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New President, Project Manager Takes Helm for NWP

Nuclear Waste Partnership LLC (NWP), the AECOM-led management and operating contractor for the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP), has a new president and project manager this week. Bruce Covert has replaced Phil Breidenbach who, for the past two years, has led NWP efforts to safely recover the facility and resume WIPP transuranic waste emplacement operations.

“I want to thank Phil for his hard work and leadership. He has been a true asset to WIPP and an outstanding partner to the DOE Carlsbad Field Office (CBFO),” said CBFO Manager Todd Shrader.

Covert has been on site at WIPP for several weeks to prepare for the management change. Shrader says he expects a smooth transition. “We’re pleased to welcome Bruce to the WIPP team and look forward to working with him as we continue WIPP’s important mission.”

Covert brings more than 30 years of experience with AECOM legacy companies in the management and operation of nuclear and high hazard facilities for the DOE and the U.K.’s Nuclear Decommissioning Authority. He has broad expertise in nuclear facility operations, from design and construction to start-up, operations and decommissioning. Most recently, Covert served as AECOM group vice president and project director for waste management projects for Dounreay Site Restoration Limited, Dounreay, U.K. Prior to that, he was the project director for Environmental, Safety, Health and Quality for Washington Closure Hanford.

“I count myself fortunate to have been part of the team that reopened WIPP and saw transuranic waste shipments resume,” said Breidenbach. “We have an amazing group of employees who care about the WIPP mission and the Carlsbad and Hobbs communities. The future of WIPP is in good hands, and I look forward to its continued success in the future.” Breidenbach will return to AECOM to support other projects in the DOE and nuclear market.

WIPP resumed waste emplacement operations in January 2017 and received its first shipment of transuranic waste from Idaho National Laboratory on April 8, 2017,



Bruce Covert



Phil Breidenbach

following a 2014 underground vehicle fire and radiological release that resulted in suspended operations.

“Phil leaves some big shoes to fill,” said Covert. “His steady hand and tenacity were integral to WIPP’s recovery. It was good to spend a few weeks with Phil as we turn our eyes to the resumption of mining later this year.”

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