



New Potash Mine May Bring 400 Jobs to Carlsbad

By Natalie Gross ngross@currentargus.com

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Since announcing its plans to open a mine near Carlsbad last year, IC Potash Corporation has continued to promise a future of desirable effects on the local economy.

"The most important thing is it's a new set of jobs," said Chief Operating Officer Randy Foote, who said Wednesday the mine will employ approximately 400 people for its operation intended to begin at the end of 2016. Before that, the construction work will provide 900-1,000 new jobs for an 18-month to two-year period.

"I think it's going to be great," said Carlsbad Mayor Dale Janway. "They'll be good high-paying jobs with good benefits."

IC, which stands for Intercontinental, was founded in 2008 and is a Canada-based company. Plans for a mine near Carlsbad have been in the works since the company's inception, Foote said, and IC Potash is currently working on a feasibility study for its first mine location between Carlsbad and Hobbs. That, as well as an environmental impact statement for the Bureau of Land Management to review by March 2014, is well underway, Foote said.

Foote, former general manager of Intrepid Potash, said the mine may present some competition to his former employer and Mosaic, but not directly. IC Potash will be mining a different kind of mineral - polyhalite, or sulfate of potash - whereas the other companies mine sylvite and langbeinite.

"Nobody in Carlsbad is currently making potassium sulfate," Foote said of IC Potash's industry. "It's used for high-valued crops like fruits, nuts, vegetables and tobacco." Foote said IC Potash will be the lowest cost producer of potassium sulfate in the world, and the company will sell the fertilizer internationally. Janway and others on the city administration are convinced Carlsbad will be affected positively by the mine's operation, despite the current housing and water supply situation.

Foote, a former long-time resident of Carlsbad, said he's aware of the challenges presented by Carlsbad's growth and also the often-heard complaint that it's hard to get good help in this area.

"I think we will do the same thing that everybody else does. We'll offer competitive wages and support the community as best we can. The benefits are a win, win," Foote said.

Representatives from IC Potash, including Foote, will be traveling to southeast New Mexico for public hearings in August and will be in Carlsbad, Hobbs and Jal Aug. 13-15.

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