



U.S. Department of Energy
Carlsbad Field Office
Waste Isolation Pilot Plant
P.O. Box 3090
Carlsbad, New Mexico 88221

Media Contact:

Bradley Bugger
U.S. DOE Carlsbad Field Office
(575) 234-7309

www.wipp.energy.gov

 @WIPPNews

WIPP UPDATE: March 26, 2014

Air Intake and Salt Shaft Inspections Complete

Inspections have been completed on the Air Intake and Salt Shafts, and there were no safety or mechanical concerns identified with the shafts or the conveyances. The Mine Safety and Health Administration requires these inspections to the shaft and conveyance to assure they are both safe and operational. During the inspections personnel rode the conveyance down the shaft at a slow speed, allowing them to inspect the shaft. Personnel also performed a mechanical inspection of the overall operability. The successful completion of both shaft inspections is an important step toward re-entering the WIPP underground facility.

Venting Activities Begin

There are some packages on site containing waste that are approaching a 60-day regulatory limit for venting. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission requires that transportation packages must be vented within 60-days of the date they were sealed at the generator site. "Venting" involves removing the waste containers from the transportation packages to allow the dissipation of any hydrogen buildup, a process that poses no risk to the public or environment. While the actual transuranic waste containers will be removed from their external transportation packaging, they are NOT opened at WIPP. The first package was safely and successfully vented Tuesday. Venting activities will continue on additional transuranic waste transportation packages as time requirements warrant.

WIPP Ventilation and Filtration Working Properly

A detailed evaluation of the WIPP filter system was conducted immediately following the salt truck fire incident. The complete ventilation system is under disciplined controls to ensure it is fully functional to ensure the safety of the workers, the public, and the environment. These controls include frequent

inspections of the filters and fans. Protective measures to ensure the equipment will continue to operate under adverse conditions include advance acquisition of additional replacement filters and sealing bypass dampers. The WIPP site maintains two backup diesel generators that can provide 1100 kilowatts of continuous power. These generators are on a regular maintenance program and are tested monthly to ensure they remain in a continuously ready state. Additionally, there are procedures in place that allow for the generators to be refueled as needed to avoid any interruption in power supply.

Community Meetings

On March 25, WIPP update presentations were conducted at the Eunice and Artesia, NM City Council meetings. The updates focused on the current and ongoing recovery operations at the WIPP facility.

Community Meetings Scheduled

March 27 – WIPP update to the Lea County Commission at 9:00 a.m. in Lovington. Location: County Court House, 100 N. Main Avenue, Lovington, N.M.

March 27 - Carlsbad Mayor Dale Janway and DOE co-host a meeting featuring updates on WIPP recovery activities. The meetings will be held every Thursday at 5:30 p.m. at the Carlsbad City Council Chambers, 101 N. Halagueno Street. The meeting will also be streamed live at <http://new.livestream.com/rrv/>.