

For Immediate Release
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Salt Processing Reaches First of Two 2012 Contract Milestones

AIKEN, S.C. (January 30, 2012) – Savannah River Remediation (SRR) has reached a contact milestone for 2012 by processing over 500,000 gallons of salt waste in its Interim Salt Disposition Process (ISDP) at the Savannah River Site (SRS).

Essential components of the ISDP is the Actinide Removal Process (ARP) and Modular Caustic Side Solvent Extraction Unit (MCU), which work as an integrated system to remove nearly all of the radioactive isotopes from salt waste solutions in SRS's waste tanks before the waste is transferred to the Saltstone facilities for disposition.

On January 11, 2012, the MCU reached the 500,000 gallons mark, which is the first contract milestone for the year.

The chemical isotopes removed by ARP/MCU include cesium, plutonium and strontium. These isotopes are transferred to the Defense Waste Processing Facility, where it is mixed with molten glass and placed in stainless steel canisters awaiting permanent storage.

The remaining low-level salt solution is converted into a grout cement mixture at the Saltstone facilities and pumped into concrete vaults for permanent disposal.

Terrel Spears, Assistant Manager for Waste Disposition Project, U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Savannah River Operations, called salt waste processing key in emptying and closing SRS waste tanks.

"I congratulate SRR for reaching this initial milestone," Spears said. "Processing salt waste is essential for us and our mission to close tanks. The salt processing technologies utilized have proven very effective in removing the radioactive constituents from salt waste and the processing rates being achieved are encouraging."

Dave Olson, SRR President and Project Manager, said salt waste constitutes 90 percent of the total waste inventory stored in SRS's two tank farms, and the removal and processing of the waste is key in SRR achieving its mission to close tanks.

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(add one – salt processing milestone)

“The milestone demonstrates the safe and continuous operations of a key component in the waste removal process at SRS,” Olson said.

The ARP/MCU has processed over 2,552,000 gallons of salt waste since becoming operational in April 2008. The ISDP is referred to as “interim” because it was designed to operate while the Site’s Salt Waste Processing Facility is being constructed.

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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