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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SRS's F Area moves to dayshift only operations

AIKEN, S.C. (January 12, 2022) — The Savannah River Site (SRS) continues to make progress toward area closure in the Site's F Area Complex, with the reduction from 24-hour coverage to day operations in November 2021.

“The three main facilities in F Area Complex are Building 235-F, the F/H Analytical Laboratory, and the F Canyon chemical separations facility,” said Verne Mooneyhan, F Area Facility Manager for SRS’s managing and operating contractor Savannah River Nuclear Solutions. “These facilities are in various stages of facility deactivation, and surveillance and maintenance, which have required operators to be present in the area 24/7. However, recent cessation of analytical operations, implementation of new DOE approved technical safety requirements for facility operations -called a Safety Basis- and deactivation progress have allowed us to move to days.”

Building 235-F at SRS was part of the original construction in the early 1950s and was utilized for several production missions throughout its operational life, each of which has left a mark on the robust facility. Its operations have benefited the nation’s defense, NASA and DOE. Deactivation will place the facility in a stable condition for long term safe storage until the eventual decommissioning. Deactivation is scheduled to complete in Sept. of 2022.

Savannah River National Laboratory (SRNL) has performed analytical sampling from radiochemical processing and radiological environmental monitoring programs at facilities



An aerial view of the Savannah River Site's F Area.

across the site for over 55 years and utilized one of F Area's legacy facilities, the F/H Analytical Laboratory. To reduce costs and streamline capabilities, SRNS and SRNL completed a multi-year project to relocate analytical services and methods from SRNL's analytical laboratory facilities in F Area to SRNL's main laboratory in A Area, several miles away. All 59 Laboratory Methods have been relocated and established in A Area. Deactivation of the legacy F/H Laboratory is projected to complete in FY2027. Between FY2018 and FY2021, 45 labs no longer in use were placed in layup, which will help accelerate deactivation. Additionally, DOE-HQ recently approved Excessing of F/H Labs and support structures.

Historically, F Canyon was used as chemical separations facility to recover plutonium-239 and uranium-238. F Canyon chemically dissolved and processed spent nuclear fuel, much like the H Canyon facility at SRS continues to do today. F Canyon deactivation was completed in 2010 and is awaiting decommissioning.

Transitioning away from 24-hour operations has come with challenges and obstacles ranging from available resources due to COVID-19, to the implementation of two nuclear safety basis revisions happening concurrently within the facility. This effort has involved multiple organizations from around SRS and required them to take a significant deep dive into the preparations to set up the area for the transition.

"Moving to days in F Area, frees up manpower for other important missions on-site," said Mooneyhan. "Most importantly, it's one step closer to deactivating all of F Area and allowing us to fulfill our commitment to cleaning up the environment from activities related to the Cold War."