



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
ENERGY

OFFICE OF
**ENVIRONMENTAL
MANAGEMENT**

Waste Isolation Pilot Plant Recovery Update

J.R. Stroble, Director
TRU Sites and Transportation Division
Carlsbad Field Office

**Northern New Mexico Citizen's Advisory Board
November, 2014**

Recap of the Incidents at WIPP

February 5th Truck Fire:

- All operations at the repository ceased following salt haul truck fire in the WIPP underground.
- An investigation team was deployed to determine the cause of the fire.
 - Report released March 13th.

February 14th Radiological Incident:

- A continuous air monitor detected airborne radiation in the underground.
- WIPP's ventilation system automatically switched to high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filtration mode when airborne radiation was detected
- underground and the WIPP mine remains in filtration mode at this time.
- Extensive sampling and monitoring conducted by DOE, New Mexico, and Carlsbad Environmental Monitoring Research Center Monitoring.
 - EPA and the NMED also performed sampling.
- Efforts by the DOE and Nuclear Waste Partnership are ensuring workers are fully protected during recovery and restart.
- Town hall meetings are utilized to keep the community informed; to stay apprised go to: <http://www.wipp.energy.gov>
 - Live streaming of the meetings can be viewed at: <http://new.livestream.com/rrv/>

February 5 Underground Fire



Accident Investigation Board Report

- Completed

February 14 Radiological Release

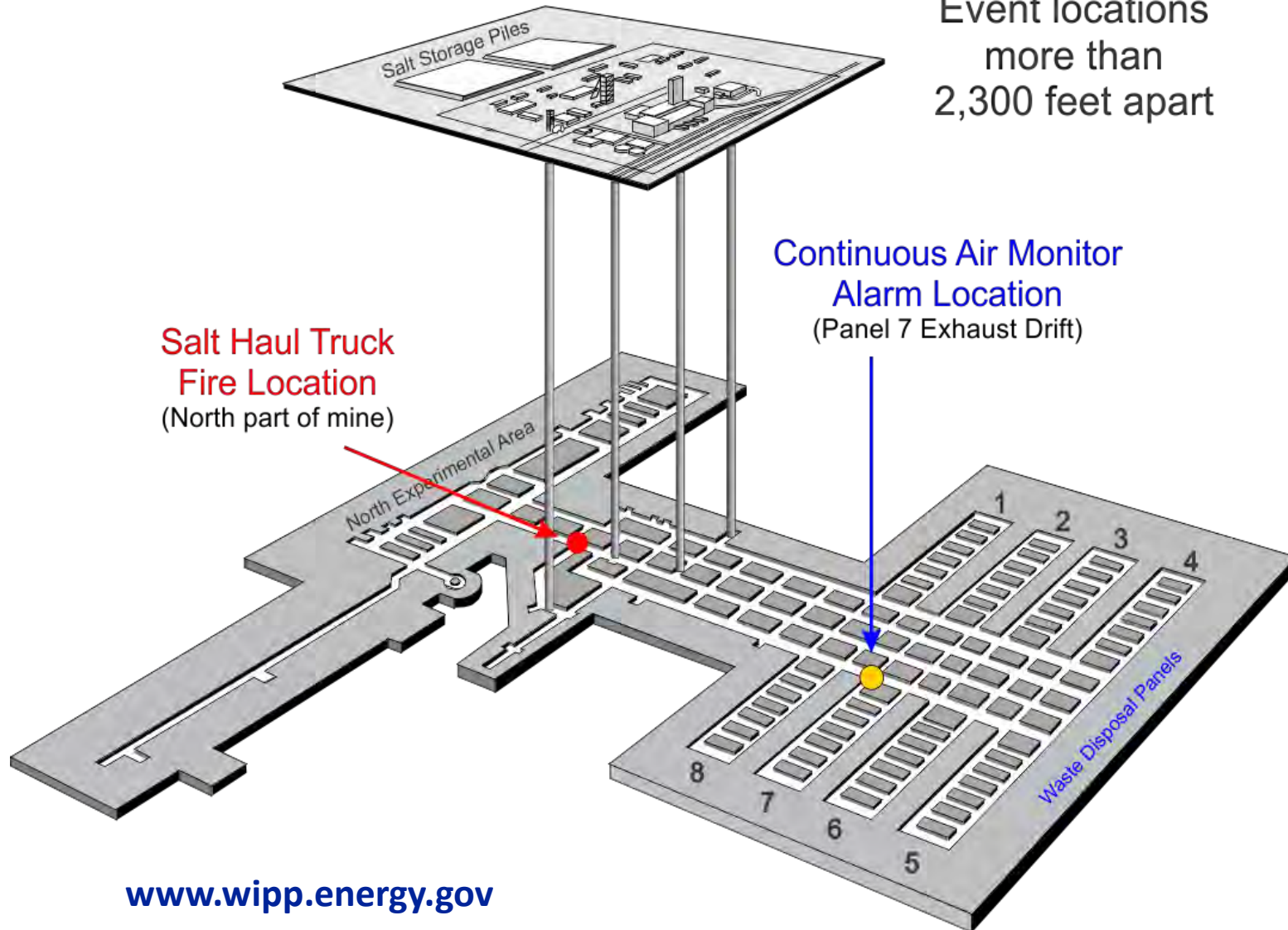


Accident Investigation Board Report

- Phase I completed
- Phase II – in progress

Recap of Incidents: Layout of the WIPP Underground

Event locations
more than
2,300 feet apart

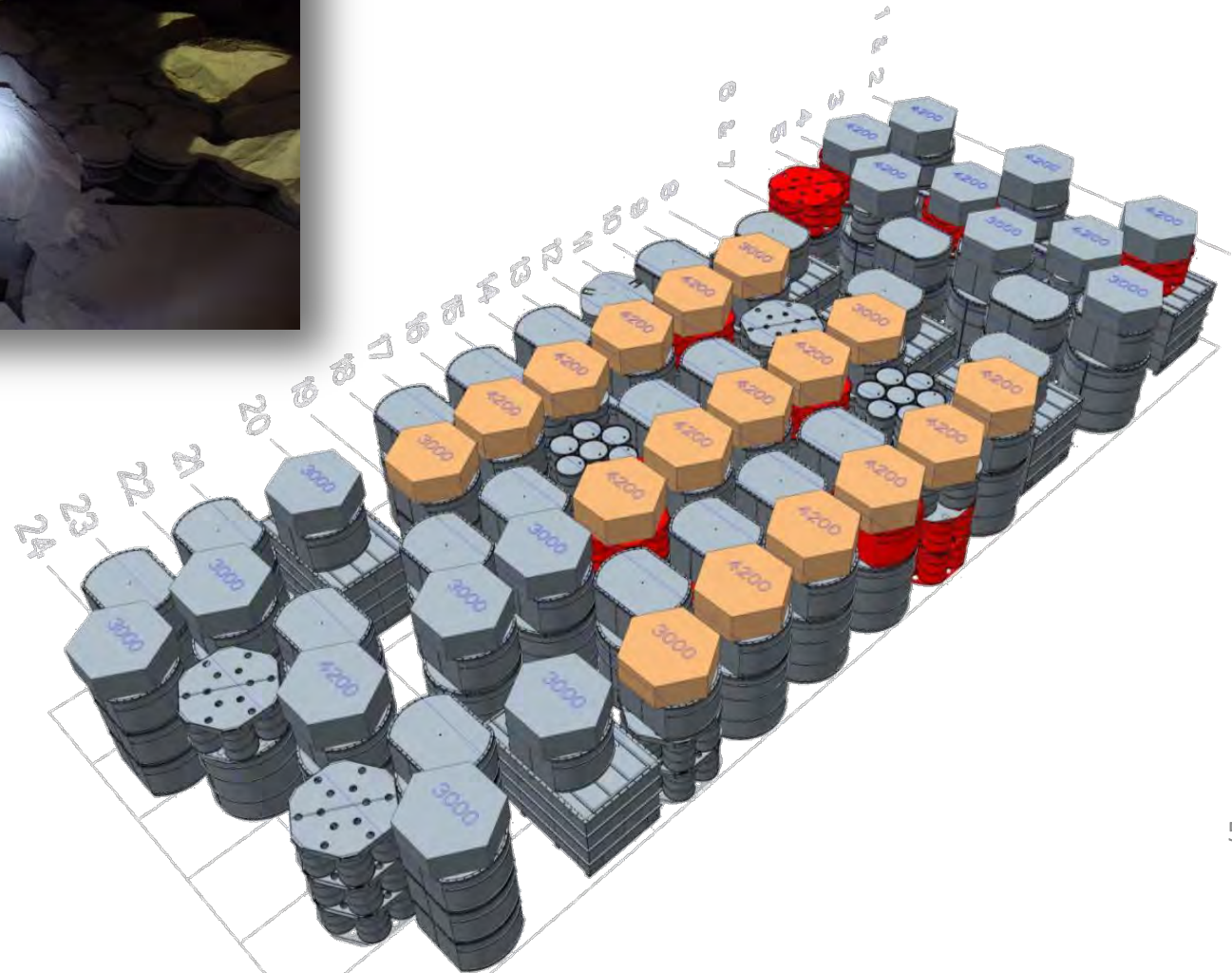


**Salt Haul Truck
Fire Location**
(North part of mine)

**Continuous Air Monitor
Alarm Location**
(Panel 7 Exhaust Drift)

www.wipp.energy.gov

Room 7, Panel 7

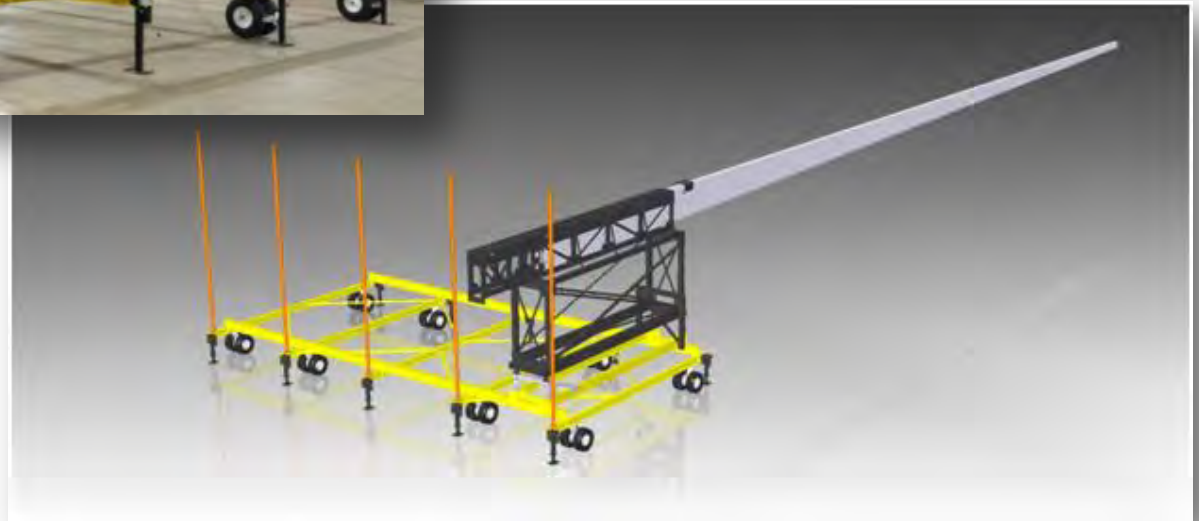


Project REACH



The REACH system will be used to perform photo/video evaluation of remaining waste containers in room 7 panel 7

REACH system has been transported to the WIPP underground

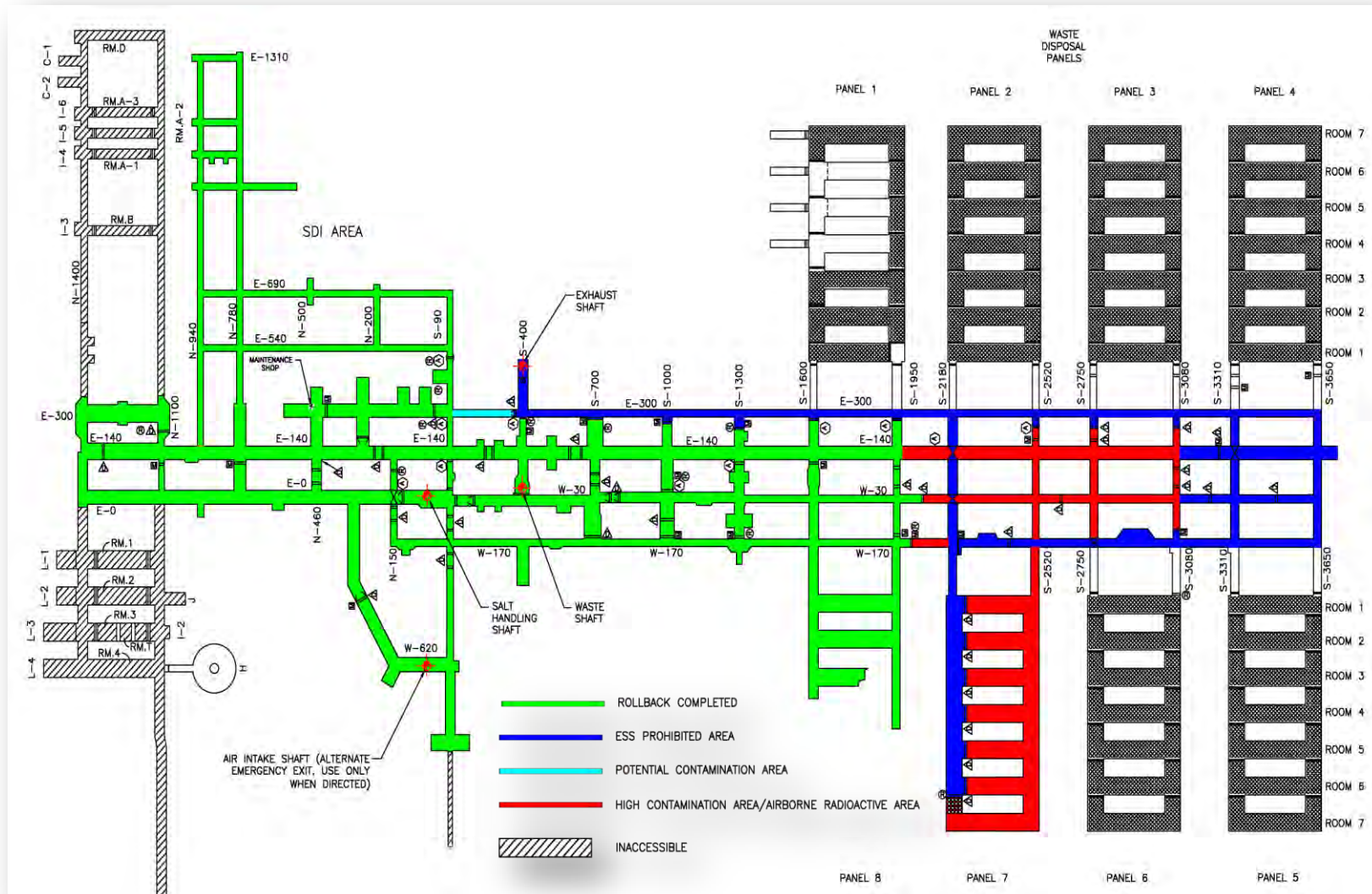


Key Recovery Steps toward Resumption of Operations

- **Nuclear Safety Document Revisions (continuing)**
- **Safety Management Program Revitalization (continuing)**
- **Underground restoration (underway)**
 - Radiological Roll-back
 - Re-Establish Safety Systems
 - Cleanup, Habitability
 - Fire Protection
 - Maintenance and Ground Control
- **Expedite mine stability (resume bolting)**
- **Expedited Panel 6 and Room 7, Panel 7 Closure**
- **Interim Ventilation (procurement underway)**
- **Supplemental Ventilation Modifications (initiated)**
- **Readiness Activities**
- **Limited Operations**
 - On-site waste
 - Off-site waste generators

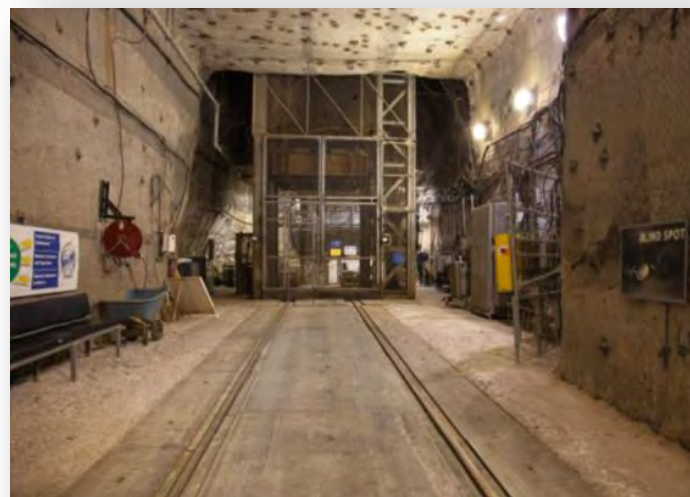


Radiological Rollback



Mine Stability and Underground Habitability

- **Resumption of bolting – one of the highest priorities**
 - Preventative maintenance activities on equipment completed
 - Roof bolting/ground control resumed the week of November 10th
- **Waste hoist**
 - Camera inspection of shaft/ropes completed
 - Preventive maintenance and inspections completed
 - Hoist is now operational for transport of equipment – also available for use as emergency egress for personnel



Anticipated Approach:

- Contamination will be fixed or sealed to the mine surface.
- Anticipated use of water spray for most areas of low contamination.
 - Will create a crust on salt surfaces.
- Higher activity areas will utilize a spray-on fixative application.
- After application, floors will be covered with a brattice cloth barrier and ~ 4 inches of mined salt.



Panel 6 Closure Plans

Closure of Panel 6 is a high priority of the WIPP recovery plan

NMED approved the initial closure for WIPP Panel 6

- Includes chain-link, brattice cloth, run-of-mine salt and bulkheads



Steel Bulkhead

- **Current Status**

- Ventilation in Filtration Mode
 - 60,000 cfm of filtered air
- Note: WIPP's standard (unfiltered) operational airflow is 425,000 cfm
 - WIPP Permit requires 260,000 cfm

- **Recovery Actions**

- **Phase I** – HEPA skid and fan unit
 - 114,000 cfm of airflow
- **Phase II** – Reconfiguring airlock and bulkheads and additional fans
 - 180,000 cfm airflow
- **Phase III** – Design and construct of new (permanent) ventilation system
 - Capable of providing 420,000 cfm



Recovery Status

- Comprehensive recovery plan – released September 30, 2014 - that puts safety first
- WIPP is making progress on recovery
 - Extensive underground radiological rollback (over 60%)
 - Mine structure evaluation ongoing
 - Panel 6 and Panel 7, Room 7 closure preparations
- The current workforce is being maintained and utilized
 - Cross-training personnel
 - Changing work schedules to support time-critical recovery activities.
 - Performing readiness activities
 - Fostering a nuclear safety culture change.
- WIPP continues to communicate often and transparently throughout this process with -
 - Frequent briefings for regulators and stakeholder groups
 - Regular town hall meetings
 - Weekly WIPP updates

Additional information is available

<http://www.wipp.energy.gov>

1-800-336-9477

or on Twitter: @WIPPNEWS