

Primary Media Contact: Angeline (Angie) French
Savannah River Nuclear Solutions
(803) 208-2110
angeline.french@srs.gov

NNSA Media Contact: Christine Gibbs
NNSA-Savannah River Field Office
(803) 208-0307
christine.gibbs@nnsa.srs.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Savannah River National Laboratory, Los Alamos National Laboratory Collaborate to Prepare for NNSA Pit Mission



AIKEN, S.C. (Aug. 4, 2020) – A Knowledge Transfer Program kicking off in August will help to ensure that both the Savannah River Site (SRS) and Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) are prepared to carry out their parts of the proposed mission – supplying the required number of plutonium “pits” to support the Nation’s nuclear deterrent. Under this joint program, scientists and engineers from SRS will be temporarily assigned to LANL for two years, where they will work side by side with their counterparts and colleagues, learning everything there is to know about plutonium pit production.



“Like much of the pit mission, this initiative involves collaboration between SRS and LANL in a way that fully utilizes the knowledge at each location,” said Lisa E. Gordon-Hagerty, Administrator of the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) and U.S. Under Secretary of Energy for Nuclear Security. “It starts with the skills and expertise the people at each site already possess, then provides the opportunity to further develop that expertise to the benefit of the Nation.”

“The Savannah River Site has a long history of production, providing materials used in meeting our Nation’s strategic deterrence objectives,” said Nicole Nelson-Jean, Manager of the NNSA Savannah River Field Office. “This program will allow personnel to gain knowledge specific to plutonium pit production from their counterparts at LANL, the acknowledged Plutonium Center of Excellence, and put that knowledge to use at SRS.”

The knowledge transfer program is executed by the Savannah River National Laboratory (SRNL), and their employees will participate. SRNL, which is operated by SRS Management and Operations contractor Savannah River Nuclear Solutions (SRNS), is a central partner in the proposed Savannah River Plutonium Processing Facility (SRPPF) mission, along with SRNS’ NNSA Capital Projects, the SRNS department responsible for planning and carrying out the proposed mission at SRS.

“Success at carrying out this important mission relies on hiring a capable workforce, then enabling them to further develop their knowledge,” said Dr. Vahid Majidi, SRNS Executive Vice President and

Director of SRNL. “The Knowledge Transfer Program is a key part of that development. Not only will the SRNL participants gain extensive knowledge that they can apply in support of the mission, but they will also return ready to train other SRS personnel in what they have learned.”

The first few participants are expected to arrive at LANL in August and September, with others beginning their rotation over a period of time, for a total of approximately 20 participants.

Once these personnel complete their rotations at LANL, they will return to SRS and continue their work in the proposed SRPPF Training and Operations Center. They will serve a two-fold mission, directly training personnel that will work in SRPPF as well as training other trainers. Also, when new production requirements emerge, they will be the recognized subject matter experts that will develop the process and production standards for new material.

SRS participants in the program will typically be personnel who have several years of experience under their belt and want to pursue future growth in the fields that support pit production. At the same time, they could be anticipated to have some years before retirement, during which they would be available to offer advice, mentorship, and subject matter expertise when they return to SRS.

To meet national security requirements, NNSA is pursuing a two-pronged approach to the production of plutonium pits—requiring a capability of 50 pits per year at SRS near Aiken, S.C., and a capability of 30 pits per year at LANL in New Mexico. This approach would provide an effective, responsive, and resilient nuclear weapons infrastructure with the flexibility to adapt to shifting requirements.

Established by Congress in 2000, the National Nuclear Security Administration (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. The mission of the NNSA Savannah River Field Office (SRFO) is to provide operations, programs, and project oversight and contract administration for NNSA field activities at the Savannah River Site, located near Aiken, South Carolina.

Savannah River Nuclear Solutions, a Fluor-led company with Newport News Nuclear and Honeywell, is 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.

Visit us on the web at www.savannahrivernuclearsolutions.com

SRNS-2020-929