

Primary Media Contact:

Holly Kemp
Savannah River Nuclear Solutions
(803) 952-2031
holly.kemp@srs.gov

NNSA Media Contact:

Bryan Cox
NNSA – Savannah River Field Office
(803) 989-9050
bryan.cox@nnsa.srs.gov

For Immediate Release**Supplier Engagement Overhaul Strengthens Resilient SRS Supply Chain**

AIKEN, S.C. (FEBRUARY 29, 2024) – A supply chain management team at the Savannah River Site (SRS) accomplished a significant overhaul of the supplier evaluation process to validate manufacturers' capabilities to meet critical schedule requirements.

The National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) has tasked and funded SRS to begin preliminary planning work related to nuclear weapons modernization. In support of this mission, SRS management and operations contractor Savannah River Nuclear Solutions (SRNS) needed the ability to assess manufacturing and assembly capabilities of suppliers proposing in an environment where businesses are challenged with an insufficient labor base.



A Savannah River Nuclear Solutions (SRNS) Supplier Technical Assessment and Validation (STAV) team with a Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) team during a STAV manufacturing facility review.

SRNS launched the Supplier Technical Assessment and Validation (STAV) process. This new process has enabled SRNS to better determine manufacturers' capabilities before award, in turn leading to higher success rates of delivering parts on or ahead of schedule.

SRNS quickly stood up a team of subject matter experts in engineering, quality, welding and procurement; the team then conducted a thorough assessment with potential suppliers. These assessments included the review of manufacturing processes, quality, fabrication schedules, capacity and more.

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To strengthen the manufacturing supply base, SRNS connected suppliers with Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) teams. These partnerships, organized through the U.S. Department of Commerce, are staffed by experienced manufacturing and business operations experts who are experienced turnaround gurus.

Together, manufacturers and MEP teams reviewed facilities and implemented process improvements focused on increasing manufacturing efficiency.

Unleashing this latent supply base capacity will facilitate on-time shipments and preclude costly construction delays.

The STAV process is now being scaled across the SRNS manufacturing supply base to improve the Department of Energy's (DOE) project and mission success.

"This is a win-win for our suppliers and SRNS," said Jay Johnson, SRNS Deputy Vice President of Contracts and Supply Chain Management. "This process transforms how we engage suppliers - proactively in advance of procurement, which enables partnering initiatives to ready the supply base for our complex requirements and aggressive schedules."

Suppliers obtain expert guidance on how to improve their key processes resulting in the ability to become much more agile and efficient. Additionally, most MEPs have state funding to assist suppliers in their states to sustain and grow businesses, which means more stability for the state's labor base.

This process yields early recognition of risk and mitigation steps that can be taken by the supplier, which results in increasing confidence in supplier commitments.



Two Savannah River Nuclear Solutions (SRNS) Supplier Technical Assessment and Validation (STAV) inspectors tour a manufacturing facility.

Established by Congress in 2000, NNSA is a semi-autonomous agency within the U.S. Department of Energy responsible for enhancing national security through the military application of nuclear science. NNSA maintains and enhances the safety, security, and effectiveness of the U.S. nuclear weapons stockpile; works to reduce the global danger from weapons of mass destruction; provides the U.S. Navy with safe and militarily effective nuclear propulsion; and responds to nuclear and radiological emergencies in the U.S. and abroad.

Savannah River Nuclear Solutions, a Fluor and HII partnership company, is responsible for the management and operations of the Department of Energy's Savannah River Site, located near Aiken, South Carolina.