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May 1, 2007
For Immediate Release

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Environment Department Completes Construction of Groundwater Remediation System for Superfund Site in Espanola

Department Will Implement System this Week

(Santa Fe, NM) – The New Mexico Environment Department completed construction of the groundwater remediation system for the North Railroad Avenue Plume Superfund Site in Española. The department will implement the system this week.

The remediation system is designed to treat groundwater over the perchloroethylene (PCE) contaminated plume, which is three quarters of a mile long and 260-feet deep. The plume stretches from Norge Town Cleaners on North Railroad Avenue south to the Rio Grande.

"The Environment Department took the lead on this project but we are thankful for cooperation with the U.S. EPA, the City of Espanola and Santa Clara Pueblo," said New Mexico Environment Department Secretary Ron Curry. "It is teamwork like this that makes such important projects achievable. The department will begin a pilot test phase this week in the source area to reduce the concentration of contaminants in the aquifer."

The $4 million construction project, which included 90 percent federal and 10 percent state matching grants, consists of two bioremediation systems that will use in-situ bioremediation to destroy PCE contaminants in the high concentration source area and deep zone aquifer. A third in-situ bioremediation system was installed in the area downgradient of the plume to prevent the continued migration of PCE plume and prevent contamination from impacting the Rio Grande. The pilot project is designed to test three bioremediation amendment solutions in order to determine the most viable alternative for full scale implementation. The biodegradable amendment solutions include vegetable oil, whey protein and ethyl lactate, which will be recirculated within the PCE plume. The amendments will add necessary electron donor required for biodegradation of the PCE to nontoxic end products. The pilot test is expected to take nine months to complete with full system operations scheduled to begin in March.

Contamination at the site ─ discovered in 1989 ─ affected at least 280 million gallons of water, forced the closure of two city supply wells and threatened to spread into the river.

The department's Superfund Oversight Section a assists EPA in the characterization of inactive hazardous waste sites, identifies sites which warrant remedial action under Superfund (CERCLA) and provides management assistance to EPA at Superfund sites listed on the National Priorities List (http://www.nmenv.state.nm.us/gwb/New_Pages/SOS.htm).

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