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 @WIPPNews

WIPP UPDATE: March 27, 2014

New Sampling Plan Establishes 10 Additional Locations

A new environmental sampling plan has been developed that includes 10 additional sampling locations in Hobbs, Artesia, Loving, Eunice and other nearby communities. The stations will monitor air, soil and vegetation, where appropriate and supplement sampling efforts already underway. The Environmental Protection Agency also plans to initiate additional environmental monitoring. To read more, visit the EPA web site at

http://www.epa.gov/radiation/docs/wipp/2014_radevent/wipp_epaactions_2014release.pdf

Additional Bioassay Results

Nuclear Waste Partnership recently enlisted the help of an industry recognized expert to review the WIPP Internal Dosimetry Program, which is responsible for the radiological testing of employees potentially exposed during the release event. The review resulted in the decision to take a more conservative approach to compare bioassay results for the WIPP employees. Using these more conservative criteria, four additional employees will undergo additional evaluation to see if they received a small dose of radiation. As with the previous 17 employees who were identified as having some internal radiological activity from the February 14 event, the estimated dose from these exposures is well below the level that would cause health concerns.

Shaft Inspections Complete; Personnel Entries Next

Mine safety compliance inspections of the Salt and Air Intake Shafts were completed Wednesday, paving the way for the initial personnel entries into the underground mine. The first personnel entry is expected early next week. Eight workers with the specific skill sets and experience needed will monitor the situation around the Salt Shaft and create a base operations station.

The team will then make its way to the Air Intake Shaft to locate a second exit point, which is required for all underground activities as a safety precaution. They will survey the air quality, verify underground structural integrity, monitor for radioactive contamination and confirm that underground communications are working by communicating with the monitoring operations base above ground. The underground station will serve as an area for employees to transition from the contamination area to a clean area before returning to the surface, to ensure no contamination is spread.

Subsequent entries will move the base camp and decontamination areas further south toward Panels 6 and 7 where the team expects locate and identify the source of the release.

Community Meetings Held

March 27 – WIPP update was presented to the Lea County Commission in Lovington.

Community Meetings Scheduled

March 27 (tonight) - 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/>.

April 14 – WIPP update to the Jal City Council at 5:30 p.m. Location: 309 S. Main St.