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WIPP UPDATE: April 7, 2016

DOE, State Officials Cut Ribbon for New WIPP Emergency Operations Center

New Mexico Governor Susana Martinez joined U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) officials for a ribbon cutting ceremony to mark the completion of a new state-of-the-art Emergency Operations Center (EOC) located in Carlsbad, NM.

“We’re pleased to share this accomplishment with Governor Martinez and other state and community leaders,” said Mark Whitney, DOE’s Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management. “This new EOC facility signifies our commitment to Carlsbad, the State of New Mexico and our neighbors to operate the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) in a safe manner that protects the environment.”



New Mexico Governor Susana Martinez, along with other state and federal dignitaries, cuts the ribbon for the new WIPP Emergency Operations Center.

The off-site EOC facility is one of many significant improvements made by the DOE to ensure that WIPP will be able to resume waste emplacement operations safely later this year. The facility is equipped with new technologies that allow the WIPP emergency management organization to coordinate response actions effectively with emergency management and responders at the WIPP site, 26 miles southeast of Carlsbad.

EOC capabilities include: a communication system that provides immediate notification to emergency responders; a web-based system that allows real-time communications among Carlsbad Field Office, WIPP, and other agencies that may be involved in an event response; and with those assisting with emergency response planning and

resources. The state-of-the-art facility is also available to assist other agencies in managing emergencies, if needed.

WIPP is a DOE facility mined in an ancient salt formation 2,150 feet below the surface that is designed to safely isolate defense-related transuranic waste from people and the environment and began operations in 1999.

In February 2014, two unrelated events occurred underground at WIPP resulting in the temporary suspension of waste disposal operations. A salt haul truck caught fire on Feb.5, followed nine days later, on Feb. 14, by a release of radiological contamination from a waste drum that contained incompatible materials. Since that time, WIPP has worked to recover the facility, implement corrective actions and upgrade equipment, programs, site infrastructure and training.

Next WIPP Town Hall Meeting Scheduled April 7

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, 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/rrv/>.