

Media Contacts:

Sonya Goines, U.S. Department of Energy
(803) 646-2788
Sonya.Goines@srs.gov

Dean Campbell, Savannah River Remediation
(803) 208-8270
Dean.Campbell@srs.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SRS Cuts Ribbon, Breaks Ground on Mega-Sized Saltstone Disposal Units

AIKEN, S.C. (December 3, 2021) – The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Office of Environmental Management (EM), with Savannah River Remediation (SRR), has ceremoniously cut the ribbon on the second mega-volume Saltstone Disposal Unit (SDU) at the Savannah River Site and broken ground on the final three SDUs to be built onsite.

DOE-EM Senior Advisor (EM-1) Ike White was onsite Thursday, December 2, for the SDU 7 ribbon-cutting and SDUs 10, 11, and 12 ground-breaking events.

SDU 7 construction was complete in 2019 and spent the last year undergoing testing and commissioning. In July 2021, DOE officially authorized SDU 7 for operations. SRR, EM's liquid waste contractor at SRS, completed the project 8 months ahead of schedule, \$32 million dollars under budget, and with zero lost-time injuries. Site prep is underway for SDUs 10-12. SRR is building the SDUs for EM.

White acknowledged that completing construction of SDU 7 was one of EM's priorities.

"Saltstone disposal units are a significant part of EM's mission to safely dispose of material in the liquid waste tanks," White said. "Completing the high priority SDU 7 project confirms the Department's continued commitment to furthering radioactive waste cleanup progress at SRS."

SDU 7 is the second of seven planned large disposal tanks, which when combined result in more than \$500 million in cost savings over the life of the SRS liquid waste storage program because they require less infrastructure and materials than the previously planned 80 smaller SDUs.

SRR President and Project Manager Phil Breidenbach said the SDU program is one of the most significant and efficient construction projects ongoing at SRS.

“Saving \$500 million is a win for SRR, DOE, and especially, for the taxpayers,” Breidenbach said. “SRR developed the concept and is building the structures responsible for this cost-savings. It is a pleasure to recognize those accomplishments with ribbon-cutting and ground-breaking ceremonies.”

The SDUs have a 32-million-gallon capacity. The units will receive decontaminated salt solution processed at the Salt Waste Processing Facility (SWPF). At SWPF, salt waste is decontaminated through processes that remove radioactive isotopes, including cesium, strontium, and actinides. The decontaminated salt solution is then mixed with dry materials at the Saltstone Production Facility (SPF) to form a grout. The grout is pumped to the above-ground SDUs where it hardens to a form called saltstone. The mega-sized SDUs support the increased output from SWPF.



A ceremonial groundbreaking for the coming Saltstone Disposal Units (SDU) 10-12. Participating are, from left, Tim Hammond, Savannah River Remediation (SRR) Project Design and Construction; Phil Breidenbach, SRR President and Project Manager; Rodney Blackmon, SRR Saltstone Facility Manager; Ike White, DOE-EM Senior Advisor; Jim Folk, DOE-Savannah River (SR) Assistant Manager for Waste Disposition; Mike Budney, DOE-SR Manager; and Shayne Farrell, DOE-SR Federal Project Director for SDU projects.



A ribbon-cutting at Saltstone Disposal Unit (SDU) 7 is held to signify the unit is ready to operate. Participating are, from left, Tim Hammond, Savannah River Remediation (SRR) Project Design and Construction; Phil Breidenbach, SRR President and Project Manager; Rodney Blackmon, SRR Saltstone Facility Manager; Ike White, DOE-EM Senior Advisor; Jim Folk, DOE-Savannah River (SR) Assistant Manager for Waste Disposition; Mike Budney, DOE-SR Manager; and Shayne Farrell, DOE-SR Federal Project Director for SDU projects.