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Environment Department Moves Forward with Clean Up Schedule for Petroleum Contamination at Santa Fe County Courthouse Construction Site

Department Selects Engineering Firm to Conduct Cleanup

Santa Fe – The New Mexico Environment Department is moving forward with a cleanup schedule for petroleum contamination at the Santa Fe County Courthouse site – a remediation system is expected to be installed at the location by February or March. That system would begin operating in April.

“Our cleanup system will begin operating simultaneously as the county’s construction begins,” said New Mexico Environment Secretary Ron Curry. “The process we selected will expedite the time it will take to remove contamination by accessing that pollution through horizontal and vertical wells beneath the site.”

The department selected engineering firm Daniel B. Stephens & Associates, Inc. to complete the cleanup after a competitive process.

The county will excavate contaminated soil at the site while NMED and its contractor drill wells and set up the system. The county, which has said its construction will last about two years, intends to complete the courthouse by December 2011.

“We recognize the corrective action activities will help the economy of New Mexico by employing staff and subcontractors for the project and avoiding layoffs,” said NMED Petroleum Storage Tank Bureau Chief Jim Davis. “However, given the fiscal realities facing the state, it is also important to spend money from the Corrective Action Fund prudently. We will require DBS&A to perform at a high level, both fiscally and technically, during the remediation of the site.”

The department’s plan is to aggressively remove petroleum contamination at the site with a soil vapor extraction technique that will include the injection of heated process air into the soil at selected points to maximize the removal of the contamination.

NMED also proposes to use horizontal and vertical soil vapor extraction wells across the site to access hard to reach contamination. The horizontal wells will be installed beneath the existing District Attorney’s office building. Daniel B. Stephens will submit a final remediation plan containing plans and specifications for the

project by early December. The department will issue a public notice and commence a public comment period for the project at that time.

The department expects the petroleum contamination will be removed from the site within two years of the startup of the system. The engineering company, which will continue to monitor the site after the contamination is removed, will ensure state groundwater standards are met.

Meetings between the department, the county and their contractors have been positive and cooperative. The cleanup will be a coordinated effort between the county and the department.

Governor Richardson directed the New Mexico Environment Department in September to take the lead in the cleanup.

The department's Petroleum Storage Tank Bureau completed about 1,800 similar cleanups across the state that resulted in almost no contamination at those sites. The courthouse location is the site of two known leaking underground storage tanks that formerly belonged to gas stations in that area.

For more information, call Marissa Stone Bardino at (505) 827-0314.

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