

# WIPP UPDATE

December 9, 2014

## **WIPP employees encounter odor while monitoring waste containers**

Late last week, four waste handling technicians at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) were performing surface temperature measurements on transuranic waste containers in the Waste Handling Bay when they encountered an abnormal odor. The odor was described as a “cleaning solution-like” odor, similar to odors that have been detected in the past when opening shipping containers during routine waste operations at WIPP.

Employees stopped work, notified their supervisor and left the area. WIPP radiological and industrial safety personnel responded to the bay within minutes and tested the area using radiological survey and industrial health instruments. No abnormal radiological or chemical conditions were detected and there were no indications of pressurization from the TRU waste containers.

The workers, who briefly complained of nausea and dizziness, were examined by on-site health services personnel and released fit for duty. As a precaution, WIPP health services personnel will continue to monitor the employees. The most likely cause of the odor was an organic vapor transported through the container filter. The area was appropriately posted and periodic surveillance of the area will continue to be performed.

## **Recording of December 4 WIPP Town Hall available online**

An online video recording of the December 4 WIPP Recovery Town Hall meeting can be seen at <http://new.livestream.com/rvv/>. The next monthly Town Hall meeting, which is co-sponsored by the DOE’s Carlsbad Field Office and the City of Carlsbad, is scheduled for January 8.