

Media Contact: Fran Poda
(803) 952-8671
fran.poda@srs.gov

For Immediate Release

Lab's Performance Qualifies it for Unique National Work

AIKEN, S.C., (August 7, 2006) – Excellent performance has resulted in the Savannah River Site's (SRS) Environmental Bioassay Laboratory (EBL) being placed on a short list of laboratories capable of responding to national emergencies.

In the National Institute of Standards and Technology's Radiochemistry Intercomparison Program (NRIP), the EBL was the only lab to meet requirements in every category, says Darlene Murdoch, who manages the site's analytical laboratories for Washington Savannah River Company. In the program, labs are required to successfully analyze NRIP samples within an eight-hour turnaround window.

Six labs from the United States and Canada participated.

For the program, the EBL received six urine and six water test samples and analyzed them for specific chemicals and isotopes, completing the work within the required eight-hour window. It was the only lab that completed actinides and strontium analyses in less than eight hours.

"This performance demonstrates the unique technology and efficiency within the EBL," says Murdoch. "It's a validation of a world-class radiochemical technology that could support rapid response analyses for Homeland Security."

A new national committee on rapid analytical methods will likely want to make the EBL technology available to other laboratories for Homeland Security reasons, Murdoch says.

EBL supports SRS's environmental and bioassay programs. It analyzes environmental samples from on site and from a circumference around the site to ensure SRS is operating in an environmentally safe manner. And, the lab performs analyses for worker radiological protection and industrial hygiene.

SRS is owned by DOE and operated by a team of contractors led by WSRC, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Washington Group International.

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