



THE GREEN GAZETTE

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 3

FALL 2004

ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT LANDFILL INSPECTIONS LEAD TO INCREASED EFFORTS AGAINST ILLEGAL DUMPING OF MEDICAL WASTE

Beginning on Wednesday, August 4, the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) conducted an enforcement crackdown at the Camino Real Landfill at the direction of Governor Bill Richardson. This effort followed an anonymous tip of illegal disposal at the Sunland Park landfill, the largest in New Mexico. Enforcement efforts included thorough inspections of each truckload of waste entering the landfill by teams of NMED inspectors from the Department's Solid Waste, Hazardous Waste, Air Quality and Occupational Health and Safety Bureaus.

In one week, the inspections uncovered six problematic loads containing infectious waste including hypodermic needles from hospital, dairy, veterinary or medical operations. "This infectious garbage can pose grave health hazards, especially to waste haulers and landfill workers," NMED Secretary Ron Curry stated.

Illegal disposal of infectious medical and veterinary waste in a municipal waste facility can lead to an increased risk of contracting many blood-borne illnesses including hepatitis B and AIDS. Following these actions, the landfill management traveled to Sunland Park to meet with Secretary Curry.

At this meeting Ronald Mittelstaedt, President & CEO of Waste Connections, expressed his commitment to redouble and strengthen efforts to educate generators in both New Mexico and Texas as to their responsibilities to comply with the Solid Waste Act. In a letter to the department Mr. Mittelstaedt further pledged to "direct our enhanced activities at medical facilities, clinics, veterinary facilities, horse and dairy farms, and other generators."

After meeting with Mr. Mittelstaedt and receipt of his letter, Secretary Curry directed NMED personnel to return to their normal inspection and compliance schedules.

"I appreciate Mr. Mittelstaedt's efforts in traveling to New Mexico and meeting with me in person to resolve this issue," said Secretary Curry. "I also appreciate how seriously Waste Connections took this problem. I am comfortable that the actions to be taken will help resolve the issues we have uncovered at the landfill."

NMED wishes to note the courteous and supportive efforts of all landfill personnel, as well as the tremendous efforts of the inspection team from NMED's Solid Waste, Hazardous Waste, and OSHA Bureaus during the eight days of inspections of every load entering the landfill.

"I am pleased with the landfill's efforts on this serious issue," said Secretary Curry.



Secretary Ron Curry and Bureau Chief Cindy Padilla of Solid Waste visit the Camino Real Landfill

"While I take them at their word, this will not be the last time Camino Real sees us in Sunland Park. We will be back to make sure these promises are lived up to."

Thank you to the following contributors for their submissions:

Erin Murphy
Ronald Duffy
Thomas A. Welts
Linda Sosa
Sherry Miller
Tom Skibitski

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Page 2	Letter from the Secretary
Page 3	Air Quality
Page 3	Who's Who
Page 4	Red or Green that is the Question
Page 5	Green Zia Recognition
Page 6	Employees of the Quarter

MISSION STATEMENT: TO PROVIDE THE HIGHEST QUALITY OF LIFE THROUGHOUT THE STATE BY PROMOTING A SAFE, CLEAN, AND PRODUCTIVE ENVIRONMENT.

training

Chemistry for Environmental Training Professionals-- Fundamentals 9-28-29, 2004 2052 Galisteo Santa Fe NM 87505 Linda Sosa 505-827-2633- or course description : www.trainex.org



Chemistry for Environmental Professionals--Applied (165.21) 9-30 to 10-1 2004 F2052 Galisteo Santa Fe NM 87505 or course description : www.trainex.org

Sampling for Hazardous Materials (165.9) 4-12-14,2005 F Emergency Mgmt Center 13 Bataan Blvd Santa Fe, NM 87504

Max Johnson 505-476-9620

Air Monitoring for Hazardous Materials (165.4) TBD-2005 For course description : www.trainex.org



A Message from Secretary Curry

This summer and fall has been busy seasons for the Environment Department. So busy in fact, that this issue of the Green Gazette is going out a little later than planned. For that we apologize, but we think that what you will find in this issue will be well worth the wait.

One item that kept many in the Department busy this summer was the multimedia inspection of the Camino Real Landfill in Sunland Park. These inspections sent about a dozen NMED employees to Sunland Park for a week in

August to comb each and every truck that planned to dump. Several loads of illegal medical waste were uncovered and properly disposed of as a result of these efforts.

This multimedia team, led by Solid Waste Bureau Chief Cindy Padilla and including personnel from her bureau as well as the Hazardous Waste, Air Quality and Occupational Health and Safety Bureaus, put in a terrific effort for New Mexico's environment. They also showed holism at work, proving again that by working together across bureaus we can accomplish tremendous things.

I applaud them for their efforts under the broiling southern New Mexico sun. Please read more about these inspections in this issue's cover story.

Secretary Ron Curry

New Plan will Protect Visibility in National Parks and Wilderness Areas

NMED's Air Quality Bureau is now moving forward with implementation of a recently approved plan to protect visibility in New Mexico's National Parks and Wilderness Areas. The multifaceted plan, adopted by the Environmental Improvement Board at its November 2003 meeting, addresses visibility impairment by instituting measures to lower emissions of pollutants that contribute to formation of "regional haze." Implementation of the plan initiates a regional program to restore visibility in national parks and wilderness areas to "natural" conditions by the year 2064. The plan includes requirements for sources of sulfur dioxide (such as coal-fired power plants, refineries, natural gas plants, and copper smelters) and smoke management.

Visibility impairment in the form of regional haze is created when light is absorbed or scattered by air pollution – gases and particles in the atmosphere. Haze is considered regional because pollutants from a wide variety of sources create it across large geographic areas. Sources such as vehicles, forest fires, and industrial sources emit haze-forming pollutants including sulfates, nitrates, and particulate matter.

The regional haze plan is New Mexico's answer to the federal Regional Haze Rule, a major effort announced in 1999 by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for improvement of visibility in 156 national parks and wilderness areas known as Class I areas. The nine Class I areas in New Mexico are Bandelier National Monument, Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge, Carlsbad Caverns National Park, and the Gila, Pecos, Salt Creek, San Pedro Parks, Wheeler Peak, and White Mountain Wilderness Areas. The ultimate goal of the EPA's visibility protection regulations is a return to natural visibility conditions in Class I areas by 2064. Depending on circumstances, natural conditions can mean visibility ranging up to a few hundred miles. The Regional Haze Rule requires states, in coordination with federal agencies and other stakeholders, to develop and implement air quality protection plans to reduce the pollution that causes visibility impairment.

For more information about the regional haze plan, go to the Air Quality Bureau's Regional Haze webpage at: www.nmenv.state.nm.us/aqb/Regional-Haze.html



DEPARTMENT PUTS LANDFILL TO GOOD USE

Progress on the new office space for District 1 Albuquerque is moving forward, albeit with some initial delay. The Department's newest office will be located at 5100 San Antonio, Drive, NE, just east of I-25. The site was formerly known as the City of Albuquerque San Antonio Landfill and was in use by the City and private residents between 1968 and 1970. The landfill was originally an arroyo approximately 25 feet deep at the west end where the Department's office will be located. Material placed in the unlined landfill was mainly residential and construction demolition wastes. It is interesting to note that much of the material had not decomposed over the intervening thirty-four years. Old newspapers could be unfolded and read, vegetation from yard cleanup seemed like it could have been placed last week and putrescible material was still putrescent! Landfills truly are time capsules for future archeologists (garbologists?).



Excavation proceeded to about 27 feet below ground surface until undisturbed soil was reached. Material was removed by the contractor and relocated to the Sandoval County Landfill. The excavation plan was approved by the City of Albuquerque and a permit to "open" the landfill was obtained from the Solid Waste Bureau, which also regulated the handling, transportation and eventual re-disposal of the waste.

Clean, engineered fill was placed in eighteen-inch lifts and moisture content was held to approximately three percent above optimum until ten feet below finished grade. The increased moisture content is intended to help retard (landfill) gas movement through the soil. Next came a ten-inch thick layer of crushed aggregate with an embedded six-inch diameter perforated plastic pipe to gather migrating gases and more engineered fill was placed to final grade. This methane recovery system will utilize passive turbines on the roof of the building to provide four air changes in the gravel layer under the building foundation based upon an average eight mile per hour wind.

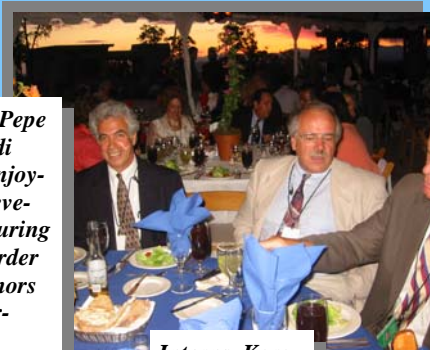
The previous owner worked with the Department's Voluntary Remediation Program before the site became available for development. The site was proposed as one of three different locations for a build-to-suit facility during the Request for Proposal (RFP) process. Eventually the proposal and location was selected as most responsive and a lease agreement was signed. It was serendipitous that the Environment Department should locate its District office on the site of a reclaimed landfill and sends the message that these "marginalized" spaces could be returned to productive use. By choosing this location the Department clearly demonstrates that these types of properties should not be stigmatized and could be appropriately developed. As an added bonus, the building was designed with adequate meeting space and will be made available to various boards and commissions for public hearings creating further opportunity to educate people about the value of returning reclaimed land to productive use. In this case the Environment Department truly exemplifies the real estate maxim of utilizing a property for the "highest and best use".

WHO'S WHO AT NMED



Larry Smolka (recently retires from Surface Water) inspecting a failed streambank structure on Coyote Creek

Dennis Pepe and Gedi Cibas enjoying an evening during the Border Governors Conference .



Interns Kara Hutchison and Taylor McClain gathering GIS data from Lincoln County, Eddy County and Chaves County.



Mark Kaufman of Hazardous Waste inspecting a truck at the Camino Real landfill.



Solid Waste Bureau Chief Cindy Padilla listens to comments from a recent Environmental Justice Listening Session.



EPA award winner Julie Wanslow of the Hazardous Waste Bureau



Robert Vialpando, Solid Waste Bureau & Robert Atencio Hazardous Waste Bureau



Bill Zeedyk and Mike Coleman of Surface Water with Owners at the Williams Ranch on Largo Creek in Catron County .

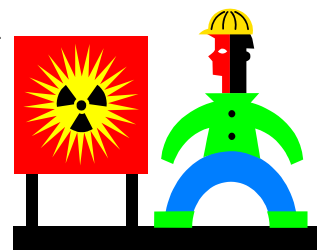
RADIATION CONTROL BUREAU CELEBRATES 30 YEARS



The Environment Department's Radiation Control Bureau celebrated 30 years of regulating radioactive materials usage in New Mexico by holding a retreat in August at Hyde Park. Employees had a potluck and barbeque. Speakers included the Bureau Chief, Field Operations Division Director and Human Resources Bureau Chief. New Mexico regulates radioactive materials through an agreement with the United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). Under this agreement New Mexico issues licenses to private and public entities that wish to use radioactive materials. Radioactive materials are used in research, as well as medical and industrial applications. The state is required to maintain compatibility with federally established guidelines and these rules are codified as the New Mexico Radiation Protection Regulations. The mission is to control the beneficial uses of ionizing radiation, while providing for protection against intrinsic hazards that it can pose to workers, the public, and the environment. The Radiation Control Bureau regulates uses of sources of radioactivity and radiation under the statutory authority of the New Mexico Radiation Control Act. Radioactive materials at the National Laboratories and the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant are exempt from regulation by the state. In addition to the licensure and inspection of radioactive materials, the Radiation Control Bureau has programs involving registration and inspection of radiation generating devices such as x-ray machines, radon testing and awareness, emergency response personnel training, and radiologic technologist certification. For more information about these programs, contact the Bureau at (505) 476-3060 or see the website at:

www.nmenv.state.nm.us/nmrcb/home.html

The Radiation Control Bureau was created back in 1974 and at that time included the licensure of uranium mines and mills. Sometime later with the decline of the uranium industry, the NRC took this portion of the program back from New Mexico. Last year the Bureau began to collect fees from the licensees it serves. This money is deposited into a on-reverting, dedicated radiation protection fund.



INTERN PROGRAM PROVES SUCCESSFUL



Summer Interns worked in Ruidoso Downs area Carlsbad area (Standpipe), and Roswell area (YO). Helping NMED collect info on groundwater. Interns Kara Hutchison and Taylor McClain worked gathering background information GIS data from Lincoln County, Eddy County and Chaves County.

Learning the operation of the Hach meters, Conductivity meter, GPS units, range finders, and pH meters. The study areas were sampled by the interns through door-to-door canvassing of the areas and asking for permission to sample. Mailings were sent out, letting property owners know that we going to be in the areas. The samples collected were analyzed for pH, conductivity, temperature, iron, fluoride, and nitrate. During sampling information was gathered on well location (GPS), well depth, water depth, and distance from nearest septic system.

This information is being gathered to further our understanding of the effects of septic systems in areas with small lots and private wells.

Palo Verde Study Area (Ruidoso Downs)

The average conductivity for the Palo Verde Study Area was 2391 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ with a maximum of 3800 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ and a minimum of 1300 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$.

Preliminary results indicate an area of elevated Nitrates on the down slope end of the subdivision along Stetson Rd.

The average depth to ground water (per property owners) was 126 ft with a maximum of 200 ft and a minimum of 60 ft.

The average Nitrate was 2.1 mg/L with a maximum of 11.9 mg/L and a minimum of 0.2 mg/L.

Standpipe Study Area (Carlsbad)

The average conductivity for the Standpipe Study Area was 1997 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ with a maximum of 6800 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ and a minimum of 825 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$.

Water quality degraded the nearer to the canal a well is located. One resident stated that his well water clouded up a couple of days after the canal started flowing.

The average depth to ground water (per property owners) was 62 ft with a maximum of 160 ft and a minimum of 10 ft.

The average Nitrate was 2.4 mg/L with a maximum of 12.7 mg/L and a minimum of 0.1 mg/L.

YO Study Area (Roswell)

The average conductivity for the YO Study Area was 3320 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ with a maximum of 3910 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ and a minimum of 2730 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$.

The Nitrates were elevated over almost the entire Study Area. Only 2 sites had Nitrates less than 4.2 mg/L.

The average depth to ground water (per property owners) was 78 ft with a maximum of 95 ft and a minimum of 60.

The average Nitrate was 5.7 mg/L with a maximum of 10.5 mg/L and a minimum of 0.2 mg/L.

Summary

The interns gathered a large amount of data. It will be interesting to see what analysis of the data yields. It is also interesting to note that almost no one in the Study areas stated that they were drinking the water from their wells.



Red or Green -that's the Question

Here in New Mexico, the state question is "Will you have Red or Green?" That could be a question for status of a food establishment – will your status after an inspection be a "Red" sticker or a "Greenish-blue" sticker.

In food inspections, there are over 160 items that are currently checked in a food inspection. Of that number, 48 of them "can" bring about a "downgrade" or red sticker for a food establishment status immediately. The others, if repeated "can" also bring about a "downgrade" or red sticker notice.

Your local Environment Department looks very closely at those actions in a food establishment that can get people ill. With over 250 known food illnesses that are caused by either source food or mishandling food, the inspections done on food establishments really look at those practices that put the general public at the highest risk for getting a disease. Just how a facility looks is not enough to tell you how they practice food handling. This inspector has seen very clean appearing facilities, in the back food handling areas, and has found major food handling practices that can put numerous people at risk for a food illness. He has also seen commercial kitchen's that have looked like a whirl wind has hit it, but all the actual food handling practices and temperatures were right on the money.

Appearance of cleanliness is a factor in assessing a food establishment's status, but what really matters is that the food itself is being handled properly. Equipment that gets food to the proper temperature, keeps it at the proper temperature, and is served in a safe manner are the most important factors in food handling – if done right, the facility will keep it's Greenish-blue or "approved" sticker.



Some people wonder if a facility with an "unsatisfactory" or red sticker can stay open. Under many circumstances they can stay open if they have started correcting the problems noted in an inspection. If the food temperatures are not correct and the time frame to grow food illness bacteria or toxins hasn't occurred, then the facility personnel can re-heat the food to proper temperatures to eliminate the problem. These facilities will be looked at again, and frequently, and they do NOT want to be downgraded again within a 12-month period. If a food establishment is downgraded twice in one year (12 month period), there is a likelihood that a hearing would be called to see if the facility will keep their food permit. Most often a facility will have to keep records of temperatures, show that their employees get the proper training in food handling, and show that any physical violations will be corrected within a scheduled time (usually within a few weeks or months).

If you wish to find out how your favorite restaurant does in an inspection, the records of all inspections are public record. These records go back to when the facility/owner originally opened the place. You can contact your local Environment Department for the state of New Mexico to see what a transpired over the years.

Which Environmental Problem is the result of Chemical reactions in the atmosphere that involve sulfur?

- A) Smog C) Acid Rain
B) Deforestation D) Holes in the ozone layer

(Answer on Page 5)



Training the New Food Workforce

More than 200 diseases are known to be transmitted by food. CDC reports that there are approximately 75 million cases of Food borne illness a year resulting in 325,000 hospitalizations and 5000 deaths.

About 60% of these illnesses result from eating in public food service facilities. The remaining 40% originate from the home environment. While NMED has regulatory oversight with the public eating facilities in New Mexico, there is a significant risk to the citizens of New Mexico from improper food handling practices within their private homes. NMED is promoting safer home food safety practices through public education.

In the past few years, District III has partnered with the Border Health office of the NMDOH and its 'promotora' program to bring knowledge of proper food handling practices into the homes of communities along the U.S. - Mexico Border.

This year, District III is partnering with a nursing class from NMSU to conduct an educational opportunity to a particularly active group in the food service industry. This latest effort is to reach the ever revolving fast food food-service worker who is usually in their teens or early twenties with little or no training in safe food handling practices.

District III food specialist, Mary Lou LaCasse, will conduct Food Safety classes to the small group of nursing students (8), and other District III staff will provide operational training opportunities to the nursing students by accompanying Environmentalists on routine food facility inspections. The nursing students will in turn provide develop a Food Safety Training curriculum and train a larger group of high school students in both the culinary arts class and general science classes at a local high school.

Hopefully through the multiplying factor of training the trainer concept, a larger portion of the younger workers entering the fast food and other food service industry will possess a higher level of awareness and knowledge of safe food handling practices. If the program proves successful, we and the Nursing school hopes to make the outreach a permanent part of the nursing curriculum.

During National Pollution Prevention Week, September 20-24 2004, New Mexico Environment Department employees recycled over 280 pounds of white paper, and saved over 3,000 miles of emissions by walking and biking to work, carpooling, or using public transportation.



(ANSWER FROM PAGE 3)
C. ACID RAIN

Congratulations to the 2004 Green Zia Environmental Excellence Recognition Organizations



for saving over \$1.6 million, 2 million gallons of water, 4 million kilowatt hours of electricity and reducing their hazardous waste generation by over 200,000 pounds.

The Green Zia Environmental Excellence Program celebrated it's annual recognition with a luncheon at the Inn at Sunrise Springs. A total of eight companies applied and six companies received recognition.



Kirtland Air Force Base- Achievement Recognition. In 2003 Kirtland Air Force Base, one of the largest employers in the state, recycled 28% of solid waste and saved \$157,000 through recycling. They reduced their hazardous waste generation by 3 tons, and reduced 65,418 million BTU of electric from heating and cooling.

Cannon Air Force Base- Achievement Recognition. In 2003 Cannon saved over \$1.2 million dollars in landfill tipping fees, eliminated more than 200,000 pounds of hazardous waste, achieved a 20% reduction in irrigation demands and diverted more than 46,000 tons of recyclable or re-usable material from the landfill.

NASA White Sands Test Facility (WSTF)- Achievement Recognition. In 2003 NASA WSTF saved almost \$10,000 in copy center costs and eliminated the use of Freon-113 altogether. They recycled 33,750 pounds of white paper and increased their "green purchasing" by 3.8%.

Alamogordo Public Schools- Achievement Recognition. Alamogordo Public Schools saved almost \$200,000 through energy consumption reductions that account for 25% of total use. They have prevented 184,330 pounds of CO2 and 19,928 pounds of SO2 from entering the environment and saved 2 million gallons of water.

Vista Corrugated, a Georgia-Pacific Company- Commitment Recognition. In 2003 Vista Corrugated installed a system that has enabled them to re-use corrugator-chilling water multiple times for an annual cost savings of over \$5,000. They estimate that by the end of 2003, Vista will have recycled 12,500 pounds of scrap and waste paper.



High Energy Laser Systems Test Facility (HELSTF)- Commitment Recognition. HELSTF anticipates seeing results from the Integrated Product Team that is investigating ways to remove and replace hexavalent chromium in the de-ionized water system of one of the major laser systems.

RADIATION CONTROL BUREAU ASSISTS WITH TRANSPORTATION VIDEO



Sherry Miller of the Radiation Control Bureau worked with the NM Department of Transportation and Los Alamos National Laboratories under the direction of the New Mexico Surety Task Force to create a short audio/visual presentation on the safe use and transportation of radioactive density moisture gauges. The Task Force viewed the final 10 minute presentation at their August meeting, and was very satisfied with it. A DVD of the presentation will be distributed to other transportation, homeland security, and radiation control programs nationwide. The presentation was aimed at the users of these gauges, which are used as a quality control measure to test the compaction and water content of materials used in constructing roadbeds. Sherry spoke on camera, reading a narrative she had prepared detailing the issues surrounding regulatory authorities, transportation, usage, reciprocity, storage, security, documentation, standard operating procedures, and penalties for noncompliance. The Task Force was originally conceived following the Oklahoma City bombing, and gathered support following the events of September 11, 2001. They met on September 13, 2001, and have been meeting monthly ever since.

WWW.NMENV.STATE.NM.US

EMPLOYEES OF THE QUARTER

Janet Silva, Ground Water Quality Bureau, Water and Waste Management Division **Ms. Janet Silva** is being recognized as the Fall Employee of the Quarter for the NMED Water and Waste Management Division for her unmatched service and guidance as a Budget Analyst Supervisor in the Ground Water Quality Bureau. She recently displayed great leadership when she guided financial staff from other bureaus to fashion the budget language and calculate the numbers for a Super BAR, resulting in reduced federal budgets across the Water and Waste Management Division. Janet's contributions to the Ground Water Quality Bureau are enormous and her opinion is often sought by program managers, bureau chiefs and technical staff.



Dominic McBride, Petroleum Storage Tank Bureau, Environmental Protection Division. **Mr. Dominic McBride** is being recognized as the Fall Employee of the Quarter for the Environmental Protection Division for distinguishing himself as an employee that takes personal responsibility for excellent performance as a systems analyst. He recently prepared an IDEA Exam and Licensing Module for tank installer certification single-handedly, and set up an excellent training week and established standard operating procedures. Dominic is a self-starter and regularly stays late and arrives early to work to solve problems for NMED staff. Extra efforts include spending many late hours providing his experience to the NMED Web Committee and teaching himself GIS tools and concepts in order to move the Petroleum Storage Tank Bureau closer to its goal of integrating spatial information into its management program.

Michelle King, District IV, Field Operations Division.

Ms. Michelle King is being recognized as the Fall Employee of the Quarter for the Field Operations Division for her continuous dependability and support of the Clovis Field Office. She has returned to the office after only 29 days of leave after giving birth to her first child. This and other displays of devotion to the field operations staff, including enthusiastic willingness to assist the public access NMED services, make her an exemplary NMED employee.

Employees of the Quarter receive a plaque of recognition, a brief bag with the NMED logo and one day of administrative leave.

Indoor Air Quality

On July 27th and 28th, as part of the New Mexico Indoor Air Quality "Tools for Schools Program", Michael A. Taylor, of the New Mexico Environment Department's Radon Outreach Program, participated in providing training for Albuquerque Public Schools HVAC



maintenance technicians. Mr. Taylor's participation included an introduction to radon and radon hazards in schools and the importance and impact of HVAC systems on indoor radon. Radon is an odorless, colorless, tasteless, naturally occurring radioactive gas that can build up to unhealthy levels indoors. Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the U.S. after cigarette smoke. According to Mr. Taylor, "The only way to tell if you have a radon problem is to test. I find it very encouraging that APS and the APS Environmental Management Department are testing Albuquerque schools and have an ongoing program to address radon issues."

Developed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the IAQ Tools for Schools Program provides local schools with guidance and training to identify, assess and correct potential indoor air quality problems in schools, ensuring that students, teachers, and staff are working and learning in a healthful indoor environment.

For publication information contact:

Darla Aiken at 827-2931 or
Email: darla_aiken@nmenv.state.nm.us

