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WIPP UPDATE: September 5, 2014

Personnel completing preparations for underground facility rock bolting activities

Personnel at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) are completing preparations to resume rock bolting activities maintaining the WIPP underground facility in a safe and stable condition as the recovery process continues. At WIPP, rock bolts are typically installed in a pattern that optimizes the bolt's effectiveness to ensure stability of disposal rooms and access tunnels.

Mechanics must first perform preventative maintenance on the mine equipment, like checking fluid levels and safety systems, cleaning, and lubricating, before bolting activities can resume. Miners then drill holes into the rock salt formation (see image below) and install bolts of varying lengths. Since 2010, more than 20,000 rock bolts have been installed to make the WIPP underground facility safe for waste disposal activities. Periodic maintenance is required to replace broken bolts to maintain mine stability.

Mining personnel install a rock bolt that helps stabilize the rock formation in the WIPP underground facility.

Replay of September 4 Town Hall available

A replay of the September 4 WIPP Town Hall meeting, sponsored by the City of Carlsbad and DOE, is available at http://new.livestream.com/rrv/. The next Town Hall meeting is scheduled for September 18 at the Carlsbad City Hall.