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DOE'S SRS STRONG IN COMPLIANCE, CONTINUES LOW RADIATION IMPACT, ACCORDING TO 2005 ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

AIKEN, S.C. (Sept. 26) – The Department of Energy's Savannah River Site turned in an excellent environmental compliance record in 2005, and its operations continued to result in minimal impact to the offsite public, according to the *SRS Environmental Report for 2005*. The 110-page annual report and accompanying CD are being released to the public this week.

“We are pleased that the report confirms the Department's commitment to environmental compliance and safety and health best practices at this DOE site,” said Jeff Allison, DOE's Savannah River Operations Office manager. “This report shows that the Site's radioactive and chemical discharges to air and water were below regulatory standards for environmental protection and public health protection during 2005. It also shows that the Site's air and water quality met appropriate standards, and the radiation dose caused by SRS discharges was smaller than natural background doses or safety-based dose standards.”

SRS environmental reports have been produced for over 50 years. Copies are distributed to government officials, universities, public libraries, environmental and civic groups, news media, SRS employees, and various interested individuals.

On the strength of excellent performance in a number of major audits, the site operated for the entire 12-month period covered by the environmental report without a Notice of Violation (NOV) from its primary regulator—the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control—or from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. This was part of a 20-month period during which no NOVs were issued to SRS.

The report notes that the largest radiation dose any offsite individual could have received from SRS operations in 2005 was estimated to be 0.13 millirem, or less than 1 percent of the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) all-pathway dose standard of 100 millirem per year. (A millirem is a standard unit of measure for radiation exposure.) This calculated dose also is extremely small compared to the natural average dose of about 300 millirem per year to people in the United States—and more than 13-percent less than the site's 2004 all-pathway dose of 0.15 millirem.

Environmental monitoring is conducted extensively within a 2,000-square-mile network extending 25 miles from SRS, with some monitoring performed as far as 100 miles from the site. The area includes neighboring cities, towns, and counties in Georgia and South Carolina. Thousands of samples of air, rainwater, surface water, drinking water, groundwater, food products, wildlife, soil, sediment, and vegetation are collected by SRS and state authorities and analyzed for the presence of radioactive and nonradioactive contaminants.

NEWS from The Savannah River Site



“The Savannah River Site environment is as clean today as it has ever been,” said Bob Pedde, President of the Washington Savannah River Company, the site’s operating contractor. “We continue to operate a very far reaching monitoring program, and to provide our stakeholders with a documented record of our environmental stewardship. It’s a good story, and it continues to show that we can carry out our missions with little impact to the environment.”

SRS’s compliance with environmental regulations and with DOE orders related to environmental protection also provides assurance that onsite processes do not adversely impact human health or the environment. For example, the site had a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) compliance rate of 99.9 percent in 2005, continuing a trend of improvement by bettering its 99.8-percent rate of 2004 and its 99.7-percent rate of 2003. The NPDES program protects streams, reservoirs, and other wetlands by limiting the release of nonradiological pollution into surface waters. Discharge limits are set for each facility to ensure that SRS operations do not negatively impact aquatic life or degrade water quality.

The report is available in hard-copy format and on a CD located inside the back cover of the report. The CD also includes extensive data tables referenced in the report—as well as annual reports from a number of other site organizations. The environmental report also can be accessed on the World Wide Web at the following address: <http://www.srs.gov/general/pubs/ERsum/index.html>

To receive a copy of the 2005 report and CD, call or write:

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