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WIPP Hosts Stakeholder Workshop

On January 14th, the Department of Energy's Carlsbad Field Office (CBFO) hosted a stakeholder workshop to discuss details of the WIPP Recovery Plan Project Management Baseline. The baseline was conditionally approved by CBFO in late December, and the meeting was to give local and regional stakeholders a detailed review of cost and schedule elements for the recovery project.

The discussions highlighted how the baseline was developed, how costs for the various work activities are established and how progress is monitored to evaluate impacts on schedules. CBFO staff and contractors stressed that the baseline is a living document and changes are made as needed to status the overall project. For example, while the WIPP Recovery Plan issued in September of 2014 identified the end of the first quarter fiscal year 2015 as the anticipated initial closure of Panel 6, a number of other prerequisite activities are required first, including roof bolting, radiological surveys, volatile organic compound monitoring and other safety functions. We are making good progress in these areas and will close Panel 6 as safely and expeditiously as possible. While DOE does not expect this change to impact the overall project schedule, changes like this will be made as necessary to ensure worker safety and regulatory compliance and can be expected as efforts progress.



“The workshop gave interested stakeholders an opportunity to learn about the Recovery Plan in more detail, and I was pleased to be able to provide additional clarity on the scope of the work underway on recovery operations at WIPP,” said Joe Franco, Carlsbad Field Office Manager. “As we implement recovery efforts, it is important for the community to understand the complexity of the recovery project and the continual adjustments that are necessary to maintain momentum and to achieve restart of operations in 2016.”

Nuclear Waste Partnership Deputy Recovery Manager Tammy Reynolds answers a question during Wednesday's workshop.

Waste Hoist Returned to Full Operations

This week the Waste Hoist, or elevator, got the green light from Operations personnel to resume normal transportation of employees to the WIPP underground following cleaning, maintenance activities and testing. The Waste Hoist is a key part of recovery operations at the WIPP facility. Previously, the Waste Hoist had been approved for use to get equipment in and out of the underground, but not for personnel. The Waste Hoist can now be used to transport up to 75 personnel as they enter or exit the underground facility, as it was prior to the fire in the WIPP underground.



From L to R: NM State Representative Cathrynn Brown, NM State Representative Jim Townsend, Carlsbad Field Office Manager Joe Franco and NM State Senator Carroll Leavell take the first trip on the waste hoist following its return to full operations.

Next WIPP Town Hall Meeting Scheduled February 5

The City of Carlsbad and DOE will co-host its Town Hall meeting featuring updates on WIPP recovery activities. The meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 5, 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/rrv/>.