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WIPP UPDATE: December 7, 2016

DORR Team Provides Preliminary Report

The DOE Operational Readiness Review (DORR) Team provided an initial briefing of their findings to the senior leadership from DOE and Nuclear Waste Partnership (NWP) on Dec. 2. The DOE ORR team concluded that upon satisfactory closure of the pre-start findings and approval of corrective action plans for the post-start findings, the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) can be authorized to safely restart waste emplacement in accordance with DOE standards.

The ORR identified 21 pre-start findings, those issues that will have to be resolved and validated before waste emplacement can resume, and 15 post-start findings, which can be addressed concurrently with resumption of waste emplacement. In addition, the team evaluated the Carlsbad Field Office's (CBFO) capabilities to perform effective oversight.

"The team conducted a very thorough review, and the findings identify areas we need to address," said CBFO Manager Todd Shrader. "We have worked very hard to get to this point, and the endorsement that WIPP can safely re-start operations after addressing the pre-starts is welcome news."

The next step in the process is to develop corrective action plans for the findings. Once the corrective action plans for each finding are finalized, the contractor must complete the actions for all of the pre-start findings and then independently verify the corrective actions have been fully implemented.

In order to provide sufficient time to review the DORR findings, the Town Hall meeting has been moved from Dec. 8 to Dec. 15.

There are a few additional items that must be completed in order to allow for the resumption of waste emplacement, including final preparations of Panel 7, completion of ground control activities, fire protection system installations, and verification of closure of all applicable Accident Investigation Board corrective actions. Completion of all of these activities will determine the date for resumption of waste emplacement at WIPP.

“Emplacement of the first waste from the Waste Handling Building before the end of December is still our goal, but we will take the time necessary to ensure it can be done safely,” said Shrader.

Next WIPP Town Hall Meeting – Moved to December 15

The City of Carlsbad and DOE co-host Town Hall meetings to provide updates on WIPP recovery and restart activities. In order to provide the best information possible to our stakeholders, the date for the next meeting has been moved to Thursday, Dec. 15, at 5:30 p.m. Location: Carlsbad City Council Chambers, 101 N. Halagueno Street. This meeting will be a special Town Hall focused on the DOE Operational Readiness Review and the remaining steps necessary to resume waste emplacement operations. WIPP Town Hall Meetings are live-streamed at <http://new.livestream.com/rrv/>.