



Media Contact: Angeline French
(803) 725-2854
angeline.french@srnl.doe.gov

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SRNL ESTABLISHES PRESENCE AT CHARLESTON'S SEAHAWK

AIKEN, S.C. (Nov. 17, 2009) – To support homeland security initiatives, the U.S. Department of Energy's Savannah River National Laboratory has established a permanent presence at the SeaHawk interagency operations center (IOC). SeaHawk was established by Congress in 2003 and located at the Port of Charleston (S.C.) as a collaborative initiative designed to bring multiple agencies together to enhance port security operations and coordination among federal, state and local agencies.

Dennis Pendergist joined SRNL on Oct. 1 to coordinate SRNL's support for the SeaHawk IOC, now led by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and U.S. Coast Guard. "The idea behind SeaHawk is that the best way to achieve port and intermodal transportation security is through interagency cooperation, joint operations, unity of command, and the sharing of information and intelligence," Pendergist says. "SRNL already has a strong relationship with SeaHawk. The advantage of having a full-time presence here will be to give the IOC ready access to the capabilities that SRNL has to support those activities." Pendergist was until recently the intelligence chief for the SeaHawk task force, spending five and a half years with the project.

SeaHawk has become the model for interagency operations centers, and much of its technology and operating procedures are now in use with the U.S. Coast Guard and other homeland security entities around the country. The Coast Guard, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Customs and Border Protection, other federal partners, and several state and local law enforcement agencies participate in the project.

"SRNL has worked closely with SeaHawk throughout the years on a number of rad/nuke detection initiatives, so we are pleased to have Savannah River establish a fulltime presence in the IOC," says Capt. Scott Beeson, Chief of the SeaHawk Interagency Operations Center. "The port partners in Charleston have a strong history of rad/nuke detection collaboration, and SRNL's presence will allow us to further integrate SRNL's capabilities into that collaborative effort."

(more)

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SRNL at SeaHawk

Nov. 17, 2009

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Homeland security is one of SRNL's major program areas. The Laboratory has significant expertise in sensors for detection and identification of radioactive materials, robotics and remote devices, specialized forensics tools, and computer simulation, and provides a variety of technology development, training and other services for several security and law enforcement agencies.

SRNL is DOE's applied research and development national laboratory at the Savannah River Site (SRS). SRNL puts science to work to support DOE and the nation in the areas of environmental management, national and homeland security, and energy security. The management and operating contractor for SRS and SRNL is Savannah River Nuclear Solutions, LLC.

SRNS-2009-50