



U.S. Department of Energy
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 @WIPPNews

WIPP UPDATES: March 21, 2014

Testing WIPP Ventilation System Filter Banks Is Scheduled

An aerosol test to determine the effectiveness of the WIPP ventilation system filter banks is targeted for early next week. The test will be performed by Los Alamos National Laboratory by introducing aerosolized oil in front of the filter banks then using highly sensitive equipment that will measure the concentration of aerosol particles at the back of the filter banks to determine filter efficiency.

WIPP's individual HEPA filter banks are tested annually and consistently meet the efficiency standard. Two filter banks service the underground exhaust. Prior to any manned entries into the mine, the WIPP Ventilation System must be tested and proven to be working properly.

DOE Review of Safety Procedures Underway

The Carlsbad Field Office is reviewing two safety packages that must be in place before personnel entries into the mine can take place. One package will establish the controls that will be used to ensure the safety of personnel, both on the surface and underground, as well as protecting the public and the environment. A second package outlines the re-entry steps.

Once DOE has approved the safety evaluations, the sequence for personnel entries will begin with inspections of the Salt Hoist and the Air Intake Shafts. The Mine Safety and Health Administration compliance inspections of both shafts involve personnel riding atop cages to the bottom of each shaft to inspect the integrity of the shaft and equipment. These inspections are normally required prior to any personnel entry.

The second entry will be performed by personnel who will be monitoring conditions while moving from the Salt Shaft to the Air Intake Shaft to establish a secondary exit path and to develop a safe base of operations underground. These individuals have received extensive training, which included use of anti-

contamination gear and air supplied breathing units during a two-hour simulated training exercise in nearby potash mine.

A third entry will follow for the purpose of evaluating the event scene, identifying the cause of the release and providing information that will lead to a mitigation plan.

All personnel will participate in a decontamination routine when leaving the mine at the base station. This involves removing the protective clothing in a specific way so as to not spread any contamination, and undergoing frisking activities to check for contamination on their body before leaving for the surface.

Recovery Plans, Monitoring Results Explained at Town Hall

About 60 people attended the second joint town hall meeting co-sponsored by Carlsbad Mayor Dale Janway's and DOE Thursday at city hall. Carlsbad Field Office Manager Joe Franco outlined the re-entry schedule and introduced Bob McQuinn, Nuclear Waste Partnership President and Project Manager, who said he felt good about the accomplishments from his first week on the job.

Fran Williams, Director, URS Environmental, Safety, Health and Quality, gave a presentation on the latest environmental sampling results, which included air, water, soil and vegetation monitoring. Williams explained that the results of all the sampling show no threat to worker health, the public or the environment.

Dr. Russell Hardy, Director, Carlsbad Environmental Monitoring and Research Center, conducted an experiment during the 1 ½ hour meeting that showed people receive far more exposure to background radiation on a daily basis than they would get from the recent radiation release at WIPP.

To view archived video of this meeting, go to <http://new.livestream.com/rrv/wipptownhall2>

New WIPP Web Page Launched; Features Updates on Recovery

A new WIPP Web Site is available that features the most recent information concerning recovery activities from the February vehicle five and radiological release events. To view the new web site go to: www.wipp.energy.gov

Community Meetings Scheduled

March 25 – WIPP officials will update the Artesia City Council on WIPP recovery activities at 7:00 p.m. Location: 511 W. Texas Ave., Artesia.