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For Immediate Release

CONSTRUCTION ON NEW-STYLE DISPOSAL UNIT BEGINS AT SRS

AIKEN, S.C., (November 13, 2008) – Construction is underway on a new-style disposal unit for salt waste materials at the U.S. Department of Energy’s (DOE) Saltstone Facility at the Savannah River Site (SRS).

When construction and testing are complete, it will provide additional disposal capacity to disposition the Site’s low-level radioactive salt waste. A total of 36 million gallons of liquid nuclear waste, in the forms of salt and sludge, are stored in 49 underground carbon-steel tanks.

Ground-breaking ceremonies for the disposal unit were held this week with DOE and Washington Savannah River Company (WSRC) officials.

This design has been used in industrial applications for 20 years. However, the new disposal unit, known as Vault 2, has many enhanced design features that will improve the facility’s ability to safely dispose of the waste in accordance with a South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control permit.

The new disposal unit will include two separate disposal cells. The new disposal unit cells will have a watertight design and will have a cylindrical shape; the current two disposal units have a rectangular shape. The cylindrical design eliminates wall stresses found with rectangular units. It also includes a special concrete and steel shell, a wall-to-floor joint design, and high-density polyethylene and geosynthetic-clay liners below the unit.

Each of the new disposal unit cells will be 150 feet in diameter and 22 feet high, with a total storage capacity of approximately 5 million gallons.

The improved design incorporates lessons learned from the existing two disposal units, and meets or exceeds regulatory requirements.

“Through our nearly 20 years of Saltstone operation, we have learned a great deal about safe waste disposal,” said Steve Piccolo, WSRC President. “While the other two disposal units have done a good job of allowing us to disposition this waste, the new facility takes additional steps to further enhance the safety of the environment, workers and the public.”

(more)

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

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The CROM Corporation of Gainesville, Florida, has been awarded the \$8.8 million contract to build the facility. It is expected to take 20 months to construct the unit, then another four months to complete testing and show readiness before being used.

SRS is owned by DOE. The Liquid Waste contract is managed by a team of contractors led by WSRC, a subsidiary of URS Washington Division.

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