



National Nuclear Security Administration

NEWS

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Date Set for Closure of Russian Nuclear Weapons Plant *U.S. National Nuclear Security Administration Is Helping Make It Happen*

The Russian government has recently determined that it will cease all nuclear weapons activity at the Avangard nuclear weapons plant in the closed city of Sarov, Russia - by the end of 2003. The Avangard plant will transition to civilian commercial uses. This effort is facilitated by the Department of Energy's National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) Nuclear Cities Initiative (NCI) program in cooperation with the Russian Ministry of Atomic Energy (MinAtom).

MinAtom, with NCI support, has established a Technopark in Sarov using land and buildings formerly used by Avangard for nuclear weapons production activities. The Technopark will be the location for civilian, commercial enterprises that will provide employment for nuclear scientists and engineers no longer employed by the weapons complex. Through NCI, NNSA is also helping to develop the infrastructure that will make Sarov and Avangard more attractive and viable locations for Western businesses.

"This is a major milestone that will allow the U.S. and Russia to continue our cooperative efforts to find civilian employment for workers displaced from the Russian nuclear weapons complex," said General John Gordon, NNSA Administrator. "Ensuring that these highly skilled individuals are putting their skills to work in the commercial sector is in the national security interest of both countries."

Sarov is located about 450 kilometers east of Moscow. The Avangard plant was the first Russian facility to manufacture nuclear weapons on an industrial scale.

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