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For Immediate Release

New SRS Process Begins Radioactive Operations

AIKEN, S.C., (March 1, 2006) – A new Savannah River Site (SRS) process line – one that will help dispose of more transuranic (TRU) waste – has begun radioactive operations.

SRS has a large volume of legacy transuranic (TRU) waste that has to be repackaged, characterized and shipped to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) in Carlsbad, N.M. The new Modular Repackaging System (MRS), located in the Solid Waste Management Facility (SWMF) in E Area, provides the capability to process TRU waste contaminated with high levels of radioactivity.

The majority of the legacy waste was packaged in 55-gallon drums during the 1980s before the WIPP disposal path was available. Before it can be shipped to WIPP, prohibited items – such as liquids and aerosol cans – must be removed from the waste in the drums. The MRS provides that capability for the waste with higher levels of radioactivity. Before, SWMF was limited to remediating drums with low levels of radioactive waste.

“SRS benefits because operation of the MRS means more drums can be shipped to WIPP, and less TRU waste has to remain at SRS long-term,” explains Keith Stone, SWMF Facility Manager.

The MRS consists of two 16-foot inert atmosphere gloveboxes. A dedicated team of site personnel successfully installed, tested, and modified the facility and developed the Authorization Basis, procedures and training to ensure successful operation. During startup testing, the MRS underwent significant testing to ensure the glovebox could safely process drums with potentially flammable liquids. After turnover to operations, operators completed several months of intensive training to ensure they could safely operate the system and respond to abnormal events.

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

Starting up this new process marks another key step in the continued acceleration of TRU waste shipments to WIPP. SRS has shipped nearly 18,000 drums to WIPP and is currently scheduled to complete the majority of its drummed TRU waste shipments in late 2007.

The site is owned by the U.S. Department of Energy and operated by a team of contractors led by the Washington Savannah River Company, a subsidiary of Washington Group International.

WSRC-06-10