

From: Bardino, Marissa, NMENV
Sent: Thursday, June 24, 2010 10:36 AM
Subject: KAFB Fuel Storage Tank Collapses Again

KAFB Fuel Storage Tank Collapses Again

Journal Staff Writer
Charles D. Brunt
June 24, 2010

For the second time in two months, a 1.7 million-gallon fuel storage tank being built at Kirtland Air Force Base's Bulk Fuels Storage Area has collapsed during construction. Eugene Jaramillo, project engineer for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which is the contracting agency for the two-tank project at Kirtland, said the latest collapse likely occurred between 8 and 9 p.m. Saturday because of high winds. There were no injuries, and no one saw the side of the massive tank cave in. "When it went, it was at its most vulnerable phase of construction," Jaramillo said Wednesday. An identical tank being built about 100 yards away was undamaged, leading investigators to suspect that the culprit was a microburst — or a severe downdraft of cool air from a thunderstorm that spreads in all directions when it hits the ground. Winds at the nearby Albuquerque International Sunport peaked at nearly 60 mph Saturday evening, Jaramillo said — not nearly severe enough to damage the tank, which was designed to withstand winds in excess of 85 mph during construction. The tanks are being built west of two existing fuel storage tanks at Kirtland, just north of the eastern end of the Sunport's 26 East/West runway. Jaramillo said the same tank collapsed April 29 "at exactly the same point in construction." The \$5.7 million tank, being built by Brown and Minneapolis Tank of Albuquerque, will have to be completely redone, he said, because the contract specifies that no salvage materials can be used. He said the contractor's insurance company will likely cover the costs of the damages. Workers were only three days away from completing the tank structure. It still needed a center column, which supports the roof, and the roof itself. The roof and center column are integral to the tank's structural strength, Jaramillo said. Despite the setbacks, Jaramillo said both tanks will be completed and ready to hand over to the Air Force by the September 2011 deadline.

Marissa Stone Bardino
Communications Director
New Mexico Environment Department
(505) 827-0314 (w)
(505) 231-0475 (c)

