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For Immediate Release

SRS pivots deactivation activities in legacy facilities, resulting in cost savings

AIKEN, S.C. (September 1, 2023) - Contractor employees at the Department of Energy's (DOE) Savannah River Site (SRS) recently reevaluated their deactivation plans for legacy facilities in the Site's F Area location, leading to a change in direction that will result in significant cost savings.

F Area at SRS is home to several legacy nuclear facilities and support buildings that are no longer used for processing nuclear material, including the F Canyon Chemical Separations facility, and the F Area Analytical Laboratory facilities. It also includes Building 235-F, which was used to process plutonium used in space exploration. The area is undergoing cleanup and closure in part to make room for the Savannah River Plutonium Processing Facility (SRPPF) and in part to contribute to meeting DOE's footprint reduction mission.

Three legacy buildings in F Area are currently undergoing deactivation activities. Two of these buildings were home to the F Area Analytical Laboratories; the capabilities of which were moved to another location at SRS in 2020. The third building is home to the chiller plant, which provides the chilled water needed for conditioned air (either heated or cooled air depending on the season) to the laboratory buildings.

"The initial deactivation plan was to deactivate these buildings by individual zones, or specific areas of the buildings and grounds, to reach final end state objectives, or endpoints, identified in the deactivation plan," said Trey Gilland, Laboratory Deactivation Project Manager of Savannah River Nuclear Solutions (SRNS), the managing and operating contractor at SRS. "The plan was to deactivate the high hazard / highly contaminated zones first, working our way out to the lower hazard / lower contamination zones. Steam and water services were going to be isolated at the end of the deactivation project to provide conditioned air until all deactivation activities inside the buildings were complete; however, it was recognized earlier this year that we could eliminate substantial utility costs in the near term by isolating steam and water services early."

SRNS will have deactivated most of the radiological areas in the F Area Laboratory buildings by the end of FY23, so the deactivation team began looking at ways to save steam costs and apply that savings to future deactivation activities.

“Instead of the deactivation by zone concept, we looked at individual endpoints required to isolate steam to the buildings and identified 36 endpoints that need to be completed before we can move to unconditioned air,” Jack Musall, Project Engineer said. “We can complete deactivation of the remaining zones /endpoints without conditioned air, so we pivoted the schedule for FY24 and FY25 to transition to unconditioned air in all three buildings, the first building completing in FY24 and the remaining two in FY25. This will result in annual savings in steam costs,” Gilland added.

Once deactivation of the 36 endpoints identified is complete, the Project Team will return to its original plan of deactivating by zones. The end result of deactivation of these facilities will be the removal of hazards to make the facility safe and stable and the reduction of surveillance and maintenance costs.

“SRNS employees are committed to continuous improvement and to being good stewards of taxpayer money,” said SRNS President and CEO Dennis Carr. “This change in direction goes to prove the flexibility and ingenuity of our workforce and their ability to get the job done.”

SRS considers legacy facilities as those that were used for past missions in nuclear materials. Many of these buildings were originally constructed at the Site’s founding in the 1950s. The purpose of these facilities during that time addressed the national security needs of the country. It is fitting that the clean-up of these legacy buildings allows F Area to focus once again on national security with the construction of SRPPF.



Legacy facilities in the Savannah River Site's F Area, including the F Canyon Chemical Separations Facility and the F Area Analytical Laboratories are undergoing deactivation.

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