



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

SAVANNAH RIVER OPERATIONS OFFICE

AIKEN, SC 29808

NEWS MEDIA CONTACTS:

Sonya Goines, DOE-SR, (803) 952-8564
sonya.goines@srs.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, May 12, 2016

Dean Campbell, SRR (803) 208-8270
dean.campbell@srs.gov

SRS Celebrates 20 years of Vitrification Facility Operations and Eighth Radioactive Waste Tank Closure

Senior DOE and SRS Officials Gather to Commemorate Historic Cleanup Milestones

AIKEN, S.C. (May 12, 2016) – Today, U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management (EM) Monica Regalbuto joined senior federal and contractor leadership, community stakeholders and hundreds of Liquid Waste Program employees, both past and present, to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Savannah River Site's (SRS) Defense Waste Processing Facility and the Site's eighth waste tank closure.

The celebration marks DOE's continuing commitment to significantly reduce the hazard of the most substantial environmental risk for the State of South Carolina.

Calling it a historic day, Dr. Regalbuto congratulated SRS employees for safely dispositioning the hazardous waste, part of the Cold War legacy. "The historical significance of this Site's work is unprecedented in terms of its contribution to our nation's defense, and it provides a path to protect workers, local communities, and the state from the risk associated with the waste," said Dr. Regalbuto. "DOE and our Nation thank you for your continued dedication to get us to the place we are today. Your work is noticed by all of us, and I am proud to share this day with you."

Defense Waste Processing Facility

The Defense Waste Processing Facility (DWPF) at SRS began operations in March 1996 and is the nation's only currently operating vitrification, or glassification, plant. DWPF has poured just over 4,000 canisters of glassified waste in the past 20 years and is expected to produce just over 8,000 canisters.

The 4,000th canister was poured on December 31, 2015.

DWPF has removed approximately 58.6 million curies (a measure of radioactivity) from the liquid waste at SRS. Nearly 16 million pounds of molten glass has been poured since 1996.

-MORE-

SRS Celebration of DWPF 20th and Eighth Tank Closure

Tank 12 Closure

Grouting activities were completed for Tank 12 on April 27, 2016, marking the operational closure of the eighth radioactive liquid waste tank at SRS.

Tank 12, located underground in SRS H Tank Farm, is an old-style tank built between 1951 and 1953 and placed into service in 1956. It has a storage capacity of approximately 750,000 gallons. It is the second tank closed in the Site's H Tank Farm, one of two areas where waste tanks are located.

During Tank 12 closure, 567 grout trucks traveled onsite, and 908,580 gallons of grout were poured into the tanks.

The Federal Facility Agreement (FFA) between DOE, the Environmental Protection Agency, and South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control required that Tank 12 be operationally closed by May 31, 2016.

In addition to Dr. Regalbuto, DOE-Savannah River Operations Office Manager Jack Craig and Savannah River Remediation President and Project Manager Tom Foster joined the employee celebration.

Craig said that the partnership with all entities involved continues to move the entire Liquid Waste Program forward.

"Working together, SRS has achieved a great deal of success in the Site's liquid waste program during the past 20 years," Craig said. "Operating this one-of-a-kind vitrification workhorse to safely immobilize radioactive waste and removing hazardous waste from our tanks for ultimate tank closures is a successful part of our past and continues to be our commitment to the state and our communities in the future."

SRR, the liquid waste contractor at SRS, is contracted by DOE to operate the Defense Waste Processing Facility and to close the waste tanks. Tom Foster, new SRR President and Project Manager, agreed that DWPF's continued operation combined with grouting the tanks minimizes the risk for workers, the public, and the environment.

"In the past 20 years, 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," Foster said. "This is a true success story, and I thank all SRR employees for a job well done."

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>.

-DOE-

Connect With SRS Online:

On Twitter: <http://twitter.com/SRSNews>

On Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/SavannahRiverSite>

On YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/user/SRSNews>

On flickr: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/51009184@N06/>

