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 @WIPPNews

WIPP UPDATE: November 19, 2014

Significant activities resume this week at WIPP

Two functions that are vital to recovery operations resumed this week at the WIPP site. Over the weekend, crews resumed roof bolting operations necessary for ground control and continued safe access to many areas of the underground facility. Roof bolts, sometimes as long as 12 feet, are inserted into predrilled holes and tightened to required specifications to help secure the roof and walls of the access routes in the underground facility. Under normal operations, roof bolts are added or replaced on a routine basis, as necessary. This is the first ground control activity to be performed since the two incidents that occurred in February. Bolting locations will be prioritized based on geotechnical engineering evaluations and recommendations.

The waste hoist has returned to limited service, while work continues towards making it fully operational. The hoist is currently being used to transport equipment in and out of the underground facility. Early this week the hoist was designated available for use as an “emergency egress” to evacuate the underground facility if necessary. Providing emergency egress has allowed for a significant increase in the number of workers that can be in the underground facility at one time. Based on the availability of the waste hoist for emergency egress, the number of employees who can be in the underground facility has increased from 24 to 74.

Idaho shipments arrive safely at Waste Control Specialists

Early this week, three shipments of contact-handled transuranic waste were transported from the Idaho National Laboratory (INL) to Waste Control Specialists (WCS) located near Andrews, TX. The waste, which originated at the Los Alamos National Laboratory, was sent to INL for additional treatment more than a year ago. The waste meets the both the WIPP and WCS waste acceptance criteria and does not contain the “nitrate salts” thought to be associated with the February radiological event at WIPP. With the support of the State of Texas and WCS, the Department was able to move this waste and meet the milestones necessary to maintain compliance with the Idaho Settlement Agreement.

December 4 – The City of Carlsbad and DOE will co-host its Town Hall meeting featuring updates on WIPP recovery activities. The meeting is scheduled Thursday at 5:30 p.m. Location: Carlsbad City Council Chambers, 101 N. Halagueno Street. Live streaming of the meeting can be seen at <http://new.livestream.com/rvv/>.