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### **WIPP UPDATE: November 15, 2016**

#### **DOE Begins Operational Readiness Review**

The final operational readiness review, which is necessary to ensure that the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) can safely return to waste emplacement operations, started this week. The Department of Energy (DOE) Operational Readiness Review (DORR) team is comprised of 19 subject matter experts from around the DOE complex who were selected based on their relevant experience in nuclear operations, engineering and safety management. The team arrived on site Monday and began a two-week review process that focuses on demonstration of proficiency in receipt and handling of contact-handled transuranic (TRU) waste; systems maintenance and operations; and fire safety, radiological controls, emergency management and other safety programs.

The DORR team will take approximately two weeks to observe operations and conduct the necessary personnel interviews and document reviews to ensure quality of operations. A closeout meeting and a final report are planned for early December.

“This is a little different than previous operational readiness reviews in that the federal employees at the Carlsbad Field Office (CBFO) are also being evaluated along with the contractor,” said Todd Shrader, manager of CBFO, which oversees WIPP. “This is an important review and the last hurdle we need to cross before declaring the facility is ready to resume transuranic waste operations.”

Once the DORR is completed and corrective actions for any prestart findings have been developed, implemented and validated, authorization to commence waste emplacement will be declared. In conjunction with the DOE, the New Mexico Environment Department will perform a site inspection to ensure WIPP is in full compliance with its hazardous waste facility permit and administrative orders.

Successful completion of all the assessments and reviews, as well as associated corrective actions, will ensure the WIPP plant, people and processes are ready for the safe and compliant resumption of waste emplacement activities.

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**Next WIPP Town Hall Meeting – December 8**

The City of Carlsbad and DOE co-host Town Hall meetings to provide updates on WIPP recovery and restart activities. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 8, at 5:30 p.m. Location: Carlsbad City Council Chambers, 101 N. Halagueno Street. This meeting will be a special Town Hall focused on mining and ground control at the WIPP site. WIPP Town Hall Meetings are live streamed at <http://new.livestream.com/rrv/>.