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Potash project keeping steam

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NEWS-SUN

The Intercontinental Potash Inc. team has completed testing of the Capitan Reef aquifer and is on schedule for a construction start in 2014.

Randy Foote, chief operating officer for ICP, said the big news right now with the company is how it has kept on track with its planned schedule for opening the new Lea County potash mine.

"We are still moving forward, working on progress," he said. "People don't realize how unique this is. Most new operations slow down, but we have managed to stay pretty well on schedule."

Foote said the company is working on several deep



drill coring operations to remove between two and four tons of polyhalite from the ground for further testing for the company's final feasibility study.

"That is being done by the company that has the largest potash operations in the world," Foote said.

The 6-inch diameter holes will take weeks to com-

plete and properly extract the polyhalite.

ICP plans to build an underground mining operation some 1,500 feet below the surface about 30 miles west of Jal along U.S. Highway 128. Earlier this year the company inked a \$39 million agreement with Yara International ASA to purchase 30 percent of the mine's production for 15 years.

The project aims to mine polyhalite, a mineral substance with high grade sulphate of potash. The sulphate of potash will be extracted from the remaining materials through a leaching process. Sulphate of potash is a key ingredient in many

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COURTESY INTERCONTINENTAL POTASH

Hydrologists test water samples from the Capitan Reef aquifer for Intercontinental Potash Inc. The company will use the saline water to leech sulphate of potash from polyhalite ore deposits it plans to mine from beneath Lea County.

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forms of fertilizer.

Foote said the project is still in the early stages, but once it breaks ground it should cause an influx of additional support businesses to locate in the area.

"The real story is that when we build it," he said. "As you build it you will have some new businesses coming in. There are supply places in Carlsbad that feed the mining industry, but there will be additional ones coming in."

The company's recent completion of testing on the Capitan Reef, which is a source of brackish, non-potable water, proved out the reef's ability to supply the company with water needed for leaching.

"The success of this aquifer

test marks yet another mission-critical milestone in our plan to produce the world's lowest cost SOP from our valuable mining assets in south-east New Mexico," said company President Sidney Himmel in a release. "Moreover, we remain on schedule and on budget with the development of the Project and are making important strides forward with our Bankable Feasibility Study, which is underway and anticipated to be completed by August 31, 2013."

The mine is expected to have a life-span of more than 100 years and produce a product with a value of more than \$130 billion. An estimated 500 jobs will be created by the project.

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