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For Immediate Release

SRS COMPLETES PROCESSING OVER 1 MILLION GALLONS OF DECONTAMINATED SALT WASTE

AIKEN, S.C. (March 19) – More than 1 million gallons of decontaminated salt solution at the Savannah River Site (SRS) has been safely processed, mixed into a cement-like material and poured into vaults.

That milestone sets the stage for new salt waste processing facilities that are expected to start operations later this spring.

Washington Savannah River Company (WSRC) met the milestone by processing the salt waste, called Deliquification, Dissolution and Adjustment (DDA) material, through the Saltstone Production and Disposal Facilities at the end of last week. The processing of DDA material continues.

“Interim salt processing is a critical component of DOE closing the circle on treatment of liquid tank waste,” said Terrel Spears, Assistant Manager for Waste Disposition Project, DOE-Savannah River Operations Office. “This processing milestone demonstrates real progress in the safe removal and permanent disposition of low-activity salt waste and supports DOE’s ultimate priority to close our tank farm system and reduce risk.”

The 1 million gallons of DDA material was processed to support Defense Waste Processing Facility operations and tank closure work. In addition, the material is processed to make room for the feed waste that will be used this spring in the Actinide Removal Process/Modular Caustic Side Solvent Extraction Unit (ARP/MCU).

DDA is a process for treating salt waste that is low in radioactivity. The process works by removing the liquid solution contained within the salt cake in the tanks (Deliquification), dissolving the salt that remains, and adjusting the salt concentration to acceptable SPF feed concentrations.

SRS is the only Site within the DOE complex to have processed and permanently dispositioned salt solutions removed from waste tanks.

“Our employees are safely moving this salt waste from storage to disposal, removing risk and opening the door to more salt waste processing,” said Dave Olson, WSRC’s LWO Executive Vice President. “Sending this material through Saltstone supports DOE’s highest priority, the closing of waste tanks.”

(more)

The WSRC Team:

Washington Savannah River Company LLC • Bechtel Savannah River, Inc. • BNG America Savannah River Corporation
BWXT Savannah River Company • CH2 Savannah River Company

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Between March and August of last year, processing of decontaminated salt solution had been suspended due to an appeal of the modified permit needed to operate the Saltstone facilities. In August 2007, a settlement agreement was reached. With the lawsuit settled, Saltstone resumed operations for the safe disposal of decontaminated salt solution in support of DOE's risk reduction priority.

"Our employees have been dedicated to safely and efficiently operating this facility," said Elester Patten, Saltstone facilities manager. "They have been innovative in their thinking, careful in their planning, and practical in their work, resulting in the outstanding achievements to date."

Saltstone is now preparing to receive decontaminated salt solution from ARP/MCU, scheduled to begin processing salt waste in April, and the Salt Waste Processing Facility, scheduled for start-up in 2013.

SRS is owned by the U.S. Department of Energy and operated by a team of companies led by the Washington Savannah River Company, a subsidiary of URS Corporation, Washington Division.

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