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For Immediate Release

## **Modifications Expand H Canyon Capabilities, Ease Burden on Waste Tanks**

AIKEN, S.C. (July 22, 2008) – Washington Savannah River Company (WSRC) recently completed one of the most extensive reconfigurations H Canyon has seen since it began operating in 1955, expanding the facility’s capabilities, reducing waste generation, and preserving space in the site’s liquid waste storage tanks. The reconfiguration was performed in stages and took over four years to complete.

H Canyon, located near the center of the Department of Energy’s (DOE) Savannah River Site (SRS), is the only operational large-scale chemical separations facility of its kind in the United States. It is designed to chemically separate and recover useful nuclear materials, and discard generated waste in a liquid form to nearby H Tank Farm.

SRS engineers and operations personnel developed an approach that took an existing unit operation and reconfigured piping routes and process tanks, and revised numerous processing procedures in order to split waste streams into high-level and low-level. The high-level portion goes to the tank farms, as it always has, while the low-level portion now goes to Saltstone feed tanks. Saltstone is the SRS facility that disposes of low-level liquid waste by turning it into a concrete-like grout. WSRC projects that it will reduce its high-level waste generation by up to 90,000 gallons per year, at a cost savings of approximately \$20 million over a five-year period.

“This was an idea that was needed very badly,” says Leo Sain, WSRC president. “Not all of the waste that was being sent to the tank farms was high-level waste, and it just makes sense to split out the low-level portion and dispose of it differently.”

When the project was completed, the facility performed a self-assessment to return the revised operations to full service, and no pre-start findings were identified. The assessment noted that the process knowledge of the operators, managers, and engineers was a strength.

“Every member of the H Canyon participated in this success” says Sain. “Everyone had to buy in to it and become very familiar with the new way of running this facility.”

SRS is owned by DOE and operated by a team of companies led by URS Washington Division.

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### **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