

4.2 UNEMPLOYMENT

Unemployment is relatively low in the two-county area. By the end of 1976, the average unemployment rate in Eddy County was 6.7 percent, while in Lea County 4.3 percent was recorded. Unemployment varies significantly from month to month. Higher unemployment rates are generally recorded during the month of June each year, and lower unemployment rates are generally recorded in the late spring or late fall.

A review of those individuals applying for work through the New Mexico Employment Security Commission revealed a large number of technical occupations available in the area. Many of these occupations were directly connected with construction or with mining--the two occupational categories needed for the construction of the WIPP project. Additionally, this information showed a large number of clerical and secretarial skills available in the area.

4.3 UNDER UNEMPLOYMENT AND DISGUISED UNEMPLOYMENT

The unemployment rate computed by the state and federal governments is based upon those individuals actively seeking employment. In some cases, an area may experience a defined unemployment rate and have a significant amount of underemployment. Underemployment refers to occupations or jobs that do not take full advantage of an employed individual's potential. Also, disguised unemployment may exist in which case many individuals are not actively seeking employment but would take a job ~~if~~ a job were available in the area. These concepts are difficult to measure, particularly at the sub-