



Department of Energy
Carlsbad Field Office
P. O. Box 3090
Carlsbad, New Mexico 88221

June 18, 2013

Eddy, Lea, and Chavez County Residents:

We have received a lot of questions recently about where we are in the recovery process and timetables for the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant's (WIPP) return to normal operations. Hopefully, I can provide some clarity about our progress at the WIPP.

Right now, our employees are addressing two tasks that are essential for transitioning us into the heart of our recovery efforts. First, we are replacing the underground ventilation system filters that have been filtering air since the February 14 radiological event. Once complete, we will resume underground entries. Second, we are cleaning the waste hoist, which has been out of service since the underground salt truck fire on February 5. This hoist allows us to take larger equipment underground to meet the needs of the project.

Since the radiological event, we have safely entered the underground facility nearly a dozen times. Each time, we learn more and we use those discoveries to refine our tasks moving forward. Our entry teams have identified a breached container and we are using all of the resources at our disposal to find the cause.

No one is more eager than we are to determine what happened and return to normal operations. However, investigations by their very nature are difficult to place on a schedule. In addition to the Accident Investigation Board, the Department of Energy recently assembled the Technical Assistance Team using the best scientists from across the country's national laboratories to review all of the known data and find answers. This team is already highly involved, and we look forward to their continued assistance.

As the investigation continues, please be mindful that reports come from a variety of sources and rarely contain all of the information necessary for a definitive conclusion. We are committed to sharing our findings, but we always want to verify that the information is complete and scientifically accurate before posting it on the website.

Continuing with our commitment to local area residents, the town hall meetings are still being held the first and third Thursday of each month, from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m., at the Carlsbad City Hall. The next meeting will be held on Thursday, June 19, 2014. As a reminder, these meetings are a great venue to ask questions and stay informed.

Sincerely,

//Signature on File//

Jose R. Franco, Manager
U.S. Department of Energy
Carlsbad Field Office