

News from the Savannah River Site

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

From Silver to Lead, SRS turns Potential Trash into Recycled Treasure

AIKEN, S.C. (March 16, 2015) – During fiscal year 2014, Savannah River Nuclear Solutions (SRNS) recycled \$1.4 million of precious metals through the Department of Energy (DOE) Business Center for Precious Metals Sales and Recovery. Additionally, SRNS recycled more than 115,000 pounds of electronics, over 970,000 pounds of scrap metal and approximately 13,000 pounds of spent (ammunition) shell casings. In all, 568 tons were collected last year through the SRNS Excess Recycle Program at DOE's Savannah River Site (SRS).

"Recycling materials reduces the amount of hazardous waste being generated, along with the expensive cost for disposal, and it also reduces the amount of new materials that would otherwise have been purchased," said J.D. Hope, SRNS Regulatory Integration and Environmental Services.

Silver is one of the precious metals recovered at several SRS facilities where photographic film is processed. The spent photographic fixative, a liquid used to process film, contains high levels of silver and must be disposed of as a hazardous waste.

A device is used to separate the silver from the remaining chemicals. It uses an ionizing process to exchange iron for the silver, leaving the liquid non-hazardous and the silver ready to be shipped to DOE. The last shipment contained 1,159 ounces of recovered silver.



JD Hope (left) and Kevin Carr, SRNS Regulatory Integration and Environmental Services, inventory a container recently received at the SRS Recycling Center. More than 50,000 fluorescent tubes and other sources of lighting were collected last year and sent to an off-site recycling contractor.

For most employees across the U.S., collecting aluminum cans and discarded paper in containers for recycling can be routine. However, employees at SRNS recycle a wide range of items and materials.

In addition to electronics, scrap metal, shell casings and silver, other examples of SRS materials recycled last year include:

- More than 50,000 fluorescent tubes, mercury lamps and other sources of bulbs for lighting were collected, packaged and sent to an off-site contractor to recycle the mercury, metal and glass.
- Approximately 900 gallons of used anti-freeze was collected and recycled on site for reuse in SRS heavy equipment, large trucks and fleet vehicles.
- Over 11,600 gallons of used oil was acquired by a regional power company and burned to make electricity.
- More than 35,000 pounds of lead-acid batteries were collected for off-site recycling.
- Plus, large quantities of aerosol cans, refrigerants and lead were also recycled.

“Our extensive recycling program is just one of many programs and projects found at SRS where we work hard to proactively and cost-effectively protect the environment,” said Tammy Rimes, SRNS Director, Asset Management and Distribution Operations. “It’s the right thing to do.”

Savannah River Nuclear Solutions is a Fluor-led company whose members are Fluor Federal Services, Newport News Nuclear and Honeywell, responsible for the management and operations of the Department of Energy’s Savannah River Site, including the Savannah River National Laboratory, located near Aiken, South Carolina.

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