

## Area Potash Company Signs Safety Agreement With Federal Government

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Article Launched: 12/05/2007 09:04:11 PM MST

CurrentArgus.com; Carlsbad, New Mexico

CARLSBAD — A Carlsbad potash company and a federal agency have signed an agreement to work together to promote safety.

On Wednesday morning, executives with Intrepid Potash New Mexico signed a partnership agreement with Edward E. Lopez, district manager for the Mine Safety and Health Administration, during a ceremony at one of Intrepid's Eddy County facilities.

The company and agency, according to the agreement, agree that zero injuries and industrial illness is an achievable goal for the mining industry. In pursuit of this, they agree to share information and work together on training. The two entities also agree to make every effort to quickly resolve potential future citation issues, should they arise.

Intrepid becomes the ninth company out of 1,857 mining operations to sign such an agreement within MSHA's six-state south central district. The first of such partnership agreements were signed in 2005. MSHA is a division of the United States Department of Labor that regulates the mining industry.

"Mr. Lopez initiated this (program) inside of the MSHA organization," said Randy Logsdon, Intrepid's manager of safety. "Intrepid management decided it would be a good thing for us to do."

Lopez spoke to a room full of Intrepid miners and administrators before the signing.



Edward Lopez, district manager for the Mine Safety and Health Administration, speaks during the signing of an agreement with Intrepid Potash New Mexico, LLC Wednesday. Pictured, from left, are Intrepid's Hugh Harvey, Randy Foote, Pat Avery and Jamie Whyte. Randy Logsdon, Intrepid's safety manager, also signed the agreement. ( Kyle Marksteiner/Current-Argus )

"I came from the same place you did," he said, noting that he was a fourth generation copper miner from Arizona. "I have miner's blood."

He said the health problems some family members faced inspired him to make his current career selection.

"We have to find a way together to stop injuries, accidents and industrial illness. We can stop all injuries," he said.

"We need to work together so we can understand and appreciate what goes on in the other guy's shop," agreed Hugh Harvey, one of Intrepid's partners.

The agreement doesn't contain any new compliance initiatives, Lopez said, nor does it excuse any enforcement statutes. It does seek to establish modern-day initiatives, he said, by reinforcing the fact that miners are professionals.

"By building bridges between the government and industry, basically we're agreeing that we're going to all do the right thing," he said. "We can work together proactively to see if we can build a better mousetrap."

As an example, Logsdon said the company is currently conducting risk assessment programs. Results can be shared directly with the federal agency due to increased interaction.

"If other mines can benefit from that, MSHA can be the conduit," he said.

Randy Foote, Intrepid's general manager, highlighted the history of the Mine Safety and Health Administration and outlined how much safer mining has become since 1977. Pat Avery, the company's president, said he's always been in support of MSHA having high expectations.

"If you go to the doctor, you don't want an easy exam," he noted.

Company Vice President Jamie Whyte outlined company incentive plans that encourage safety.

"We've long been working together to achieve these goals," he said. "Now this agreement is memorializing these types of actions."

Intrepid purchased the Carlsbad holdings in 2004. The company currently employs 590 in the Carlsbad area up 140 employees from three years ago. Intrepid also has facilities in Moab and Wendover, Utah.