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Savannah River Nuclear Solutions Presented 2014 DOE Sustainability Award for New Technology Development

AIKEN, S.C. (April 9, 2015) – A new method for measuring the radioactivity of transuranic (TRU) waste, items primarily contaminated with plutonium as a result of common activities within nuclear facilities, has resulted in a savings exceeding \$10 million at the Department of Energy’s Savannah River Site.

“This new non-destructive technology also led to significant cost savings and earning of a DOE Sustainability Award in the category of Exemplary Practice,” said Bert Crapse, Waste Disposition Programs, DOE-Savannah River Operations Office. “Every team member contributed to the use of this technology and achievement. What they accomplished will have a significant impact on many organizations throughout the DOE complex,” Bert Crapse said.

Non-destructive technology uses highly sensitive instruments to provide accurate data for each waste container placed into the highly shielded unit. The new technique significantly improves existing methods to determine the strength or level of radiation emitted from each TRU waste container being tested.

Two years of careful analysis and documentation were required to receive full approval from the Savannah River Nuclear Solutions TRU Waste Team, DOE and Environmental



SRNS employee and forklift driver Willie Jones carefully places a drum normally filled with transuranic waste into position during a training exercise involving a device that uses highly sensitive instruments to determine the level of radiation emitted from each waste container being tested. Central Characterization Project employee Mike Schneider provides assistance.

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Protection Agency for use of this new method in the TRU waste characterization and certification program at SRS.

Engineers from the site's management and operations contractor SRNS worked closely with DOE's Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) personnel and employees from the company Canberra to obtain this level of achievement. Both WIPP and Canberra have employees with expertise in the area of analyzing radiological test results.

The DOE Sustainability Performance Office sponsors sustainability awards to recognize outstanding contributions at DOE facilities across the country involving energy, water and vehicle fleet management, as well as achievements in other projects representing exemplary practices.

This new variation of non-destructive measuring also eliminated the need to repackage containers filled with highly contaminated TRU waste and the hazards associated with this type of hands-on work.

Repackaging would have resulted in the generation of over 600 55-gallon drums of unexpected contaminated waste, creating a need for 28 additional waste shipments from SRS to the federal repository.

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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