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WIPP UPDATE: December 10, 2015

WIPP Workers Perform Filter Replacement

As recovery operations at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant continue, increased work activity in the underground results in higher levels of airborne salt dust, increasing the frequency with which filters are replaced. Last week, workers performed a filter replacement on WIPP's Underground Ventilation System.

WIPP's ventilation system has two filter units. Each unit has 84 separate filters arranged in four layers— moderate efficiency filters, high efficiency filters, and two layers of HEPA filters. Last week, teams replaced high efficiency filters from both units. Frequent replacement is necessary because of reduced airflow due to buildup of salt dust.



Radiological workers ready used filters for off-site disposal.

During the filter change out, operations in the underground are temporarily suspended because of the reduction in airflow that is necessary while the filters were being replaced. Once removed, the filters – 21 from each unit – were surveyed for radioactive contamination. Filters exhibiting contamination are placed in thick plastic bags which are then sealed and packaged for disposal at an off-site low-level radioactive waste disposal facility.

All air exiting the WIPP underground facility continues to pass through HEPA filters prior to being released to the environment. WIPP will continue to monitor the effectiveness of the filters and replace them as necessary.

Next WIPP Town Hall Meeting Scheduled January 7

The City of Carlsbad and DOE will co-host its Town Hall meeting featuring updates on WIPP recovery activities. The meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 7 at 5:30 p.m. Location: Carlsbad City Council Chambers, 101 N. Halagueno Street. Live streaming of the meeting can be seen at <http://new.livestream.com/rvv/>.