

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

For Immediate Release

## **Deactivation Complete at Nation's Last Plutonium Production Facility**

AIKEN, S.C., (July 24, 2006) – The Savannah River Site (SRS) facility known as FB Line, which produced one-third of the nation's weapons-grade plutonium during the Cold War, has been deactivated and is now “cold, dark and dry.”

As deactivation work in F Area has been completed over the past three years, personnel have been reassigned elsewhere at SRS. With the deactivation of this key facility, more than 85 percent of the F Area workforce is now free to focus on other SRS cleanup priorities. Completing deactivation in F Area results in a savings of about \$130 million per year.

F Canyon is one of two chemical separations plants at SRS, and FB Line is located on its roof. FB Line covers 68,000 square feet and is two stories high.

The original FB Line, built in the early 1950s as part of the original site construction, was located in the canyon itself, on the third and fourth floors. In 1957-1959, the facility now known as FB Line was built. It operated to support defense needs from 1959-1990. It was placed in standby at the end of the Cold War, then was restarted in 1995 to stabilize remaining materials.

Plutonium processing operations concluded in F Canyon in early 2002, and deinventory and deactivation work began. For three years, deactivation tasks and deinventory work went on in parallel, with deactivation crews concentrating on areas of the building where no further operations were planned.

Deinventory workers, meanwhile, packaged remaining plutonium inventories for long-term storage. This involved packaging and shipping over 1,600 plutonium items to other SRS facilities.

### **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

Deinventory was completed in February 2005, and deactivation went into full swing throughout FB Line. Many areas had not been operational or routinely entered in years, and presented unusual challenges to the workers.

“Nothing was routine,” says F Area Deputy Facility Manager Steve Williams. “Every job had to be approached with discipline and inquisitiveness. It took every member of the team conducting every piece of work with extreme rigor to get the job done safely. I’m proud of every member of the FB Line team.”

During deactivation, enough waste was generated to fill a two-car garage over 50 feet high, says Williams. This waste includes such items as protective clothing, tools, machinery – anything that was used in a radiological area and could not be efficiently decontaminated. This waste was sent to the site waste management facility.

In June 2006, the facility was declared “cold, dark and dry.” By the end of July, access will be reduced to quarterly entries, only to ensure the facility remains in a safe, environmentally sound condition until closure during the final phase of decommissioning.

The site 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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