



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

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Monday, October 1, 2012

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SRS Celebrates Closure of Two Additional Radioactive Waste Tanks

*Senior DOE Officials and SC Congressional Leadership Gather
to Commemorate Another Historic Cleanup Milestone*

AIKEN, S.C. – Today, Under Secretary of Energy Thomas D’Agostino joined U.S. Senator Lindsey Graham (R-SC), other senior officials from the Department of Energy (DOE), Savannah River Remediation (SRR), South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) and hundreds of Liquid Waste Program employees to celebrate the operational closure of two Cold War era hazardous waste tanks at DOE’s Savannah River Site (SRS). Successful closure of SRS Tanks 18 and 19 signifies the most substantial environmental risk reduction achievement for the State of South Carolina since 1997 when DOE closed Tanks 17 and 20, the first for SRS and the Nation.

Calling it an historic day, Under Secretary D’Agostino congratulated SRS employees for accomplishing the tank closure milestone safely and ahead of schedule. “The historical significance of this Site can never be duplicated and will always be remembered. Supporting efforts to win the Cold War was part of the SRS legacy, and helped define our Nation,” said D’Agostino. “DOE and this Nation thank you for the years of dedicated efforts it took to get us to where we are today. You have performed your work safely and admirably and I am proud to share this important day with you.”

Bulk grouting of Tanks 18 and 19 began in April 2012. The process involved over 3.3 million gallons of specially formulated cement grout delivered by 2,080 cement trucks and poured into the tanks. The pouring and closure were completed three months ahead of the December 31 regulatory deadline and with no job injuries or accidents.

“This is a great milestone for the Site and DOE. Eight years ago, I authored a provision in the United States Senate permitting DOE to clean and close forty, one-million gallon tanks at the Site. The measure passed by a single vote and was later signed into law by President Bush. The first two tanks are now clean and will be permanently closed. It was a decision that was good for our environment and good for the taxpayer, saving billions. Today we celebrate a significant accomplishment and one that was a long time in the making.” said Senator Graham.

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SCDHEC Commissioner Catherine Templeton, DOE-Savannah River Operations Office Manager Dave Moody, and Savannah River Remediation (SRR) President and Project Manager Dave Olson joined Under Secretary D'Agostino and Senator Graham for a special tank closure marker unveiling at the Site's F Tank Farm followed by an employee celebration.

"Closing waste tanks 18 and 19 under the 3116 provision has provided SRS a roadmap for safely expediting future tank closures and meeting our risk reduction commitments" said DOE Savannah River Manager Dave Moody. "For this, we owe tremendous gratitude to Senator Graham for his tireless efforts, and to our regulators, SC Department of Health and Environmental Control and the Environmental Protection Agency, for their partnership in support of the Department's cleanup goals."

Eliminating the risk of legacy nuclear waste by closing tanks is a top priority for DOE and part of the Enterprise•SRS strategy to prepare for future missions. Addressing a celebratory audience of 800-plus, Dr. Moody also lauded the efforts of the Site's liquid waste program workforce. "It is your hard work and commitment that guaranteed this day possible. Today, we are celebrating you, the closure of two waste tanks and the opening of our future."

SRR, the liquid waste contractor at SRS, is contracted by DOE to operationally close the waste tanks. Dave Olson, SRR President and Project Manager, agreed that grouting the tanks minimizes the risk for workers, the public and the environment.

"With the operational closure of these tanks, we have witnessed one of the nation's most substantial nuclear waste tank cleanup effort and the most significant environmental risk reduction in South Carolina since 1997," Olson said. "This is a success story, and I thank all SRR employees for a job well done."

Tanks 18 and 19, each with a waste capacity of approximately 1.3 million gallons, were both constructed in 1958. Tank 18 becoming operational in 1959 as a waste receipt tank in the Site's nuclear weapons production process and remained in active service until 1986 when waste removal activities were initiated. Tank 19 was placed into operations in 1961, also used as a nuclear waste receipt tank, and remained in service until 1980 when waste removal began.

An agreement between DOE, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and SCDHEC required the operational closure of Tanks 18 and 19 by December 2012. Both tanks underwent extensive waste removal process that included bulk waste removal, specialized mechanical cleaning, and working to isolate the tanks from all external systems, all leading to regulatory confirmation that the tanks were ready for stabilization and final closure.

Additional information on the Department of Energy's Office of Environmental Management and the Savannah River Site can be found at <http://www.em.doe.gov> or <http://www.srs.gov>.

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