

developed to the point where it received a license from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. Yet the project was cancelled in 2012 when PFS was unable to secure the necessary rights to transport used fuel to the site. Knox noted that it was not the DOE, the NRC, nor the Environmental Protection Agency that killed the project, but the Department of Interior. "You can have a willing host community, you can follow a long, arduous process, and you can do your due diligence, but politics in the U.S. make things very difficult," he said.

The lesson of PFS, Knox said, is the need to learn from the mistakes of the past, as well as to anticipate potential obstacles and understand how to overcome them. Knox pointed to Canada's adaptive, phased-management approach to siting a geologic repository as an example of how other countries are using a consent-based siting process.

## WIPP

During the keynote session "WIPP Restart and Long-Term Outlook," Ryan Flynn, cabinet secretary of the New Mexico Environment Department, said that his state is committed to reopening the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant. Located near

Carlsbad, N.M., the repository for defense-related transuranic waste has been closed since February 2014 due to an underground truck fire and subsequent but unrelated radiological release from a breached waste drum. Flynn said that while both accidents were preventable, WIPP performed well in minimizing the impacts of the incidents. "This facility works and works really well," he said.

Referencing a recent settlement between the state of New Mexico and the Department of Energy, Flynn stressed that his department is focused on implementing corrective actions rather than on punishing the DOE. According to Flynn, those corrective actions include triennial reviews of the facility, enhanced training for workers in the nonradiological areas of the mine, and changes to the DOE's waste characterization programs.

Also noting the DOE's recent announcement that the department will be unable to meet its initial goal of resuming partial operations at WIPP by early 2016, Flynn said that it is more important to get the recovery work done right than opening "on time." The schedule for resuming WIPP operations largely depends on the DOE and Congress, he said, adding that DOE's ability to manage its contractors in implementing changes also will influence the recovery schedule.



Flynn



Marcinowski

Flynn indicated that WIPP may be able to temporarily store waste above ground while recovery work proceeds. Frank Marcinowski, deputy assistant secretary of waste management with the DOE's Office of Environmental Management, confirmed that the DOE is looking at the option of surface storage at WIPP for transuranic waste containers. Surface storage at WIPP will allow the DOE to move forward with removing waste from cleanup sites and will demonstrate to site states that the DOE is working to meet its cleanup commitments, Marcinowski said.

When the DOE could resume shipments of waste to WIPP, however, remains uncertain, Marcinowski said. Factors that need to be considered before shipments can begin include the capability of WIPP to store waste and the regulatory compliance of waste-generating sites, he said. ■



Join the Decommissioning and Environmental Sciences Division



# ANS DESD

Working on projects in the nuclear decommissioning industry? Involved in the remediation of radiologically impacted sites? The **ANS Decommissioning and Environmental Sciences Division** wants you!

### Membership benefits include:

- Opportunities to network with leaders working current and potential new projects in the nuclear community with expertise in decommissioning, license termination, and the characterization and remediation of contaminated sites.
- Work with industry and regulatory experts in sustainable development and environmental stewardship.
- A semi-annual DESD newsletter on the status of the industry available only to members.
- Special pricing on publications related to the decommissioning and environmental sciences industry.
- Recognition and awards from peers for exceptional performance and lifetime achievement.

Why wouldn't you want to be a member of the DESD community?

Visit our website at [DESD.ANS.org](http://DESD.ANS.org)