

SUSANA MARTINEZ, GOVERNORDavid Martin, *Cabinet Secretary*Butch Tongate, *Deputy Secretary***NEWS RELEASE****May 11, 2012**

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**New Mexico Environment Department Settles  
Compliance Order Issued to Southwest Tire Processors, Inc.**

**Santa Fe, NM** – The New Mexico Environment Department (“NMED”) has settled an Administrative Compliance Order (“ACO”) issued in 2003 to Southwest Tire Processors (“STP”) and its operators – Jeanne M. Romero Gacanich and Moises Romero. The settlement included payment of a \$119,229 civil penalty.

“The results were worth the exceptional effort put into this case by NMED’s employees,” said NMED Secretary David Martin. “Photographs of the area (below) show the dramatic improvements from the time of the fire.”



June 2000



December 2011

The NMED’s 2003 ACO alleged serious operational, safety and permit-related violations of the Solid Waste Act and Regulations at STP’s tire recycling facility located southwest of Socorro, New Mexico. The alleged violations included the unsafe storage of an excessive number of scrap tires, bales or processed rubber near or underneath electrical power lines.

The tire recycling facility was consumed in a catastrophic fire, which occurred in June, 2000. The incident resulted in a response by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, which assisted by overseeing partial extinguishment of the fire by on-site burial of the burning rubber with heavy equipment using locally-acquired soil. Hot spots and flare ups continued for several years after the site was covered with soil.

After years of effort and site evaluation, including the installation of ground water monitoring wells and related monitoring at the NMED’s expense, STP and representatives of the “STP Trust” (an entity

comprised of representatives of Tri-State Electric Cooperative and STP) reached a settlement agreement that included site abatement through installation of an engineered cover (similar to the cover on a closed landfill) to help prevent infiltration and contamination of ground water, and payment of a \$119,229 civil penalty. The cover and site abatement work was performed under the direct supervision and oversight of a professional engineering firm, with close coordination and approval by the NMED.

“The installation of an engineered cap, ground water monitoring, and the deterrent achieved through the costs of compliance and payment of the civil penalty highlight the successful and necessary enforcement action taken by the NMED,” said Secretary Martin.

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