

1.1 EMPLOYMENT AND POPULATION continued

4

jobs will be an indirect result of the construction of the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant.

Of those jobs created as an indirect result of the construction phase of the WIPP project, it is estimated that some 46 percent will be filled by newcomers to the area who are attracted by new employment opportunities.

During the first year of construction, approximately 1,600 new individuals will migrate to the area. In 1980 an additional 1,300 will be attracted to the area; in 1981 the impact of the construction phase is expected to be complete with an additional 400 migrants. Thus, in 1982, the final full year of construction, the impact of the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant on the area should be static, with 3,300 total new individuals attracted to the two-county area.

It should be noted that during the years of plant construction, the unemployment rate is expected to drop substantially--to an overall rate of approximately 3.5 percent for the combined two-county area. This, however, is not an unusual unemployment rate for these counties. In 1976, Lea County experienced monthly unemployment rates as low as 3.1 percent and an overall average of 4.3 percent for the year. During the 1960s when economic conditions were somewhat depressed in the two-county area, the unemployment rate in Eddy County never rose above 6.9 percent (1963) on an annual basis, and was as low as 4.6 percent (1960). In Lea County during the 1960s the unemployment rate was 3.8 percent in 1963, and as low as 2.8 percent in 1968. However, a level of 3.5 percent will essentially constitute an area of labor shortage, given today's unemployment rates and conditions throughout the State and the Nation.