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For Immediate Release

1950s-Vintage Tritium Facility Deactivated

AIKEN, S.C., (August 11, 2006) – The Savannah River Site’s (SRS) first H Area tritium processing facility has been safely deactivated, marking an end to an era at SRS.

This era ends as another is about to begin, with the imminent start of operations at the new Tritium Extraction Facility (TEF). Extractions are expected to begin at TEF in July 2007.

“Our workers have done a tremendous job of bringing our facilities out of the past and into the future,” says Dennis Hayes, who manages the Defense Programs organization for Washington Savannah River Company (WSRC). “They’ve gone from safely operating a vintage processing plant, to intensive modernization and consolidation efforts, to training to operate a brand new facility. Through it all, we still have never missed a tritium shipment, and our product still has a perfect field performance rate.”

Building 232-H was built and began processing in the early 1950s. It operated to support the national defense until 2004, alongside a newer facility, originally called the Replacement Tritium Facility, that began operating in the 1990s.

In 2004, the Tritium Modernization and Consolidation Project was completed, which essentially expanded the Replacement Tritium Facility to take over the functions of 232-H, allowing the old facility to be shut down and deactivated.

Deactivation planning began well before that, however. In May 2003, a team consisting of a cross section of organizations began planning 232-H’s deactivation. Their planning included deciding what the facility’s final end state would be, along with plans for how to get there.

Deinventory and deactivation of the 1950s-vintage tritium processing plant presented new and unique challenges, each of which were safely and conservatively addressed. All nuclear materials were removed from the facility by May 2005.

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

The team that had operated and maintained the facility was essentially the same team that deinventoried and deactivated it. Their significant experience in this vintage tritium processing plant was key to success. This allowed for safe and efficient methods to be used, as the team was familiar with the process areas and understood the hazards of the facility.

On July 5, the primary power feed to the facility was disconnected from the building, placing it into a “cold, dark and dry” state for a long-term safe state. Two additional modifications are under way to the exterior of the building. These modifications will be completed by the end of September 2006 and the doors will be locked.

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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