

WIPP

Mining of new waste panel begins



A continuous miner machine cuts into salt rock as mining begins on Panel 11, one of WIPP's next waste disposal panels. (Photo: DOE)

For the first time in a decade, crews have started mining a new disposal panel at the Department of Energy's Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) in New Mexico, the nation's deep geologic waste repository for defense-related transuranic waste. According to the DOE's Office of Environmental Management, during a ribbon-cutting at WIPP just before the new year, the spinning teeth of a multiton mechanical mining machine clawed through the ceremonial ribbon and began cutting the new Panel 11 out of the site's 250-million-year-old layer of salt.

Panel 11 is the first of two waste emplacement panels approved last year by the New Mexico Environment Department as part of a 10-year

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