office is honored to be a part of this collaborative effort that will benefit the taxpayers, the environment and the local community,” CBFO Manager Dave Moody said. “The signing of this contract is the successful conclusion of a long effort by the parties involved to find a viable, beneficial use for this resource, while at the same time identifying a means to partner with the Bureau of Land Management and the Soil and Water Conservation District to allow the proceeds from the sale of the salt tailings to remain in the local community.”

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The Bureau of Land Management was instrumental in coordinating the multi-agency agreement. The CSWCD will collect and account for fees from Magnum Minerals. Revenues generated by the sale will go toward area public works projects.

DOE officials say the salt tailings, which likely would have been placed in a landfill, will mutually benefit private business and taxpayers.

Magnum Minerals will begin hauling salt from WIPP early next year—a project expected to take five years.

The Waste Isolation Pilot Plant is a U.S. Department of Energy facility designed to safely isolate defense-related transuranic waste from people and the environment. Waste temporarily stored at sites around the country is shipped to WIPP and permanently disposed in rooms mined out of an ancient salt formation 2,150 feet below the surface. WIPP, which began waste disposal operations in 1999, is located 26 miles outside of Carlsbad, N.M.

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