



NEWS

National Nuclear Security Administration
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MEDIA ADVISORY ONLY
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DOE/NNSA to Host Media Availability
Before Modern Pit Facility Public Meeting in Carlsbad,



U. S. Department of Energy National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) representatives will host a press availability at 4 p.m. on Wednesday, October 9, 2002, to discuss the upcoming public scoping meeting for the development of a Modern Pit Facility. The session will be held in DOE's Skeen-Whitlock Building auditorium, 4021 National Parks Highway, Carlsbad, New Mexico.

The public scoping meeting will be held the following evening at the same location. An informational open house and registration will begin at 5 p.m. with the formal scoping meeting set for 7 to 10 p.m. The meeting will provide the public with an opportunity to present comments, ask questions and discuss issues with NNSA representatives. Carlsbad community leaders are encouraging public participation in the scoping meeting.

The NNSA recently announced its intent to prepare a Supplemental Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on Stockpile Stewardship and Management for a Modern Pit Facility. This notice is the first step in carrying out recommendations to develop a modern capability to manufacture plutonium pits. Pit production was shut down in 1989 at the Rocky Flats Plant, and no pits have been produced since. The NNSA's strategy calls for a new facility to be in production by approximately 2020.

The United States is the only nuclear power without the capability to manufacture a plutonium pit, a critical component of a nuclear weapon that functions as a trigger to allow a modern nuclear weapon to function. A new facility would reestablish the capability to manufacture all pit types in the nation's current nuclear stockpile and meet any future requirements in an environmentally compliant manner.

This Supplement to the Programmatic EIS process will evaluate two decisions: Whether to proceed with a Modern Pit Facility, and if so, where to locate it. Five potential locations will be evaluated in the EIS: (1) Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) at Los Alamos, New Mexico; (2) Nevada Test Site, north of Las Vegas, Nevada; (3) Pantex Plant at Amarillo, Texas; (4) Savannah River Site at Aiken, South Carolina; and (5) the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant near Carlsbad, New Mexico. The EIS also will evaluate the no-action alternative of maintaining current plutonium pit capabilities at LANL, and whether it is reasonable to upgrade the existing facilities at LANL to increase pit production capacity.

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