

For Immediate Release

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DWPF Melter 2 Pours 2,000th Canister

AIKEN, S.C. (January 25, 2012) – The second melter ever in the 16-year history of the Savannah River Site's (SRS) Defense Waste Processing Facility (DWPF) earlier this month poured its 2,000th canister of glassified hazardous waste, surpassing its two-year design life expectancy years ago while showing no signs of slowing down.

The melter is a 65-ton refractory lined melting vessel that receives a chemically balanced feed of treated high-level waste from the Site's underground waste tanks, mixed with borosilicate frit. When heated these elements form a molten glass. The glassified waste is then poured from the melter into stainless steel canisters, which are being safely stored on site until a permanent storage facility is identified.

Keeping the melter hot and operating is vital to Savannah River Remediation's (SRR) mission to dispose of the Site's hazardous waste, according to Steve Wilkerson, DWPF Treatment Project Director.

"The melter is the heart of the DWPF and keeping it safely operating is the key," Wilkerson said. "Because of recent enhancements, such as the deployment of bubbler technology in the melter, we continue to surpass performance milestones."

Melter 1 became operational when DWPF began hot operations in March 1996. It poured 1,339 canisters in its seven-year history. Melter 2 was placed into service in 2003. In total, 3,339 of the predicted 7,557 canisters needed to dispose of SRS's hazardous waste have been poured.

Terrel Spears, Assistant Manager for Waste Disposition Project, U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Savannah River Operations, called canister production crucial in eliminating the Site's hazardous waste.

"Since beginning operations, DWPF has poured 13 million pounds of glass and has immobilized 40 million curies of radioactivity," Spears said. "Every canister poured means there is less risk to people and the environment."

(over)

(add one – melter 2)

DWPF continues to set production milestones. In December 2011, DWPF produced 37 canisters for the best production month ever. During calendar year 2011, 266 canisters were poured, another production record.

With liquid waste operations continuing well into the next decade, additional melters will be required. SRR has a third melter in storage, ready to be put into operation when necessary, and a fourth melter is under construction for future use.

Immobilizing some of the most hazardous waste in South Carolina's is a focal point of liquid waste operations at SRS, according to Dave Olson, SRR President and Project Manager.

"By mixing the radioactive waste in a glass form, DWPF reduces the risks associated with liquid waste at SRS and is essential in SRR's mission to clean and operationally close the Site's waste tanks," Olson said.

SRS is owned by DOE. The SRS Liquid Waste contract is managed by SRR, a team of companies led by URS Corp. with partners Bechtel National, CH2M Hill and Babcock & Wilcox. Critical subcontractors for the contract are AREVA, Energy Solutions and URS Safety Management Solutions.

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PHOTO CAPTION

A SRR employee is using a manipulator located inside a shielded enclosure at the Defense Waste Processing Facility where the melter is pouring molten glass inside a canister.

