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WIPP UPDATE: February 12, 2016

Anniversary of Fire, Radiological Events Marks Major Progress at WIPP

February 2016 marks two years since the underground fire and radiological release events forced the temporary closure of the Department of Energy's (DOE) Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP), near Carlsbad, New Mexico. Since that time much progress has been made in the recovery of the underground including mine stability and habitability, initial panel closure, radiological risk remediation and the addition of an interim ventilation system. Additionally, in response to investigations from the Accident Investigation Boards (AIB), the site has made significant changes to all safety management programs and is in the process of revising the Documented Safety Analysis (DSA) that establishes the safety envelope for all activities on the WIPP site.

As recovery actions at the site begin to wind down, DOE and NWP will begin a series of readiness activities necessary to ensure that all equipment, people and procedures have been thoroughly tested and are ready to resume plant operations in 2016. The readiness activities will culminate with separate contractor and DOE Operational Readiness Reviews that must be passed before DOE and Regulators will give authorization to commence with waste emplacement.

As Energy Secretary Earnest Moniz indicated in the February 9th budget rollout, "We really expect to get WIPP operating at the end of this year, resuming operations and ramping over a few years to full operations and then of course cleaning out the backlog that has been create by its shutdown for the last couple of years," Moniz said. "That is a very, very high priority." WIPP remains an important component of the Department of Energy's Office of Environmental Management transuranic waste disposal program and has been key to their success in remediating 22 transuranic waste generator sites and significantly reducing DOE's footprint for legacy waste management.

For a more in-depth look at WIPP's recovery progress, please see the [WIPP Recovery Fact sheet](#).

Next WIPP Town Hall Meeting Scheduled April 7

The City of Carlsbad and DOE will co-host its quarterly Town Hall meeting featuring updates on WIPP recovery and restart activities. The meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 7 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/>.