

Gila Resources
Information
Project

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MISSION STATEMENT

Recognizing that human and environmental systems are inseparable and interdependent, Gila Resources Information Project pursues two goals: To protect and nurture human communities by safeguarding the natural resources that sustain us all; and to safeguard natural resources by facilitating informed public participation in resource use decisions.

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To become a member and receive a copy of Get A GRIP, a minimum donation of \$5.00 is appreciated. GRIP is a 501(c)(3), tax-exempt organization; your contribution is tax-deductible.

Your privacy is important to us. GRIP will never share your name or personal information without your consent.

The Answer, My Friends, Could Have Been Blowing in the Wind **GRIP's Petition for Temporary Restraining Order Forces Phelps Dodge to Improve Hurley Smelter Stack Demolition Plans**

by Sally Smith, Director of Responsible Mining

It's not an every day occurrence that 500-foot smelter stacks are demolished within 500 feet of a residential area, let alone in our own Grant County. Yet last May, executives of mining giant Phelps Dodge (PD) expected the public to blindly trust them when they announced their intent to drop the two deteriorating structures in Hurley, east of Silver City. The public was not even informed of any of the details of this event until three days before the originally scheduled demolition.

When notified last spring that the demolition had been moved up and was to take place in two weeks, GRIP staff filed a petition for a Temporary Restraining Order (TRO) to force the company to provide the community its demolition, evacuation, and air quality monitoring plans. GRIP staff's perspective was that the public had a right to know the details of a hazardous activity taking place in their community. Although its petition to halt the demolition until the public's health and safety had been adequately protected was denied in court, GRIP's action forced Phelps

Dodge to provide some additional information to the public, take a second look at their plans, and make some procedural changes.

Since PD's announcement in September 2005 that the stacks would eventually come down, GRIP has raised concerns about exactly how the company planned to demolish the stacks. GRIP's primary concerns were protection of the health of the citizens of Hurley and prevention of recontamination of the recently cleaned-up residential yards in Hurley.

In a January 2007 Silver City Daily Press article, PD spokesperson Richard Peterson said that the company had not yet begun to plan this event. So when GRIP was notified that the demolition date had in fact been moved up to May from the 2nd quarter to 3rd quarter of 2007, GRIP's staff was understandably surprised and felt compelled to take action.

GRIP staff had been in contact with the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) Air Quality Bureau (AQB) and NMED Water Quality Bureau (WQB) since

see Smelter Stack Demolition, p4



Photos of Hurley smelter stack demolition taken from Chino Blvd. and Romero St., southwest of the stacks.

Ten-Year Review of Chino AOC

September 18, 2007; 7:00pm; Bayard Community Center

The Community Work Group will begin a review of progress made thus far to clean up contamination from historical mining activity at the Chino mine under the Chino Administrative Order on Consent (AOC). Back in 1997, clean up was expected to take 5 years. In 2007, progress towards remediation of contaminated sites is far from complete. Chris Eustice, NMED point person for the AOC, will give a presentation on the AOC past, present and future, with discussion of AOC issues including scheduling and policy.